

ESSAYS IN TRUE ORTHODOX CHRISTIANITY

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1. THE FOUR ELEMENTS AND THE CREATION OF MAN

In the service for the Greater Blessing of the Waters, there is a prayer in which we read: “Of four elements hast Thou compounded the creation” ...

Some may think that this is proof of the primitive scientific knowledge of the ancients. After all, we know now that the creation is compounded of all kinds of elements at various levels of complexity – molecules, atoms, electrons, subatomic particles, quarks, even the recently discovered so-called “God particle”. In fact, there is no such thing as a single water “element”, for example: there is just a molecule composed of two atoms of hydrogen and one of oxygen.

However, the ancients were not wrong. If we stop analyzing and quantifying for a moment, and just apprehend nature as it appears to us *qualitatively*, then we will soon realize that there are in fact only four kinds of things: earthy things (solids), watery things (liquids), airy things (gases) and incendiary things (fire). There is nothing material that cannot be classed in one of these categories, or a mixture of them. Moreover, earth, water, air and fire do indeed seem to be the most basic material elements *from a qualitative point of view*. This does not contradict the scientific point of view: it is just a fact of another, equally valid way of looking at the world – a point of view, moreover, that opens a window into the spiritual world. For, as St. Maximus the Confessor writes, “To those who have eyes to see, all the invisible (spiritual) world is mysteriously presented in symbols of the visible world. And the whole of the natural world depends on the supernatural world.”¹

The four elements are not just matter to be analyzed by science, but also *symbols* of *spiritual* realities. Now modern scientific man is inclined to scorn symbols as being merely conventional – useful, perhaps, just as “green light for go” and “red light for stop” are useful conventions for drivers, but not because they offer any insight into the true nature of things. However, this is true only of conventional, that is, *man-made* symbolisms. Thus there is no real, essential relationships between the colour green and forward movement, and the colour red and arrested movement: the same purpose could be served by reversing the symbolism and making green stand for stop and red for go (as long as everyone was warned beforehand).

Some symbols are a little more than mere conventions, being also signs having a real, psychological basis in human nature. Thus when the poet Robert Burns wrote: “My love is like a red, red rose”, he was exploiting, for aesthetic purposes, a real, psychological link between the colour red and amorous passion. Artists use both purely conventional symbols and the real, psychological effects of certain symbols to create their art.

¹ St. Maximus, *Mystagogy*, II.

However, the symbols we are talking about here are more than conventions or psychological signs or triggers: they are real, *God-made* relationships between certain material things or qualities, such as the four elements, and spiritual reality. Let us look at each of the four elements, especially in relation to the creation of man.

*

1. Earth. When God created man, he made him out of earth – but not the fallen earth of our fallen planet Earth, which is composed of millions of rotting dead organisms, but a more primitive, pristine earth or clay that existed before the Fall and death. Since the Fall, however, when our souls became defiled by sin, earth has become equated with dirt, and our first instinct is to rid ourselves of it through washing with water. Earth is the opposite of heaven, and thus stands for that which is low in relation to God and the angels. The Latin-derived English word “humus” means “earth”; and “humility” is therefore the appropriate spiritual state of the earth-born. But the earth is also the source of all our food – under this aspect it is beneficent “Mother Earth”. And earth under the aspect of dirt and sin can be transformed by the blessing of God into the source of life and fertility. On the whole, however, earth signifies sin; earthly thoughts are sinful thoughts; and it is because we sin that God has delivered us to the curse of returning to the earth from which we were made: “Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return” ...

2. Water. When God created man, He made him not only of earth but also of water, and scientists have established that 70% of our bodies are made of water. Although also “low” in relation to heaven – water always runs *downward* toward the sea – water has more positive symbolic qualities. Water is life-giving – without water all organic life quickly dies. Water cleans – tears wash away sin, as does the water of Holy Baptism. Thus the Greek words “to wash” (λουειν) and “to set free (from sin) (λυειν) are very similar.²

Water is gentle and soothing and refreshing, but at the same time powerful – in time it wears away even the hardest stone. Under the aspect of rain, which comes from heaven, it symbolizes *grace*, which softens the hardest of hearts. Water is not always a positive symbol. The sea, being barren, salty water, is a symbol of the world in its spiritual barrenness, its incapacity to produce true spiritual fruit. And water can also be the instrument of God’s destructive, punishing power, as in the flood of Noah. But when God’s justice was satisfied, God sent light through the water in the rainbow to symbolize His reconciliation with man.

3. Air. When God created man, He infused into his body an airy substance, the soul; for, as we read, “God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and

² Some MSS for Revelation 1.5 read “Unto Him that loved us and *washed* us from our sins (λουειν) in His own blood”, and others, “Unto Him that loved us and *set us free* from our sins (λυειν)”. See William Barclay *The Daily Study Bible: The Revelation of John*, Edinburgh: The Saint Andrew Press, 1976, vol. I, pp. 33-34.

man became a living soul" (Genesis 2.7). St. Augustine points out that "the Greek [of the Septuagint] does not say πνευμα [spirit], which is commonly used of the Holy Spirit, but πνοη, which is a name more frequently used of the creation than of the Creator"³. In other words, the soul is not an extension, as it were, of the uncreated Spirit, but is created. However, the fact that the words for "breath" and "Spirit" are so close in Greek indicates that the soul is closely akin to the Divine Spirit, being truly "in His image and likeness". "We must believe neither that He made the soul from Himself, nor that He made it out of corporeal elements, when He created it through His inbreathing"⁴. Being airy rather than earthy or watery, the soul's natural direction is upward, toward God and the angelic realm, and it does not share the fate of the body. "Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God Who gave it" (Ecclesiastes 12.7).

The Lord compares the Holy Spirit to a wind "that blows where it wishes" (John 3.8). He can manifest Himself in a gentle breeze, as to the Prophet Elijah on Carmel, or in a mighty wind, as to the apostles on Zion at Pentecost. It lifts to heaven or it dashes to the earth. It is the Creator Spirit, but also the Destroyer Spirit. "Thou wilt take their spirit, and they shall cease; and unto their dust shall they return. Thou wilt send forth Thy Spirit, and they shall be created; and Thou shalt renew the face of the earth" (Psalms 103.31-32).

4. Fire. If air, breath, spirit and inspiration are associated with the spiritual realm, and with God Himself, then the association is still stronger in relation to fire. "God is a consuming fire", says the apostle (Hebrews 12.29). And of the created angels who are filled with the Spirit of God it is said that they are "a flaming fire" (Psalms 103.5). St. John the Baptist, the greatest born of woman, was, in the Lord's own words, "a burning and a shining light" (John 5.38). These are not just pretty metaphors; they indicate that the angels, and angelic men, are filled with the fire of God's grace, which warms and enlightens, but also judges and destroys. At the Second Coming the Lord will come in the manifest fire of His Divinity, so that "the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat, both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up" (II Peter 3.10). But this judgement by fire, though destructive, will have an ultimately creative purpose: "a new heaven and a new earth in which righteousness dwells" (II Peter 3.13). Then those men in whom there is the fire of the Divinity will "shine forth like the sun" (Matthew 13.43), "running to and fro like sparks among the stubble" (Wisdom 4).

Some of the Fathers, such as St. Gregory the Theologian, speak of the soul of man as having "the spark of Divinity". Certainly it was so before the Fall, when the Spirit of God dwelt in man as a constituent part of him. But then man sinned and the spark was lost; for the Lord said: "My Spirit shall not remain with man forever, for he is indeed flesh" (Genesis 3.5). So in his original constitution man

³ St. Augustine, *On the City of God*, XIII, 24, 3.

⁴ St. Augustine, *On Genesis according to the Letter*, VII, 4, 6.

can be said to have been made up of four elements: earth and water (body), air (soul) and fire (grace). But the four elements became three after the Fall, when fire was lost; and at death there is further disintegration as air separates from earth and water, and earth and water from each other. St. Seraphim said something similar in his famous *Conversation with Motovilov*, when he spoke of the original man as having been made up of four elements: body, soul, spirit and Spirit. Here "spirit" (with a small "s") signifies the higher part of the soul, its "airiest" part, which communicates with the fire of the Uncreated Spirit (with a capital "S"), and is so united to the Spirit that it becomes "one Spirit" with Him. The great tragedy took place when the spirit of man was dissociated from the Spirit of God, leading to the disintegration of the whole of human nature. The Apostle Jude calls such fallen people "*psychical*,... not having the Spirit" (Jude 19).

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The feast of the Nativity of Christ is called "the feast of recreation", because at His Conception and Birth Christ truly recreated human nature through the virgin earth of the Virgin Mary and the descent of the Holy Spirit, so that in His Person man is again pure earth, water, air and fire. But the grace of recreation and regeneration has to be communicated to the rest of mankind, and with this end in view Christ goes to His Baptism in the Jordan. His Descent into the waters purifies the element of water, driving out the evil spirits that have taken up their abode in it. Fire enters water and purifies it. Of course, this is paradoxical from a material point of view, because in the material world fire is quenched by water – or turns it into steam. But here the Divine fire takes up its dwelling in the water, preserving its natural qualities and making it permanently Spirit-bearing. From now on, it is possible for there to be baptism by water and the Spirit, through which all men can be reborn and recreated to eternal life, receiving the Spirit that was in Adam originally, before the original sin, and thereby delivering them from the punitive fire of the Last Day. For "Christ baptizes in the fire of the Last Day those who are disobedient and believe not that He is God: but through the Spirit and by the grace that comes through water He grants a new birth to all who acknowledge His Divinity, delivering them from their faults".⁵

Spirit and fire are also *light*, another of the great themes of the Theophany of the Lord, which is also called *the Feast of lights*. On descending into the Jordan the Lord restores the Divine, Uncreated Light to creation, thereby making creation – and in particular, the water of Holy Baptism – a means of restoring that Light to human nature. "Adam became blind in Eden [i.e. he lost the Divine Light in the fall], but now in Bethlehem the Son has appeared to him and opened his eyes, washing them clean in the waters of Jordan."⁶

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⁵ *Festal Menaion*, The Holy Theophany of the Lord, Mattins Canon, Canticle Six, Troparion.

⁶ *Menaion*, Synaxis of St. John the Baptist, Mattins Canon, Ikos.

Returning, finally, to the question of the scientific versus the religious-symbolic apprehension of reality, let us listen to the illuminating contrast that the great Serbian Bishop Nikolai Velimirovich makes between the “analphabetic” nature worshippers and the “alphabetic” spirit worshippers: “With great pains and labor [those who call themselves philosophers and scientists] scarcely go beyond their childlike repetition of the letters that comprise nature. Very seldom, if ever, do they reach and comprehend the actual meaning and significance of those letters, written in nature in the form of things that comprise the visible universe, or in the scenes of happenings and events. A person well trained in reading, however, reads words without even thinking of the letters of which words themselves are composed, and consciously reads them quickly according to their meaning.

“A school teacher labors long and hard until students are able to read words ‘according to their meaning’. Worshippers of nature are but worshippers of the letters that comprise that nature. Though they have grown up, they are but immature children. When asked what the things in nature or happenings and events mean, they look at you wonderingly, like puzzled children, when asked about the meaning of that they had just read.

“Therefore, it may be said that nature worshippers are analphabetic, and spirit worshippers only are alphabetic. To the mind of the former, things and creatures in the natural world represent an ultimate reality, expressed in their forms, colors, functions and relations. While to the mind of the latter things and creatures are only the symbols of a spiritual reality which is the actual meaning and life and justification of those symbols...”⁷

January 8/21, 2013; revised January 8/21, 2016.

⁷ Velimirovich, *The Universe as Symbols and Signs*, South Canaan, Penn.: St. Tikhon’s Seminary Press, 2010, pp. 9-10.

2. THE THOUGHT OF IVAN KIREYEVSKY

The Slavophiles believed that western civilization since the Schism in the eleventh century had created a new kind of man, homo occidentalis. The question, then, was: what were the main characteristics of this new man, and in what did he differ from homo orientalis, the older, original kind of Christian and European, who was now to be found only in Russia and the Balkans? The first clear answer to this question was expounded by Ivan Vasilievich Kireyevsky, a man of thoroughly western education, tastes and habits, who converted to the Orthodox ideal in adult life, becoming a disciple of the Optina Elder Macarius. In his *Reply to Khomiakov* (1839) and *On the Character of European Civilization and Its Relationship to Russian Civilization* (1852), he gave his own answer to the question of the cause of the appearance of homo occidentalis - the growth of western *rationalism*.

The beginning of Kireyevsky's spiritual emancipation may be said to date to 1829, when, as Fr. Sergius Chetverikov writes, he "appeared for the first time in the field of literature with an article about Pushkin, which revealed a remarkably clear understanding of the works of this poet. In this article he already expressed doubt in the absolute truth of German philosophy and pointed out the pressing need for the development of a school of original Russian scientific thought. 'German philosophy cannot take root in us. Our philosophy must arise from current questions, from the prevailing interest of *our* people and their individual ways of life.' But at the same time we must not reject the experience of Western European thought. 'The crown of European enlightenment served as the cradle of our education. It was born when the other states had already completed the cycle of their intellectual development; and where they finished, there we began. Like a young sister in a large harmonious family, Russia was enriched by the experience of her older brothers and sisters prior to her entry into the world.'"⁸

"Europe," wrote Kireyevsky in 1830, "now presents an image of stupor. Both political and moral development have come to an end in her." Only two peoples "from the whole of enlightened humanity... are not taking part in the general falling asleep; two peoples, young and fresh, are flourishing with hope: these are the United States and our fatherland."⁹

At this stage the full uniqueness and saving truth of Orthodoxy was perhaps not yet fully revealed to Kireyevsky. The decisive moment in his conversion, as Nina Lazareva writes, was his marriage to Natalya Petrovna Arbeneva in 1834: "The beginning of his family life was for Ivan Vasilievich also the beginning of the transformation of his inner world, the beginning of his coming out of that

⁸ Chetverikov, *Elder Ambrose of Optina*, Platina, CA: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 1997, pp. 124-125.

⁹ Kireyevsky, *Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenij*, Moscow, 1861, vol. 2, p. 237; vol. 1, pp. 45, 46. Quoted in S.V. Khatunev, "Problema 'Rossia-Evropa' vo vzgliadiakh K.N. Leontieva (60-e gg. XIX veka)" (The Russia-Europe' problem in the views of K.N. Leontiev (60s of the 19th century), *Voprosy Istorii*, 3/2006, p. 117.

dead-end in which his former rationalistic world-view had led him. The difference between the whole structure of Natalya Petrovna's life, educated as she had been in the rules of strict piety, and that of Ivan Vasilievich, who had passed his days and nights in tobacco-filled rooms reading and discussing the latest philosophical works, could not fail to wound both of them.

“In the note written by A.I. Koshelev from the words of N.P. Kireyevsky and entitled ‘The Story of Ivan Vasilievich’s Conversion’, we read: ‘In the first period after their marriage her fulfilment of our Church rites and customs made an unpleasant impression on him, but from the tolerance and delicacy that was natural to him he did not hinder her in this at all. She on her side was still more sorrowfully struck by his lack of faith and complete neglect of all the customs of the Orthodox Church. They had conversations which ended with it being decided that he would not hinder her in the fulfilment of her obligations, and he would be free in his actions, but he promised in her presence not to blaspheme and by all means to cut short the conversations of his friends that were unpleasant to her. In the second year of their marriage he asked his wife to read Cousin. She willingly did this, but when he began to ask her for her opinion of this book, she said that there was much good in it, but that she had not found anything new, for in the works of the Holy Fathers it was all expounded in a much profounder and more satisfying way. He laughed and was quiet. He began to ask his wife to read Voltaire with him. She told him that she was ready to read any serious book that he might suggest to her, but she disliked mockery and every kind of blasphemy and she could neither hear nor read them. Then after some time they began to read Schelling together, and when great, radiant thoughts stopped them and I.V. Kireyevsky demanded wonderment from his wife, she first said that she knew these thoughts from the works of the Holy Fathers. She often pointed them out to him in the books of the Holy Fathers, which forced Ivan Vasilievich to read whole pages sometimes. It was unpleasant for him to recognise that there really was much in the Holy Fathers that he had admired in Schelling. He did not like to admit this, but secretly he took his wife’s books and read them with interest.’

“At that time the works of the Holy Fathers were hardly published in Russia, lovers of spiritual literature transcribed them themselves or for small sums of money they engaged transcribers. Natalya Petrovna made notes from those books which her spiritual father, Hieromonk Philaret (Puliashkin) gave her to read. In his time he had laboured much to prepare the Slavonic *Philokalia* for publication. These were works of the Holy Fathers collected by St. Paisius Velichkovsky which contained instructions on mental prayer, that is, on the cleansing of the soul from passions, on the means to attaining this and in particular on the union of the mind and the heart in the Jesus prayer. In 1836 Ivan Vasilyevich for the first time read the works of St. Isaac the Syrian, who was called the teacher of silence. Thus the philosopher came into contact with the hitherto unknown to him, centuries-old Orthodox enlightenment, which always witnessed to the True Light, our Lord Jesus Christ.

“Acquaintance with the Novospassky monk Philaret, conversations with the holy elder and the reading of various works of the Holy Fathers gave him pleasure and drew him to the side of piety. He went to see Fr. Philaret, but each time as it were unwillingly. It was evident that he wanted to go to him, but forcing was always necessary.’ This continued until, according to the Providence of God, and thanks to the clairvoyance of Elder Philaret and his knowledge of the human soul, a truly wondrous event took place: ‘I.V. Kireyevsky in the past never wore a cross round his neck. His wife had more than once asked him to do that, but Ivan Vasilyevich had not replied. Finally, he told her once that he would put on a cross if it would be sent to him by Fr. Philaret, whose mind and piety he warmly admired. Natalya Petrovna went to Fr. Philaret and communicated this to him. The elder made the sign of the cross, took it off his neck and said to Natalya Petrovna: ‘Let this be to Ivan Vasilyevich for salvation.’

“When Natalya Petrovna went home, Ivan Vasilyevich on meeting her said: ‘Well, what did Fr. Philaret say?’ She took out the cross and gave it to Ivan Vasilyevich. Ivan Vasilyevich asked her: ‘What is this cross?’ Natalya Petrovna said to him that Fr. Philaret had taken it off himself and said: let this be to him for salvation. Ivan Vasilyevich fell on his knees and said: ‘Well, now I expect salvation for my soul, for in my mind I had determined: if Fr. Philaret takes off his cross and sends it to me, then it will be clear that God is calling me to salvation.’ From that moment a decisive turnaround in the thoughts and feelings of Ivan Vasilyevich was evident.”¹⁰

Soon Kireyevsky met the famous Optina Elder Macarius, with whom he started the series of Optina translations of the works of the Holy Fathers into Russian. This, as well as being of great importance in itself, marked the beginning of the return of a part of the educated classes to a more than nominal membership of the Church. It was on the basis of the teaching of the Holy Fathers that Kireyevsky determined to build a philosophy that would engage with the problems felt by the Russian intelligentsia of his day and provide them with true enlightenment.

A very important element in this philosophy would be a correct “placing” of Russia in relation to Western Europe.

According to Kireyevsky, “three elements lie at the foundation of European [i.e. Western European] education: Roman Christianity, the world of the uneducated barbarians who destroyed the [western] Roman empire, and the classical world of ancient paganism.

“This classical world of ancient paganism, which did not enter into the inheritance of Russia, essentially constitutes the triumph of the formal reason of man over everything that is inside and within him – pure, naked reason,

¹⁰ Lazareva, “Zhizneopisanie” (“Biography”), introduction to I.V. Kireyevsky, *Razum na puti k Istine (Reason on the Path to Truth)*, Moscow: “Pravilo very”, 2002, pp. XXXVI- XXXIX.

based on itself, recognizing nothing higher than or outside itself and appearing in two forms – the form of formal abstraction and the form of abstract sensuality. Classicism's influence on European education had to correspond to this same character.

“Whether it was because Christians in the West gave themselves up unlawfully to the influence of the classical world, or because heresy accidentally united itself with paganism, the Roman Church differs in its deviation from the Eastern only in that same triumph of rationalism over Tradition, of external ratiocination over inner spiritual reason. Thus it was in consequence of this external syllogism drawn out of the concept of the Divine equality of the Father and the Son [the Filioque] that the dogma of the Trinity was changed in opposition to spiritual sense and Tradition. Similarly, in consequence of another syllogism, the pope became the head of the Church in place of Jesus Christ. They tried to demonstrate the existence of God with a syllogism; the whole unity of the faith rested on syllogistic scholasticism; the Inquisition, Jesuitism – in a word, all the particularities of Catholicism, developed by virtue of the same formal process of reason, so that Protestantism itself, which the Catholics reproach for its rationalism, proceeded directly from the rationalism of Catholicism...

“Thus rationalism was both an extra element in the education of Europe at the beginning and is now an exclusive characteristic of the European enlightenment and way of life. This will be still clearer if we compare the basic principles of the public and private way of life of the West with the basic principles of the same public and private way of life which, if it had not developed completely, was at least clearly indicated in old Russia, when she was under the direct influence of pure Christianity, without any admixture from the pagan world.

“The whole private and public way of life of the West is founded on the concept of individual, separate independence, which presupposes individual isolation. Hence the sacredness of formal relationships; the sacredness of property and conditional decrees is more important than the personality. Every individual is a private person; a knight, prince or city *within his or its rights* is an autocratic, unlimited personage that gives laws to itself. The first step of each personage into society is to surround himself with a fortress from the depths of which he enters into negotiations with others and other independent powers.

“... I was speaking about the difference between enlightenment in Russia and in the West. Our educative principle consisted in our Church. There, however, together with Christianity, the still fruitful remnants of the ancient pagan world continued to act on the development of enlightenment. The very Christianity of the West, in separation from the Universal Church, accepted into itself the seeds of that principle which constituted the general colouring of the whole development of Greco-Roman culture: the principle of rationalism.

For that reason the character of European education differs by virtue of an excess of rationalism.

“However, this excess appeared only later, when logical development had already overwhelmed Christianity, so to speak. But at the beginning rationalism, as I said, appeared only in embryo. The Roman Church separated from the Eastern because it changed certain dogmas existing in the *Tradition* of the whole of Christianity into others *by deduction*. She spread other dogmas by means of the same logical process, again in opposition to Tradition and the spirit of the Universal Church. Thus a logical belief lay at the very lowest base of Catholicism. But the first action of rationalism was limited to this at the beginning. The inner and outer construction of the Church, which had been completed earlier in another spirit, continued to exist without obvious changes until the whole unity of the ecclesiastical teaching passed into the consciousness of the thinking part of the clergy. This was completed in the philosophy of scholasticism, which, by reason of the logical principle at the very foundation of the Church, could not reconcile the contradictions of faith and reason in any other way than by means of syllogism, which thereby became the first condition of every belief. At first, naturally, this same syllogism tried to demonstrate the truth of faith against reason and subdue reason to faith by means of rational arguments. But this faith, logically proved and logically opposed to reason, was no longer a living, but a formal faith, not faith as such, but only the logical rejection of reason. Therefore during this period of the scholastic development of Catholicism, precisely by reason of its rationality, the Western church becomes an enemy of reason, its oppressive, murderous, desperate enemy. But, taken to its extreme, as the continuation of this same logical process, this absolute annihilation of reason produced the well-known opposite effect, the consequences of which constitute the character of the present enlightenment. That is what I meant when I spoke of the rational element of Catholicism.

“Christianity in the East knew neither this struggle of faith against reason, nor this triumph of reason over faith. Therefore its influence on enlightenment was dissimilar to that of Catholicism.

“When examining the social construction of old Russia, we find many differences from the West, and first of all: the formation of society into so-called mirs [communes]. Private, personal idiosyncrasy, the basis of western development, was as little known among us as was social autocracy. A man belonged to the mir, and the mir to him. Agricultural property, the fount of personal rights in the West, belonged with us to society. A person had the rights of ownership to the extent that entered into the membership of society.

“But this society was not autonomous and could not order itself, or itself acquire laws for itself, because it was not separated from other similar communities that were ruled by uniform custom. The innumerable multitude of these small communes, which constituted Russia, was all covered with a net of churches, monasteries and the remote dwellings of hermits, whence there

spread everywhere identical concepts of the relationship between social matters and personal matters. These concepts little by little were bound to pass over into a general conviction, conviction – into custom, whose place was taken by law, which established throughout the whole space of the lands subject to our Church one thought, one point of view, one aim, one order of life. This universal uniformity of custom was probably one of the reasons for its amazing strength, which has preserved its living remnants even to our time, in spite of all the opposition of destructive influences which, in the course of two hundred years, strove to introduce new principles in their place.

“As a result of these strong, uniform and universal customs, it was impossible for there to be any change in the social order that was not in agreement with the order of the whole. Every person’s family relationships were defined, first of all, by his birth; but in the same predetermined order the family was subject to the commune, and the wider commune to the assembly, the assembly to the *veche*, and so on, whence all the private circles came together in one centre, in one Orthodox Church. No personal reasoning, no artificial agreement could found any new order, think up new rights and privileges. Even the very word *right* was unknown among us in its western sense, but signified only justice, righteousness. Therefore no power could be given to any person or class, nor could any right be accorded, for righteousness and justice cannot be sold or taken, but exist in themselves independently of conditional relationships. In the West, by contrast, all social relationships are founded on *convention* or strive to attain this artificial basis. *Outside* convention there are no correct relationships, but only arbitrariness, which in the governing class is called *autonomy*, in the governed – *freedom*. But in both the one and the other case this arbitrariness demonstrates not the development of the inner life, but the development of the external, formal life. All social forces, interests and rights exist there in separation, each in itself, and they are united not by a normal law, but either accidentally or by an artificial agreement. In the first case material force triumphs, in the second – the sum of individual reasonings. But material force, material dominance, a material majority, the sum of individual reasonings in essence constitute one principle only at different moments of their development. Therefore *the social contract* is not the invention of the encyclopaedists, but a real ideal to which all the western societies strove unconsciously, and now consciously, under the influence of the rational element, which outweighs the Christian element.”¹¹

“Private and social life in the West,’ Kireyevsky wrote, ‘are based on the concept of an individual and separate independence that presupposes the isolation of the individual. Hence the external formal relations of private property and all types of legal conventions are sacred and of greater importance than human beings”.

¹¹ Kireyevsky, “V otvet A.S. Khomiakovu” (In Reply to A.S. Khomiakov), *Razum na puti k Istine* (Reason on the Path to Truth), Moscow, 2002, pp. 6-12.

“Only one serious thing was left to man, and that was industry. For him the reality of being survived only in his physical person. Industry rules the world without faith or poetry. In our times it unites and divides people. It determines one’s fatherland, it delineates classes, it lies at the base of state structures, it moves nations, it declares war, makes peace, changes mores, gives direction to science, and determines the character of culture. Men bow down before it and erect temples to it. It is the real deity in which people sincerely believe and to which they submit. Unselfish activity has become inconceivable; it has acquired the same significance in the contemporary world as chivalry had in the time of Cervantes.”¹²

This long and tragic development had its roots, according to Kireyevsky, in the falling away of the Roman Church. "In the ninth century the western Church showed within itself the inevitable seed of the Reformation, which placed this same Church before the judgement seat of the same logical reason which the Roman Church had itself exalted... A thinking man could already see Luther behind Pope Nicolas I just as... a thinking man of the 16th century could foresee behind Luther the coming of 19th century liberal Protestantism..."¹³

According to Kireyevsky, just as in a marriage separation or divorce takes place when one partner asserts his or her self against the other, so in the Church schisms and heresies take place when one party asserts itself over against Catholic unity. In the early, undivided Church “each patriarchate, each tribe, each country in the Christian world preserved its own characteristic features, while at the same time participating in the common unity of the whole Church.”¹⁴

A patriarchate or country fell away from that unity only if it introduced heresy, that is, a teaching contrary to the Catholic understanding of the Church. The Roman patriarchate fell away from the Unity and Catholicity of the Church through an unbalanced, self-willed development of its own particular strength, the logical development of concepts, by introducing the Filioque into the Creed in defiance of the theological consciousness of the Church as a whole. But it fell away from that Unity and Catholicity in another way, by preaching a heresy *about* Unity and Catholicity. For the Popes taught that *the Church, in order to be Catholic, must be first and above all Roman* - and “Roman” not in the sense employed by the Greeks when they called themselves Roman, that is, belonging to the Christian Roman Empire and including both Italians and Greeks and people of many nationalities. The Popes now understood “Rome”, “the Roman Church” and “the Roman Faith” in a different, particularist, anti-Catholic sense - that is, “Roman” as opposed to “Greek”, “the Roman Church” as opposed to “the Greek Church”, “the Roman Faith” as opposed to, and something different from and inherently superior to, “the Greek Church”.

¹² Kireyevsky, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenij (Complete Works)*, Moscow, 1911, vol. I, pp. 113, 246; quoted in Walicki, *op. cit.*, pp. 94, 95.

¹³ Kireyevsky, quoted by Fr. Alexey Young, *A Man is His Faith: Ivan Kireyevsky and Orthodox Christianity*, London: St. George Information Service, 1980.

¹⁴ Kireyevsky, in Young, *op. cit.*

From this time that the Roman Church ceased to be a part of the Catholic Church, having trampled on the dogma of Catholicity. Instead she became the anti-Catholic, or Romanist, or Latin, or Papist church.

“Christianity penetrated the minds of the western peoples through the teaching of the Roman Church alone – in Russia it was kindled on the candle-stands of the whole Orthodox Church; theology in the West acquired a ratiocinative-abstract character – in the Orthodox world it preserved an inner wholeness of spirit; there there was a division in the powers of the reason – here a striving for their living unity; there: the movement of the mind towards the truth by means of a logical chain of concepts – here: a striving for it by means of an inner exaltation of self-consciousness towards wholeness of heart and concentration of reason; there: a searching for external, dead unity – here: a striving for inner, living unity; there the Church was confused with the State, uniting spiritual power with secular power and pouring ecclesiastical and worldly significance into one institution of a mixed character – in Russia it remained unmixed with worldly aims and institution; there: scholastic and juridical universities – in ancient Russia: prayer-filled monasteries concentrating higher knowledge in themselves; there: a rationalist and scholastic study of the higher truths – here: a striving for their living and integral assimilation; there: a mutual growing together of pagan and Christian education – here: a constant striving for the purification of truth; there: statehood arising out of forcible conquest – here: out of the natural development of the people’s everyday life, penetrated by the unity of its basic conviction; there: a hostile walling-off of classes – in ancient Russia their unanimous union while preserving natural differences; there: the artificial connection of knights’ castles with what belonged to them constituted separate states – here: the agreement of the whole land spiritually expresses its undivided unity; there: agrarian property is the first basis of civil relationships – here: property is only an accidental expression of personal relationships; there: formal-logical legality – here: legality proceeding from everyday life; there: the inclination of law towards external justice – here: preference for inner justice; there: jurisprudence strives towards a logical codex – here: instead of an external connectedness of form with form, it seeks the inner connection of lawful conviction with convictions of faith and everyday life; there improvements were always accomplished by violent changes – here by a harmonious, natural growth; there: the agitation of the party spirit – here: the unshakeability of basic conviction; there: the pursuit of fashion – here: constancy of everyday life; there: the instability of personal self-rule – here: the strength of familial and social links; there: the foppishness of luxury and the artificiality of life – here: the simplicity of vital needs and the exuberance of moral courage; there: tender dreaminess – here: the healthy integrity of rational forces; there: inner anxiety of spirit accompanied by rational conviction of one’s moral perfection – among the Russians: profound quietness and the calm of inner self-consciousness combined with constant lack of trust of oneself and the unlimited demands of moral perfection – in a word, there: disunity of spirit, disunity of thoughts, disunity of sciences, disunity of state, disunity of classes, disunity of society, disunity of family rights and obligations, disunity of the

whole unity and of all the separate forms of human existence, social and personal – in Russia, by contrast, mainly a striving for integrity of everyday existence both inner and outer, social and personal, speculative and practical, aesthetic and moral. Therefore if what we have said above is just, *disunity* and *integrity*, *rationalism* [*rassudochnost'*] and *reason* [*razumnost'*] will be the final expression of West European and Russian education."¹⁵

We may wonder whether the contrast between East and West has been drawn too sharply, too tidily here. But there can be no doubt that Kireyevsky has unerringly pointed to the main lines of bifurcation between the development of the Orthodox East and the Catholic-Protestant West. The explanation lies in his spiritual development. "Having himself been a son of the West and gone to study with the most advanced philosophers," writes Fr. Seraphim Rose, 'Kireyevsky was thoroughly penetrated with the Western spirit and then became thoroughly converted to Orthodoxy. Therefore he saw that these two things cannot be put together. He wanted to find out why they were different and what was the answer in one's soul, what one had to choose...'"¹⁶

An important original part of Kireyevsky's thought was his teaching on the Russian Orthodox Autocracy. Nicholas I's reign had invented the slogan: Orthodoxy, Autocracy, and Nationality (*Narodnost'*) was coming more and more under attack from the westerners as the century wore on. However, with the exception of Kireyevsky, the Slavophiles had little to say about Autocracy. As Lev Tikhomirov writes, "the greatest merit of the Slavophiles consisted not so much in their working out of a *political* teaching, as in establishing the *social* and *psychological* bases of public life."¹⁷ They were not opposed to the autocracy; but the emphasis of their thought, especially Khomiakov's, was on *the people* rather than on the autocracy.¹⁸

Thus Khomiakov wrote: "The people transferred to the Emperor all the power with which it itself was endowed in all its forms. The sovereign became the head of the people in Church matters as well as in matters of State administration. The people could not transfer to its Emperor rights that it did not itself have. It had from the beginning a voice in the election of its bishops, and this voice it could transfer to its Emperor. It had the right, or more precisely the obligation to watch that the decisions of its pastors and their councils were carried out – this right it could entrust to its chosen one and his successors. It had the right to defend its faith against every hostile attack upon it, - this right

¹⁵ Kireyevsky, "O kharaktere prosveschenia Evropy i o ego otnoshenii k prosvescheniu Rossii" (On the Character of the Enlightenment of Europe and its Relationship to the Enlightenment of Russia), in *Razum na puti k istine*, *op. cit.*, pp. 207-209.

¹⁶ Monk Damascene Christenson, *Not of this World: The Life and Teaching of Fr. Seraphim Rose*, Forestville, Ca.: Fr. Seraphim Rose Foundation, 1993, pp. 589-590

¹⁷ Tikhomirov, *Monarkhicheskaia Gosudarstvennost'*, St. Petersburg, 1992, p. 310.

¹⁸ Florovsky writes that the Slavophiles "opposed their 'socialism' to the statism of West European thought, both in its absolutist-monarchist and in its constitutional-democratic varieties" ("Vechnoe i prekhodiashee v uchenii russkikh slavianofilov" (The Eternal and the Passing in the Teaching of the Russian Slavophiles), in *Vera i Kul'tura* (Faith and Culture), St. Petersburg, 2002, p. 95).

it could also transfer to its Sovereign. But the Church people did not have any power in questions of dogmatic teaching, and general Church piety – and for that reason it could not transfer such power to its Emperor.”

Here we see the myth of an early pact between the Tsar and the people. For this was what the Slavophiles were above all concerned to emphasize: that the Tsar is not separated from his people, that Tsar and people form one harmonious whole and have a single ideal.

Khomiakov was also concerned to emphasize that it was not the Tsar who ruled the Russian Orthodox Church, as the Fundamental Laws of the Russian Empire might have suggested. “‘It is true,’ he says, ‘the expression “the head of the local church” has been used in the Laws of the Empire, but in a totally different sense than it is interpreted in other countries’ (II, 351). The Russian Emperor has no rights of priesthood, he has no claims to infallibility or ‘to any authority in matters of faith or even of church discipline’. He signs the decisions of the Holy Synod, but this right of proclaiming laws and putting them into execution is not the same as the right to formulate ecclesiastical laws. The Tsar has influence with regard to the appointment of bishops and members of the Synod, but it should be observed that such dependence upon secular power is frequently met with in many Catholic countries as well. In some of the Protestant states it is even greater (II, 36-38, 208).”¹⁹

“The whole pathos of Slavophilism,” writes Bishop Dionysius (Alferov), “lay in ‘sobornost’, ‘zemstvo’, in ‘the popular character of the monarchy, and not in its service as ‘he who restrains [the coming of the Antichrist]’. Byzantium, in which there were neither Zemskie Sobory nor self-government of the land, elicited only irritation in them and was used by them to put in the shade the free ‘Slavic element’. The Russian Tsar for the Slavophiles was first of all ‘the people’s Tsar’, and not the Tsar of the Third Rome. According to the witness of Konstantin Leontiev, Tsar Nicholas Pavlovich himself noticed that under the Slavophiles’ Russian caftan there stuck out the trousers of the most vulgar European democracy and liberalism.”²⁰

This estimate is probably least true in relation to Kireyevsky, although of all the Slavophiles he had the most problems with the Tsarist censor. At one point he was required to give an assurance to the minister of popular enlightenment that in his thinking he did not “separate the Tsar from Russia”. Offended by the very suggestion, Kireyevsky proceeded to give one of the earliest and best justifications of the Autocracy in post-Petrine Russian history... He began from the fact that “the Russian man loves his Tsar. This reality cannot be doubted, because everyone can see and feel it. But love for the Tsar, like every love, can be true and false, good and bad – I am not speaking about feigned love. False love is that which loves in the Tsar only one’s advantage; this love is base,

¹⁹ Nikolai Lossky, *A History of Russian Philosophy*, London: Allen & Unwin, 1950, pp. 35-36.

²⁰ Alferov, “Ob Uderzhanii i Simfonii” (On Restraining and Symphony), <http://www.monarhist-spb.narod.ru/D-ST/Dionisy-1.htm>, p. 11.

harmful and, in dangerous moments, can turn to treachery. True love for the Tsar is united in one indivisible feeling with love for the Fatherland, for lawfulness and for the Holy Orthodox Church. Therefore this love can be magnanimous. And how can one separate in this matter love for the Tsar from the law, the Fatherland and the Church? The law is the will of the Tsar, proclaimed before the whole people; the Fatherland is the best love of his heart; the Holy Orthodox Church is his highest link with the people, it is the most essential basis of his power, the reason for the people's trust in him, the combination of his conscience with the Fatherland, the living junction of the mutual sympathy of the Tsar and the people, the basis of their common prosperity, the source of the blessing of God on him and on the Fatherland.

“But to love the Tsar separately from Russia means to love an external force, a chance power, but not the Russian Tsar: that is how the Old Ritualist schismatics and Balts love him, who were ready to serve Napoleon with the same devotion when they considered him stronger than Alexander. To love the Tsar and not to venerate the laws, or to break the laws given or confirmed by him under the cover of his trust, under the protection of his power, is to be his enemy under the mask of zeal, it is to undermine his might at the root, to destroy the Fatherland's love for him, to separate the people's concept of him from their concept of justice, order and general well-being – in a word, it is to separate the Tsar in the heart of the people from the very reasons for which Russia wishes to have a Tsar, from those good things in the hope of which she so highly venerates him. Finally, to love him without any relation to the Holy Church as a powerful Tsar, but not as the Orthodox Tsar, is to think that his rule is not the service of God and His Holy Church, but only the rule of the State for secular aims; it is to think that the advantage of the State can be separated from the advantage of Orthodoxy, or even that the Orthodox Church is a means, and not the end of the people's existence as a whole, that the Holy Church can be sometimes a hindrance and at other times a useful instrument for the Tsar's power. This is the love of a slave, and not that of a faithful subject; it is Austrian love, not Russian; this love for the Tsar is treason before Russia, and for the Tsar himself it is profoundly harmful, even if sometimes seems convenient. Every counsel he receives from such a love bears within it a secret poison that eats away at the very living links that bind him with the Fatherland. For Orthodoxy is the soul of Russia, the root of the whole of her moral existence, the source of her might and strength, the standard gathering all the different kinds of feelings of her people into one stronghold, the earnest of all her hopes for the future, the treasury of the best memories of the past, her ruling object of worship, her heartfelt love. The people venerates the Tsar as the Church's support; and is so boundlessly devoted to him because it does not separate the Church from the Fatherland. All its trust in the Tsar is based on feeling for the Church. It sees in him a faithful director in State affairs only because it knows that he is a brother in the Church, who together with it serves her as the sincere son of the same mother and therefore can be a reliable shield of her external prosperity and independence...

“He who has not despaired of the destiny of his Fatherland cannot separate love for it from sincere devotion to Orthodoxy. And he who is Orthodox in his convictions cannot not love Russia, as the God-chosen vessel of His Holy Church on earth. Faith in the Church of God and love for Orthodox Russia are neither divided nor distinguished in the soul of the true Russian. Therefore a man holding to another confession cannot love the Russian Tsar except with a love that is harmful for the Tsar and for Russia, a love whose influence of necessity must strive to destroy precisely that which constitutes the very first condition of the mutual love of the Tsar and Russia, the basis of his correct and beneficent rule and the condition of her correct and beneficent construction.

“Therefore to wish that the Russian government should cease to have the spirit and bear the character of an Orthodox government, but be completely indifferent to the confessions, accepting the spirit of so-called common Christianity, which does not belong to any particular Church and was thought up recently by some unbelieving philosophers and half-believing Protestants – to wish for this would signify for the present time the tearing up of all bonds of love and trust between the government and the people, and for the future, – that is, if the government were to hide its indifference to Orthodoxy until it educates the people in the same coldness to its Church, – it would produce the complete destruction of the whole fortress of Russia and the annihilation of the whole of her world significance. For for him who knows Russia and her Orthodox Faith, there can be no doubt that she grew up on it and became strong by it, since by it alone is she strong and prosperous.”²¹

In a critical review of an article by the Protestant Pastor Wiener, who was defending the principle of complete separation of Church and State and complete tolerance, Kireyevsky wrote: “The author says very justly that in most states where there is a dominant religion, the government uses it as a means for its own private ends and under the excuse of protecting it oppresses it. But this happens *not because* there is a dominant faith in the state, but, on the contrary, because the dominant faith of the people *is not dominant* in the state apparatus. This unfortunate relationship takes place when, as a consequence of some chance historical circumstances, the rift opens up between the convictions of the people and of the government. Then the faith of the people is used as a means, but not for long. One of three things must unfailingly happen: either the people wavers in its faith and then the whole state apparatus wavers, as we see in the West; or the government attains a correct self-knowledge and sincerely converts to the faith of the people, as we hope; or the people sees that it is being deceived, as we fear.

“But what are the normal, desirable relations between the Church and the State? The state must not agree with the Church so as to search out and persecute heretics and force them to believe (this is contrary to the spirit of Christianity and has a counter-productive effect, and harms the state itself

²¹ Kireyevsky, “Ob otnoshenii k tsarskoj vlasti” (On the relationship to Tsarist power), in *Razum na puti k istine*, op. cit., pp. 51-53, 62.

almost as much as the Church); but it must agree with the Church so as to place as the main purpose of its existence to be penetrated constantly, more and more, with the spirit of the Church and not only not look on the Church as a means to its own most fitting existence, but, on the contrary, see in its own existence only a means for the fullest and most fitting installation of the Church of God on earth.

“The State is a construction of society having as its aim earthly, temporal life. The Church is a construction of the same society having as its aim heavenly, eternal life. If society understands its life in such a way that in it the temporal must serve the eternal, the state apparatus of this society must also serve the Church. But if society understands its life in such a way that in it earthly relationships carry on by themselves, and spiritual relations by themselves, then the state in such a society must be separated from the Church. But such a society will consist not of Christians, but of unbelievers, or, at any rate, of mixed faiths and convictions. Such a state cannot make claims to a harmonious, normal development. The whole of its dignity must be limited by a *negative* character. But there where the people is bound inwardly, by identical convictions of faith, there it has the right to wish and demand that both its external bonds – familial, social and state – should be in agreement with its religious inspirations, and that its government should be penetrated by the same spirit. To act in hostility to this spirit means to act in hostility to the people itself, even if these actions afford it some earthly advantages.”²²

“Of special interest is the explanatory note which the young [I.S.] Aksakov was forced to present in reply to the questions of the Third Department in 1849. Some passages in this reply were underlined by Tsar Nicholas Pavlovich, and objections against them were made by the Tsar in his own hand. Opposite the place where Aksakov writes about ‘the heartfelt sympathy of the so-called Slavophiles for the western Slavs and in general for the situation of their co-religionist and consanguineous brothers’, the Emperor made the following comment: ‘Under the guise of sympathy for the Slavic tribes supposedly oppressed in other states, there is hidden the criminal thought of a rebellion against the lawful authority of neighbouring and in part allied states, and of a *general union they expect to attain not through the will of God*’

“By these ‘states’ we must understand, of course, first of all Austria, and then in part Turkey... Nicholas Pavlovich recognized *himself* to have the right of exerting pressure on the Sultan in favour of his co-religionists, the right to war with him and even subject him to himself, but did not recognize the right of the subjects of the Sultan to carry out their own self-willed liberation....

“Nicholas Pavlovich understood *at that time* that liberationist politics beyond the bounds of one’s own state is something that, while useful at the

²² Kireyevsky, in L.A. Tikhomirov, “I.V. Kireyevsky”, *Kritika Demokratii* (A Critique of Democracy), Moscow, 1997, pp. 520-521.

beginning, is in essence extremely dangerous and can, with the slightest incaution, turn onto the head of the liberator.

“He understood half a century ago that of which it is impossible to convince many of us even now, in spite of all the crude evidence of events, in spite of the fact that everything is simply ‘bursting at the seams’ both in old Europe and in the Orthodox countries of the East!

“Emperor Nicholas was called by Divine Providence to hold back for a time the general disintegration which even now nobody knows how to stop...

“...Tsar Nicholas Pavlovich did not live to the end of the 19th century, when ‘reaction’ is beginning little by little to acquire for itself theoretical justifications and foundations. However, he felt by his political instinct not only that the West was on the path to a corruption which could be contagious for us, too, but also that our Russia herself under him *had attained its cultural-state apogee, after which living state construction would come to an end and on which it was necessary to stop as far as possible and for as long as possible, not fearing even a certain stagnation.* And all his major political actions and sympathies are explained by this conservative instinct of genius: his revulsion from the liberal monarchy of Louis Philippe; his defence of the ‘crafty’, *but necessary for some time to come, perhaps, Austria;* the Hungarian war; his helping of the Sultan against Mehmed Ali; his good disposition toward England, which was still at that time aristocratic and conservative; his desire that the Eastern Christians should not of their own will rise up against the lawful and autocratic Turkish government; and finally, his disillusionment in emancipated Greece, which was expressed in his words (legendary or historical, it doesn’t matter): ‘I will not give an inch of land to this demagogic people.’”²³

²³ Leontiev, “Plody natsional’nykh dvizhenij”, *Vostok, Rossia i Slaviansstvo* (The East, Russia and Slavdom), Moscow, 1996, pp. 542, 543-544, 545, 545-546.

3. DOSTOYEVSKY AND LEONTIEV ON THE CHURCH

In 1881 Dostoyevsky delivered his famous "Pushkin Speech", which delighted many of Russia's intelligenty. But many also mocked it. And the famous former diplomat and disciple of the Optina Elders, Constantine Leontiev, criticised it more seriously. He was scandalized by the lack of mention in the Speech of *the Church*. Igor Volgin writes that "at the end of the Pushkin festival [the Over-Procurator of the Holy Synod, Constantine] Pobedonostev in a restrained way, without going into details, congratulated Dostoyevsky on his success. And then immediately after his congratulations he sent him 'Warsaw Diary' with an article by Constantine Leontiev. This article was angry and crushing. C. Leontiev not only annihilated the Speech point by point from the point of view of his ascetic... Christianity, but compared it directly with another public speech that had taken place at almost the same time as the Moscow festivities, in Yaroslavl diocese at a graduation ceremony in a school for the daughters of clergymen. 'In the speech of Mr. Pobedonostev (the speaker was precisely him - I.V.),' writes Leontiev, 'Christ is known in no other way that through the Church: "love the Church first of all". In the speech of Mr. Dostoyevsky Christ... is so accessible to each of us in bypassing the Church, that we consider that we have the right... to ascribe to the Saviour promises that He never uttered concerning "the universal brotherhood of the peoples", "general peace" and "harmony"..."²⁴ Leontiev had written much about the invasion of the twin spirits of liberal cosmopolitanism and nationalism into the Orthodox world. So when he wrote that Dostoyevsky "extracted out of the spirit of Pushkin's genius the prophetic thought of the 'cosmopolitan' mission of the Slavs"²⁵, it is with scarcely concealed irony. This irony becomes crushing and without any concealment when he spoke about waiting for "the fulfilment of the prophecy of Dostoyevsky, 'until the Slavs teach the whole of humanity this pan-human love', which neither the Holy Fathers nor the Apostles nor the Divine Redeemer Himself was able to confirm absolutely in the hearts of men".²⁶

But was he being fair? Dostoyevsky was not looking to the fusion of the races into one liberal-ecumenist conglomerate, but to their union in spirit and true brotherhood through the adoption of the Orthodox faith. Nor was he a chauvinist, but simply believed that the Russian people was the bearer of a truly universal content, the Orthodox Christian Gospel, which it would one day preach to all nations; for "this Kingdom of the Gospel shall be preached to all nations, and *then* shall the end come" (Matthew 24.14). As he wrote in another place: "You see, I've seen the Truth. I've seen it, and I know that men can be happy and beautiful without losing the ability to live on earth. I cannot - I

²⁴ Volgin, *Poslednij God Dostoevskogo* (Dostoyevsky's Last Year), Moscow, 1986, pp. 269-270.

²⁵ Leontiev, "G. Katkov i ego vrugi na prazdnike Pushkina" (G. Katkov and his enemies at the Pushkin festivities), *Vostok, Rossia i Slaviansstvo* (The East, Russia and Slavdom), Moscow, 1996, p. 279.

²⁶ Leontiev, *op. cit.*, p. 282.

refuse to believe that wickedness is the normal state of men. And when they laugh at me, it is essentially at that belief of mine."²⁷

Leontiev returned to his criticism of this supposedly romantic, cosmopolitan or "chiliast" faith of Dostoyevsky's in an article entitled "On Universal Love", in which he supported the liberal writer A.D. Gradovsky's claim that Dostoyevsky was ignoring the prophecies of the Antichrist. "The prophecy of the general reconciliation of people in Christ," he wrote, "is not an Orthodox prophecy, but some kind of general-humanitarian [prophecy]. The Church of this world does not promise this, and 'he who disobeys the Church, let him be unto thee as a pagan and a publican'".²⁸

Dostoyevsky himself replied to Gradovsky (and therefore also to Leontiev) as follows: "In your triumphant irony concerning the words in my Speech to the effect that we may, perhaps, utter a word of 'final harmony' in mankind, you seize on the Apocalypse and venomously cry out:

"By a word you will accomplish that which has not been foretold in the Apocalypse! On the contrary, the Apocalypse foretells, not "final agreement", but final "disagreement" with the coming of the Antichrist. But why should the Antichrist come if we utter a word of "final harmony".'

"This is terribly witty, only you have cheated here. You probably have not read the Apocalypse to the end, Mr. Gradovsky. There it is precisely said that during the most powerful disagreements, not the Antichrist, but Christ will come and establish His Kingdom on earth (do you hear, on earth) for 1000 years. But it is added at this point: blessed is he who will take part in the first resurrection, that is, in this Kingdom. Well, it is in that time, perhaps, that we shall utter that word of final harmony which I talk about in my Speech."²⁹

Leontiev counters by more or less accusing Dostoyevsky of the heresy of chiliasm: "It is not the complete and universal triumph of love and general righteousness on *this* earth that is promised to us by Christ and His Apostles; but, on the contrary, something in the nature of a seeming *failure* of the evangelical preaching on the earthly globe, for *the nearness of the end* must coincide with the last attempts to make everyone good Christians... Mr. Dostoyevsky introduces too *rose-coloured* a tint into Christianity in this speech. It is an *innovation* in relation to the Church, which expects nothing especially beneficial from humanity in the future..."³⁰

However, of one thing the author of *The Demons*, that extraordinary prophecy of the collective Antichrist, cannot be accused: of underestimating the evil in man, and of his capacity for self-destruction. The inventor of

²⁷ Dostoyevsky, *The Dream of a Ridiculous Man*.

²⁸ Leontiev, "O vsemirnoj liubvi", op. cit., p. 315.

²⁹ Dostoyevsky, *Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenij* (Complete Works), Leningrad, 1984, vol. 26, p. 323.

³⁰ Leontiev, op. cit., pp. 315, 322.

Stavrogin and Ivan Karamazov did not look at contemporary Russian society with rose-tinted spectacles. Dostoyevsky's faith in a final harmony before the Antichrist did not blind him to present realities. "Europe is on the eve of a general and dreadful collapse. The ant-hill which has been long in the process of construction without the Church and Christ (since the Church, having dimmed its ideal, long ago and everywhere reincarnated itself in the state), with a moral principle shaken loose from its foundation, with everything general and absolute lost - this ant-hill, I say, is utterly undermined. The fourth estate is coming, it knocks at the door, and breaks into it, and if it is not opened to it, it will break the door. The fourth estate cares nothing for the former ideals; it rejects every existing law. It will make no compromises, no concessions; buttresses will not save the edifice. Concessions only provoke, but the fourth estate wants everything. There will come to pass something wholly unsuspected. All these parliamentarisms, all civic theories professed at present, all accumulated riches, banks, sciences, Jews - all these will instantly perish without leaving a trace - save the Jews, who even then will find their way out, so that this work will even be to their advantage."³¹

However, Leontiev accuses him also, and still more seriously, of distorting the basic message of the Gospel. Dostoyevsky's "love" or "humaneness" (*gumannost'*) is closer to the "love" and "humaneness" of Georges Sand than that of Christ. Christian love is complex; it calls on people to love, not simply as such, but "in the name of God", "for the sake of Christ". Dostoyevsky's "love", on the other hand, is "simple and 'autonomous'; step by step and thought by thought it can lead to that dry and self-assured utilitarianism, to that epidemic madness of our time, which we can call, using psychiatric language, *mania democratica progressiva*. The whole point is that we claim *by ourselves*, without the help of God, to be either good or, which is still more mistaken, useful... "True, in all spiritual compositions there is talk of love for people. But in all such books we also find that *the beginning of wisdom* (that is, religious wisdom and the everyday wisdom that *proceeds from it*) is "the fear of God" - a simple, *very simple fear* both of torments beyond the grave and of other punishments, in the form of earthly tortures, sorrows and woes."³²

However, far from espousing a "dry and self-assured utilitarianism", Dostoyevsky was one of its most biting critics, satirising the rationalist-humanist-utilitarian world-view under the images of "the crystal palace" and "the ant-hill". Nor did he in any way share in *mania democratica progressiva*.

Again, Leontiev rejects Dostoyevsky's call to the intelligentsia to humble themselves before the people. "I don't think that the family, public and in general *personal* in the narrow sense qualities of our simple people would be so worthy of imitation. It is hardly necessary to imitate their dryness in relation to the suffering and the sick, their unmerciful cruelty in anger, their drunkenness, the disposition of so many of them to cunning and even thievery... Humility

³¹ Dostoyevsky, *The Diary of a Writer*, Haslemere: Ianmead, 1984, p. 1003.

³² Leontiev, *op. cit.*, p. 324.

before the people... is nothing other than *humility before that same Church which Mr. Pobedonostsev advises us to love.*"³³

However, "one must know," wrote Dostoyevsky, "how to segregate the beauty of the Russian peasant from the layers of barbarity that have accumulated over it... Judge the people not by the abominations they so frequently commit, but by those great and sacred things for which, even in their abominations, they constantly yearn. Not all the people are villains; there are true saints, and what saints they are: they are radiant and illuminate the way for all!... Do not judge the People by what they are, but by what they would like to become."³⁴

"I know that our educated men ridicule me: they refuse even to recognize 'this idea' in the people, pointing to their sins and abominations (for which these men themselves are responsible, having oppressed the people for two centuries); they also emphasize the people's prejudices, their alleged indifference to religion, while some of them imagine that the Russian people are simply atheists. Their great error consists of the fact that they refuse to recognize the existence of the Church as an element in the life of the people. I am not speaking about church buildings, or the clergy. I am now referring to our Russian 'socialism', the ultimate aim of which is the establishment of an oecumenical Church on earth in so far as the earth is capable of embracing it. I am speaking of the unquenchable, inherent thirst in the Russian people for great, universal, brotherly fellowship in the name of Christ. And even if this fellowship, as yet, does not exist, and if that church has not completely materialized, - not in prayers only but in reality - nevertheless the instinct for it and the unquenchable, oftentimes unconscious thirst for it, indubitably dwells in the hearts of the millions of our people.

"Not in communism, not in mechanical forms is the socialism of the Russian people expressed: they believe that they shall be finally saved *through the universal communion in the name of Christ*. This is our Russian socialism! It is the presence in the Russian people of this sublime unifying 'church' idea that you, our European gentlemen, are ridiculing."³⁵

So Dostoyevsky's "theology" was by no means as unecclesiastical as Leontiev and Pobedonostsev thought. The idea of universal communion in the name of Christ may be considered utopian by some, but it is not heretical. And even if some of his phrases were not strictly accurate as ecclesiological theses, it is quite clear that the concepts of "Church" and "people" were much more closely linked in his mind than Leontiev and Pobedonostsev gave him credit for. Indeed, according to Vladimir Soloviev, on a journey to Optina in June, 1878, Dostoyevsky discussed with him his plans for his new novel, *The Brothers*

³³ Leontiev, *op. cit.*, pp. 326, 327.

³⁴ Dostoyevsky, *The Diary of a Writer*; in Orlando Figes, *Crimea*, London: Allen Lane, 2010, p. 331.

³⁵ Dostoyevsky, "The Pushkin Speech", in *The Diary of a Writer*, January, 1881, p. 1029.

Karamazov, and “the Church as a positive social ideal was to constitute the central idea of the new novel or series of novels”.³⁶

In some ways, in fact, Dostoyevsky was more inoculated against Westernism than Leontiev. Thus Leontiev complained to his friend Vasily Rozanov that Dostoyevsky’s views on Papism were too severe. And he was so fixated on the evils of liberalism and cosmopolitanism that he could be called an ecumenist in relation to medieval and contemporary Papism – an error that Dostoyevsky was not prone to. Thus Fr. Georges Florovsky points out that “of particular importance was the fact that Dostoyevsky reduced all his searching for vital righteousness to the reality of the Church. In his dialectics of living images (rather than only ideas), the reality of *sobornost’* becomes especially evident... Constantine Leontiev sharply accused Dostoyevsky of preaching a new, ‘rose-coloured’ Christianity (with reference to his Pushkin speech). ‘All these hopes on earthly love and on earthly peace one can find in the songs of Béranger, and still more in Georges Sand many others. And in this connection not only the name of God, but even the name of Christ was mentioned more than once in the West.’... It is true, in his religious development Dostoyevsky proceeded precisely from these impressions and names mentioned by Leontiev. And he never renounced this ‘humanism’ later because, with all its ambiguity and insufficiency, he divined in it the possibility of becoming truly Christian, and strove to enchurch (*otserkovit’*) them. Dostoyevsky saw only insufficiency where Leontiev found the complete opposite...”³⁷

Dostoyevsky started where his audience were – outside the Church, in the morass of westernism, and tried to build on what was still not completely corrupted in that world-view in order to draw his audience closer to Christ. In this way, he imitated St. Paul in Athens, who, seeing an altar with the inscription “TO THE UNKNOWN GOD”, gave the Athenians the benefit of the doubt, as it were, and proceeded to declare: “He Whom ye ignorantly worship, Him I declare unto you” (*Acts* 17.23). Leontiev would perhaps have objected that the Athenians, as pagans, were certainly not worshipping the True God at this altar. And he would have been right... And yet St. Paul saw the germ of true worship in this inchoate paganism, and, building upon it, led at any rate a few to the truth. This was also the method of Dostoyevsky with his semi-pagan Russian audience. And he, too, made some converts...

Again, if Dostoyevsky emphasized certain aspects of the Christian teaching such as compassionate love and humility more than others such as the fear of God, fasting, sacraments, obedience to authorities, this is not because he did not think the latter were important, but because he knew that his audience, being spiritually infants, could not take this “hard” food, but had to begin on

³⁶ Soloviev, in David Magarshack’s introduction to his Penguin translation of *The Brothers Karamazov*, pp. xi-xii.

³⁷ Florovsky, “Vechnoe i prekhodiaschee v uchenii russkikh slavianofilov” (The eternal and the passing in the teaching of the Russian Slavophiles), in *Vera i Kul’tura (Faith and Culture)*, St. Petersburg, 2002, pp. 300-301.

the “milk” of those teachings which were not so distasteful to their spoilt palates.

And the results proved him right from a pragmatic, missionary point of view; for the unbelieving intelligentsia of several subsequent generations have been stimulated to question their unbelief far more by the writings of Dostoyevsky than by those of Leontiev and Pobedonostev, undoubtedly Orthodox though the latter are.

V.M. Lourié has developed Leontiev’s line of criticism. From Dostoyevsky’s remarks about “that rapture which most of all binds us to [God]”, he concludes that “‘deification’ is interpreted as a psychological and even natural condition – a relationship of man to Christ, in Whom he believes as God. From such ‘deification’ there does not and cannot follow the deification of man himself. On the contrary, man remains as he was, ‘on his own’, and with his own psychology... In such an – unOrthodox – soteriological perspective, the patristic ‘God became man, so that man should become God’ is inevitably exchanged for something like ‘God became man, so that man should become a good man’; ascetic sobriety turns out to be simply inadmissible, and it has to be squeezed out by various means of eliciting ‘that rapture’.”³⁸

And yet what is more significant: the fact that there is a certain inaccuracy in Dostoyevsky’s words from a strictly theological point of view, or the fact that Dostoyevsky talks about deification at all as the ultimate end of man? Surely the latter... Even among the Holy Fathers we find inaccuracies, and if Lourié is right (in his more theological works), the Palamite ideas of uncreated grace and the deification of man through grace had almost been lost even among the monasteries and academies of nineteenth-century Russia. This makes Dostoyevsky’s achievement in at least placing the germs of such thoughts in the mind of the intelligentsia, all the greater. For in what other non-monastic Russian writer of the nineteenth century do we find such a vivid, profound and above all *relevant* (to the contemporary spiritual state of his listeners) analysis of the absolute difference between becoming “god” through the assertion of self (Kirillov, Ivan Karamazov) and becoming god through self-sacrificial love and humility (Bishop Tikhon, Elder Zosima)?

Leontiev also asserted (followed by Lourié) that Dostoyevsky’s monastic types are not true depictions of monastic holiness. “In his memoirs, Leontiev wrote: ‘*The Brothers Karamazov* can be considered an Orthodox novel only by those who are little acquainted with true Orthodoxy, with the Christianity of the Holy Fathers and the Elders of Athos and Optina.’ In Leontiev’s view (he himself became an Orthodox monk and lived at Optina for the last six months of his life), the work of Zola (in *La Faute de l’abbé Mouret*) is ‘far closer to the

³⁸ Lourié, “Dogmatika ‘religii ljubvi’ . Dogmaticheskie predstavlenia pozdnego Dostoevskogo” (The Dogmatics of ‘the religion of love’ . The Dogmatic ideas of the late Dostoyevsky), in V.A. Kotel’nikov (ed.), *Khristianstvo i Russkaia Literatura* (Christianity and Russian Literature), St. Petersburg, 1996, p. 305.

spirit of true personal monkhood than the superficial and sentimental inventions of Dostoyevsky in *The Brothers Karamazov*.”³⁹

There is some truth in this criticism, and yet it misses more than one important point. The first is that Dostoyevsky was not intending to make a literal representation of anyone, but “an artistic tableau”. And for that reason, as he wrote to Pobedonostsev in August, 1879, he was worried whether he would be understood. The “obligations of artistry... required that I present a modest and majestic figure, whereas life is full of the comic and is majestic only in its inner sense, so that in the biography of my monk I was involuntarily compelled by artistic demands to touch upon even the most vulgar aspects so as not to infringe artistic realism. Then, too, there are several teachings of the monk against which people will simply cry out that they are absurd, for they are all too ecstatic; of course, they are absurd in an everyday sense, but in another, inward sense, I think they are true.”⁴⁰

Again, as Fr. Georges Florovsky writes: “To the ‘synthetic’ Christianity of Dostoyevsky Leontiev opposed the contemporary monastic way of life or ethos, especially on Athos. And he insisted that in Optina *The Brothers Karamazov* was not recognized as ‘a correct Orthodox composition’, while Elder Zosima did not correspond to the contemporary monastic spirit. In his time Rozanov made a very true comment on this score. ‘If it does not correspond to the type of Russian monasticism of the 18th-19th centuries (the words of Leontiev), then perhaps, and even probably, it corresponded to the type of monasticism of the 4th to 6th centuries’. In any case, Dostoyevsky was truly closer to Chrysostom (and precisely in his social teachings) than Leontiev... Rozanov adds: ‘The whole of Russia read *The Brothers Karamazov*, and believed in the representation of the Elder Zosima. “The Russian Monk” (Dostoyevsky’s term) appeared as a close and fascinating figure in the eyes of the whole of Russia, even her unbelieving parts.’... Now we know that the Elder Zosima was not drawn from nature, and in this case Dostoyevsky did not draw on Optina figures. It was an ‘ideal’ or ‘idealised’ portrait, written most of all from [St.] Tikhon of Zadonsk, and it was precisely Tikhon’s works that inspired Dostoyevsky, constituting the ‘teachings’ of Zosima... By the power of his artistic clairvoyance Dostoyevsky divined and recognized this seraphic stream in Russian piety, and prophetically continued the dotted line.”⁴¹

January 12/25, 2015.

³⁹ Magarshack, *op. cit.*, p. xviii.

⁴⁰ Magarshack, *op. cit.*, p. xvi.

⁴¹ Florovsky, *op. cit.*, pp. 301-302.

4. IS THE MOSCOW PATRIARCHATE CRUMBLING AT LAST?

Generations of True Orthodox Christians, both in the Catacomb Church and in the Russian Church Abroad, have understood that the key to the resurrection of Holy Russia, and therefore to the salvation of millions around the world, lies in the fall of the heretical and apostate Moscow Patriarchate, and its replacement by a truly Orthodox hierarchy that clearly and unambiguously renounces sergianism and ecumenism and all communion with the ecumenist hierarchs of World Orthodoxy. The prophecies of the Valaam elders declare that such a resurrection and radical cleansing of the Russian Church will take place through a True Orthodox Tsar who will be elected by the True Orthodox people at a time of national humiliation. However, as many have rightly warned, such a longed-for event will not take place until the people as a whole – or at any rate, a significant percentage of it – show by their deeds that they have truly repented of sergianism and ecumenism and are ready to receive the true faith of the One True Church.

In this connection, the recent meeting of Pope Francis and Patriarch Cyril in Havana may prove to be a significant turning-point. The meeting – which, as Cyril admitted, was made known beforehand to only five people, – was accompanied by the publication of a communiqué in which the two churches clearly recognized each other as “sister churches” in the spirit of the notorious Balamand agreement of 1994. As if finally waking up to the reality of what has been happening between Rome and Moscow for several decades, many priests, communities and laymen, from Moscow to Belorussia to Moldova are calling Cyril a heretic and refusing to commemorate him in their Divine services. Only a few believe one archimandrite’s theory: that the Pope wants to become Orthodox!⁴² The truth is: it is the patriarch who is in spirit a Catholic already...

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Of course, something like this happened once before, after the famous “our prophets – your prophets” speech of Patriarch Alexis II (Agent “Drozdov”) to the New York rabbis in November, 1991. Then many priests stopped commemorating the patriarch for his blasphemous recognition of Judaism. In 1992, the president of the Union of Orthodox Brotherhoods, Sergius Poliakov, declared that the patriarch’s speech to the New York rabbis had been “clearly heretical”. And a representative of the Tver diocese declared that “almost 60% of the diocesan clergy” were refusing to commemorate the patriarch.⁴³

⁴² “RPTs: Papa Rimskij khoschet byt’ pravoslavnym”, *Styler*, February 26, 2016, <https://www.rbc.ua/styler/zhizn/rpts-papa-rimskiy-hochet-pravoslavnym-1456494541.html>.

⁴³ *Priamoj Put'* (The Straight Path), February, 1992, p. 5; E. Polyakov, "Khronika Tserkovnoj Zhizni v Yanvare-Fevrale 1992 g." (A Chronicle of Church Life in January-February, 1992) (MS), p. 2.

Unfortunately, only one of those priests actually joined the True Church...⁴⁴

At that time the MP was able to face down its dissidents. Thus in December, 1994, the patriarchate's participation in the WCC was unequivocally endorsed as having been inspired "primarily by considerations of the good it would do for the Church". Then a purge of the anti-ecumenist brotherhoods began.⁴⁵ The decision was made to permit common prayers with heretics with the blessing of the local bishop!⁴⁶ And with the death in 1995 of the only anti-ecumenist in the hierarchy, Metropolitan John (Snychev) of St. Petersburg, the victory of the ecumenists appeared to be sealed.

However, in December, 1995 a group of about fifty Moscow clergy addressed an open letter to the patriarch denouncing the "crypto-catholic" teaching and actions of several modernist priests and laity in the capital. They pointed to numerous instances of the MP offering direct assistance to Latin propaganda, listing ecumenical or purely Catholic radio stations ("Sophia", "Blagovest") and periodicals (*Simvol, Istina i Zhizn', Novaia Evropa, Russkaia Mysl'*). Active contributors and sometimes even managers of these organs of Latin propaganda included Archpriest Ioann Sviridov (Department of the Religious Education and Catechization of the MP), Igumen Innokenty (Pavlov) (Secretary of the Russian Bible Society), Priest Alexander Borisov (President of the same Society), Igumen Ignaty (Krekshin) (Secretary of the Synodal Commission for the Canonization of Saints of the ROC), Igumen Ioann (Ekonomtsev) (Rector of the Orthodox University of St. John the Theologian), V. Nikitin (chief editor of the official journal of the Department of Religious Education and Catechization *Put' Pravoslavia*), the "priest journalists" G. Chistiakov and V. Lapshin, Priest G. Ziablitsev (employee in the Department of External Church Relations of the MP), who was appointed by his superior, Metropolitan Cyril (Gundyaev), to the commission of the Catholic Church (!) for the canonization of one of their saints. "Such a scandalous fact," wrote the fifty clergy, "i.e. participation in a heterodox enterprise of a canonical character, has not been heard of since the Latins fell away from the Church of Christ in 1054... One is left with the impression that the Vatican is attempting to create within the Church a layer of clergy loyal to the Catholic doctrine who serve the cause of union."⁴⁷

The patriarch deflected this protest by complaining about Catholic proselytism and their use of humanitarian aid as a cover for their missionary

⁴⁴ *Russkii Pastyr'*, (Russian Pastor), № 30, I-1998, p. 86. Cf. Fr. Timothy Alferov, "Nekotore uroki dvizhenia 'nepominaiushchikh' (Some Lessons of the Movement of the Non-Commemorators), *Russkii Pastyr'* (Russian Pastor), № 19, II-1994, pp. 102-104.

⁴⁵ A. Soldatov, "Obnovlenie ili obnovlenchestvo?" (Renovation or Renovationism?), *Pravoslavnaiia Rus'* (Orthodox Russia), № 20 (1521), October 15/28, 1994, pp. 6-9; *Service Orthodoxe de Presse* (Orthodox Press Service), № 194, January, 1995, pp. 7-10 (F); V.N. Osipov, "Pravoslavnoe serdtse na vetru", *Pravoslavnaiia Rus'* (Orthodox Russia), № 2 (1527), January 15/28, 1995, pp. 14-15.

⁴⁶ Perepiolkina, *Ekumenizm: Put' k pogibeli*, p. 205; from the Documents and Reports of the Council published by the MP in 1995, p. 191.

⁴⁷ Perepiolkina, *op. cit.*, pp. 215-216.

work in Russia.⁴⁸ It is not recorded, however, that he rejected the offer of one Catholic organization, "Aid to the Suffering Church", to give every priest in the Russian Church an annual salary of \$1000.⁴⁹ Nor was he particularly disturbed when the Pope was declared an honorary member of the new parish of the MP in Ulyanovsk in gratitude for his sending \$14,000 for the construction of the city's cathedral. Nor when, in 1996, "Aid to the Suffering Church" gave \$750,000 to Radio "Sophia" ...⁵⁰ The patriarch's right hand (his criticism of the Catholics) clearly did not know what his left hand (his reception of largesse from them) was doing...

However, the anti-ecumenist unrest of the early 1990s was successfully suppressed by the MP (as similar disturbances were suppressed in other Orthodox countries by the hierarchs of World Orthodoxy). Two important events contributed to this unfortunate outcome. The first was the failure of the mission of the Russian Church Abroad inside Russia. ROCOR under St. Philaret of New York had anathematized ecumenism in 1983, and her anti-sergianism and anti-ecumenism had been very influential among MP clergy who were now for the first time able to read non-Soviet church literature, and learn the truth about the history of twentieth-century Orthodoxy. However, divisions inside ROCOR, and a successful MP campaign slandering ROCOR as an American church under the control of the CIA, arrested the growth of ROCOR parishes in Russia as the country as a whole moved sharply against the West and all things western.

The second event was the rise to power in the year 2000 of KGB Colonel V.V. Putin, who gradually began moving the nation back towards "Orthodox" Sovietism with a Fascist face. The MP's KGB hierarchs willingly joined in this pseudo-resurrection of Holy Rus', especially as it stood to gain financially from it. Thus the new Patriarch Cyril (Agent "Mikhailov") was reported to have made a personal fortune of \$4 billion, gained through the duty-free import of alcohol and tobacco, and to be involved in still more morally dubious ventures.⁵¹ In 2009 he proclaimed the astonishingly blasphemous idea that the anti-theist Red Army's barbarous victory over Nazi Germany in 1945 had somehow expiated the sins of the 1930s, and that Stalin had thereby "trampled on death by death".⁵² The tepid reaction of Church society to these ever more

⁴⁸ *Service Orthodoxe de Presse* (Orthodox Press Service), № 204, January, 1996, p. 13

⁴⁹ "Wages for Popes", *30 Days*, № 66, 1994; reprinted in "Vatican Diary", *Orthodox Christian Witness*, January 2/15, 1995, pp. 7-8.

⁵⁰ Perepiolkina, *op. cit.*, pp. 205, 217-219.

⁵¹ V. Moss, "Patriarch Cyril, Abortion, Gays and the Goddess Aphrodite", in *The Battle for the Russian Orthodox Church*, https://www.academia.edu/22378447/THE_BATTLE_FOR_THE_RUSSIAN_ORTHODOX_CHURCH.

⁵² V. Moss, "God 1945 I 'Bogoslovie Pobedy' v Moskovskoj Patriarkhii", https://www.academia.edu/10213748/1945_%D0%93%D0%9E%D0%94_%D0%98_%D0%91%D0%9E%D0%93%D0%9E%D0%A1%D0%9B%D0%9E%D0%92%D0%98%D0%95_%D0%9F%D0%9E%D0%91%D0%95%D0%94%D0%AB_%D0%92_%D0%9C%D0%9E%D0%A1%D0%9A%D0%9E%D0%99_%D0%9F%D0%90%D0%A2%D0%A0%D0%98%D0%90%D0%A0%D0%A5%D0%98%D0%98.

extreme manifestations of the MP's apostasy was discouraging, to say the least.

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However, it looks now as if the MP may have finally overstepped the mark. Putin's invasion of the Ukraine, with its disastrous consequences for relations with the West and for the Russian economy, is eliciting increasing criticism. And Cyril's slavish following of Putin in all things – the price, of course, of his church's large share in Putin's ill-gotten gains – is far from universally admired. Again, many parishes in the "Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate" are deserting to other jurisdictions such as the Kievan Patriarchate, which is recognized by Constantinople but not by Moscow. Cyril calls them "schismatics", and blames uniatic propaganda by nationalist "Banderites" – but is thereby placing his sceptical Ukrainian flock in an increasingly difficult position, having to choose between loyalties to the Russian church and to the Ukrainian state.

Undoubtedly concern over the worsening situation in the Ukraine was the main motivation for Cyril's meeting with the Pope in Havana. For his master Putin's sake, he wants the Pope to exert his influence to weaken the West's sanctions regime against Russia. And for his own sake, he wants the Pope to recognize the canonicity of the MP in the Ukraine rather than that of Kievan Patriarchate, which is backed by his chief global competitor, the Patriarch of Constantinople. But for many in the Russian Church these essentially political issues were less important than the issue of *the faith*: that their patriarch had publicly recognized the world's number one heretic. And the patriarch must have known that this would be a problem. For why else would he conceal the meeting from all except five people? He must have sensed that public announcement of the meeting a long time in advance risked eliciting a powerful negative response that might have endangered the meeting taking place – and he was right.

This leads us to think that it will be more difficult, perhaps impossible, for the MP to shrug off the anti-ecumenist reaction in the way it did twenty years ago. Although pro-Catholic ecumenism has been a fact of life in the MP since the time of the notorious Metropolitan Nikodim (Rotov) – who as well as being the mentor of the present patriarch was simultaneously KGB Agent "Sviatoslav", metropolitan of Leningrad, and a secret Catholic bishop, and died at the feet of Pope John-Paul I, having received communion from him – there is a big difference between metropolitans signing ecumenist agreements with Catholic cardinals and this meeting at the highest level between the Pope and the Patriarch – something that has never taken place before in history. The symbolism of the papal-patriarchal meeting is more direct more powerful – and much more dangerous for the internal stability of the MP.

Another difference between 2016 and the early 1990s is that the clergy are more educated now; they have outgrown the ecumenist Paris theologians that were so popular in the early 1990s and are now familiar with stronger, strictly

patristic food in the form of the writings of St. Ignaty Brianchaninov, St. Theophan the Recluse and Archbishop Averky of Jordanville. And while the anti-ecumenist ROCOR has been crushed – and, since 2007, absorbed into the MP – the seeds it sowed in the earlier period have sunk into the earth of the MP’s consciousness. Ecumenism is now widely recognized as a heresy; the metropolitan of Vladivostok has even called publicly for the MP’s withdrawal from all ecumenist organizations, including the World Council of Churches, which the present patriarch once famously called “our common home” ...

Paradoxically, Putin’s anti-western policies may have indirectly contributed to the impending unia. For just as Putin may thunder against the West’s moral vices, but has no intention of depriving himself of western pleasures himself, so Cyril may thunder against Banderites and schismatics, but has no intention of foregoing his friendship with the world’s number one heretic. And just as Putin and Russia’s secular elite still send their children to western schools, live in fabulously grand houses in the evil West, deposit their money in London banks, cruise the world in western yachts, buy western football clubs and build villas on the Mediterranean coast of France and Spain, so Cyril and Russia’s ecclesiastical elite drive around in limousines, buy rolex watches, have usually homosexual lovers and engage in extremely profitable and immoral business deals in imitation of their secular rulers. So, far from building up a true spiritual and moral alternative to western civilization, Church and State in Russia are simply showing themselves to be a deeply corrupt extension of that same civilization. Only the Russians are worse than the westerners they ape because their sins are compounded by the vast legacy of the unrepented mega-crimes of the Soviet period, and the terrible guilt and hypocrisy that comes from knowing what Orthodoxy is, and trumpeting their “Orthodoxy” to the skies, while denying it in practice.

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Finally, one may ask: now that the MP is returning to that ecumenism from which it was supposed to have liberated itself as a condition of its union with ROCOR in 2007, will not ROCOR-MP rise up in protest and denounce the treachery of their patriarch? The tragic but predictable answer is: ROCOR-MP are the *last* people who will rebel against the heretic. For having betrayed Christ and His Holy Church in 2007, they are too proud to admit their treachery, but are rather trying to justify themselves by an exaggerated justification of their MP masters.

As an example of this lamentable spiritual condition, let us take a recent article by Fr. Andrew Phillips, a ROCOR-MP priest.⁵³ Phillips is a very intelligent man who has written excellent things on Orthodox England, and

⁵³ Phillips, “The Anti-Christian Empire and the Resistance Movement”, *Orthodox England*, February 21, 2016, <http://www.events.orthodoxengland.org.uk/the-anti-christian-empire-and-the-resistance-movement>.

good things on the corruption of the West. But, having consciously taken part in ROCOR's Judas act of 2007, his views on Russia are wildly misguided.

Phillips believes that resistance to the Anti-Christian empire of the West is coming from "what is organically reviving in the place of the old Soviet Empire - the Sacral Christian Empire of Rus". Phillips seems to forget the words of the Lord: "You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them." (Matthew 7.16-20).

The fruits of Putin's reign have been unequivocally evil. On every index of social malfunction - suicide, alcoholism, child mortality, drug-taking - Russia comes in the first or second place in the United Nations rankings. This would be impossible if Russia were a truly Orthodox country, a good fruit from a good tree. But in fact Putin has done everything to demonstrate his and his regime's roots in the ultra-evil tree of Soviet power. The same applies to the Soviet church of the Moscow Patriarchate. It has repented of none of its heresies; the moral evil of its hierarchy - especially its homosexuality - is tolerated and its practitioners promoted; True Orthodoxy is persecuted.

Phillips continues with the familiar KGB lies that Russia was invaded *from* Georgia in 2008, and that in 2014 the "legitimate" authority of the Ukraine was overthrown in a western coup. We will not dwell on these myths, since they are not central to our ecclesiastical theme. More relevant are these words of his: "Slandering and even destruction can come in two other ways... The first is by infiltrating the nascent Christian Empire with modernism, which is what individuals have been trying to do in recent years and especially now with the divisive draft documents for the Crete meeting of selected Orthodox bishops next June. The second way is protesting against those unacceptable documents in a divisive and even schismatic way, exactly as Metr Onufry of Kiev and others predicted." It is astonishing that Phillips thinks that modernism in World Orthodoxy comes only from certain "selected Orthodox bishops" who do not include his own patriarch. As if the meeting of the pope and the patriarch were not modernism, and their joint communiqué not "unacceptable" no less than any of the draft documents he mentions. Evidently, leaving True Orthodoxy and joining the modernist MP and World Orthodoxy has made Phillips a dyed-in-the-wool ecumenist!

But even Phillips cannot ignore the protests against his patriarch that have begun in his own false church, "with several perhaps hot-headed priests in Moldova no longer commemorating their bishops. Other individuals are following. We suggest that this is an error. Two wrongs do not make a right. However understandable, the far better method of protest is, as we have suggested, for monasteries and parishes simply to petition their diocesan

bishops stating that we do not accept the draft documents and that if they are accepted in Crete, we will tear them up, refusing to receive them.”

Phillips suggests that these non-commemorating priests are “hot-headed” and “in error”, and then goes on to assert that “the temptation of non-commemoration is a simplistic error of schismatic proportions”. Logically speaking, he should say the same about all the hierarchs of ROCOR throughout its history, declaring St. Philaret, who left the MP and anathematized the whole of World Orthodoxy to be a hot-headed schismatic, and St. John Maximovich, who bitterly repented of having once commemorated Patriarch Alexis I, to have succumbed to “the temptation of non-commemoration” But these were great men who were capable of repentance and taught it to their right-believing flock. Phillips is a turncoat who is now engaged in whitewashing the Pharisaic KGB agents and ecumenist heretics whom he serves and who are destroying what little is left of Holy Russia. Russia will indeed be resurrected, as the true prophets proclaimed – but only when the people steadfastly block their ears to the false prophets like Phillips who call evil good and good evil, who hypocritically denounce the supposed perverters of Orthodoxy while themselves promoting the neo-Soviet Anti-Christian Empire and its Soviet puppet-church!

February 17 /March 1, 2016.

St. Hermogen, Patriarch of Moscow, who was martyred by the Latins in 1612.

5. FORGIVENESS AND THE TRIUMPH OF ORTHODOXY

Forgiveness Sunday and the Sunday of the Triumph of Orthodoxy follow each other in quick succession in the Church's liturgical calendar. A coincidence? No – there are no coincidences in life, and still less in Church life. So let us search for the reason for this “coincidence”, beginning with the story behind the institution of the feast of the Triumph of Orthodoxy...

The last iconoclast emperor, Theophilus, died in February, 842. His widow, St. Theodora, wanted to restore the icons, but she used her imperial authority to impose a bargain on the Church: if her reposed husband could be restored to the diptychs as an Orthodox emperor, she would give carte blanche to the patriarch to restore the true faith as he saw fit. The confessors of Orthodoxy were understandably reluctant to enter into such a bargain, since there was no reliable evidence that Theophilus had repented before his death. However, God inspired the new patriarch, St. Methodius, to resolve the dilemma in the following way. As Nun Cassia tells the story, “On March 4, 843 Methodius was consecrated to the see of Constantinople and immediately proclaimed that the whole Church should pray for the Emperor Theophilus, which continued for the whole of the first week of the Great Fast and ended with the miraculous blotting out of the name of Theophilus from the list of heretics that the patriarch had sealed before the beginning of the prayer and placed on the altar of Hagia Sophia. The reposed emperor was recognized as forgiven by the Church and as Orthodox, and on Sunday, March 11, 843 the icons were brought in a triumphal procession into the main church of the Empire, and icon-veneration has remained forever as an unshakeable dogma of the Orthodox Church...”⁵⁴

So the Triumph of Orthodoxy, of the true faith over heresy, was at the same time a Triumph of Forgiveness – of God's forgiveness of a heretic and persecutor of the Church even after his death. Truly with God all things are possible. He “has the keys of Hades and of Death” (Revelation 1.18), and is able to bring even the impenitent sinner to repentance and draw him out of hades and death into paradise and eternal life.

However, it is important to note how this was done. Forgiveness was not given to the dead heretic just like that. The whole Church fasted and prayed with great intensity for a whole week, and only when God's forgiveness had been revealed to all by an obvious miracle was his name restored to the ranks of the saved and the Orthodox. And at the same time the heresy that he had championed throughout his life - the heresy of iconoclasm that had ravaged the Byzantine empire for over a hundred years - was officially overturned.

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Many hundreds of years later, in March, 2014, something superficially

⁵⁴ Nun Cassia (Senina) (editor), *Zhitia Vizantijskikh Sviatykh Epokhi Ikonoborchestva* (Lives of the Byzantine Saints of the Iconoclast Period), vol. I, St. Petersburg: Kvadrivium, 2015, pp. 129-130.

similar took place. Let us examine this more closely.

In 1980 Archimandrite Cyprian of the Monastery of SS. Cyprian and Justina, Fili, Greece was secretly ordained, together with seven other archimandrites, to the episcopate by the Greek True Orthodox Metropolitans Callistus and Anthony. This ecclesiastical coup failed; all those ordained – with the exception of Cyprian – repented of their uncanonical ordination and were eventually received back into the canonical True Orthodox Church of Greece under Archbishop Chrysostomos (Kiouisis) of Athens. Cyprian, however, together with another bishop, Giovanni of Sardinia, remained aloof from all Greek Synods; and Cyprian now began to lean towards ecumenism, giving communion en masse to new calendarists and even concelebrating with the new-calendarist Patriarch Nicholas of Alexandria – although the Cyprianites denied this, saying that the patriarch just happened to enter the sanctuary and sat down. In order to justify these uncanonical practices, in 1984 Cyprian published his *Ecclesiological Theses*, which proclaimed a new and heretical understanding of the Church's relationship to heresy and heretics. In this work heretics were said to be "sick" members of the True Church until they had been expelled from the Church by a "Unifying Synod" of Ecumenical or at least Pan-Orthodox status; local Councils, according to Cyprian, did not have the authority to expel heretics from the Church. In accordance with this theory, Cyprian declared that the new calendarist church of Greece was the "Mother Church" of the True Orthodox Church, and that while ecumenism was a heresy, the ecumenists themselves were still inside the Church and had the grace of sacraments – in spite of the fact that the Russian Church Abroad under St. Philaret, which Cyprian greatly respected and was trying to enter into communion with, had just anathematized ecumenism and the ecumenists only the year before.

In September, 1984 the True Orthodox Church of Greece under Archbishop Chrysostomos summoned Cyprian to a synodal court to give an account of his actions, but he did not appear at the summons. On September 19 the Synod banned him from serving for 40 days, but he continued to serve. Finally, on April 5, 1985 Cyprian and Giovanni, while still under canonical bans, left the Greek Church and formed their own Synod. (They claimed that they had no obligation to answer any summons from a Synod they had never belonged to. But since they recognized the authority of no other Synod over them, this was to all intents and purposes a declaration of autocephaly – in other words, a schism.)

In February, 1986, the Synod of Archbishop Chrysostomos defrocked Cyprian and the other members of his Synod for their practice of giving communion to new-calendarists ("for without investigation he gives the Holy Mysteries of our Church to new calendarist modernists, schismatics and ecumenists"), and for preaching a false teaching on the presence of the Grace-filled Mysteries among the new calendarists ("because he has fallen away from the Orthodox Faith... and accepted the false and dishonourable faith of the ecumenists – that is, that new calendarist schismatics belong to the Holy,

Catholic and Apostolic Church, which is the only guardian and bestower of Grace”).⁵⁵

For many years the Cyprianites spread their influence far and wide. In 1994 they entered into communion with the Russian Church Abroad (ROCOR), which accepted their confession of faith. As a result, the movement for union with the Moscow Patriarchate inside ROCOR gained strength, and in 2007 ROCOR entered into full communion with the MP. Not content with having helped to destroy this local Church, the Cyprianites now sought to “sweep up” the splinters (*oskolki*) of ROCOR that had refused to surrender to the MP. Their lot fell on Bishop Agathangel of Odessa, a lone bishop and renegade from the Russian True Orthodox Church (RTOC) who in 1994 had declared that even the Catholics and the Monophysites had grace. He was the last to “jump ship” at the shipwreck of ROCOR in 2007, but then had the effrontery to declare himself the sole True Orthodox Russian bishop in the world! Clearly well suited to each other, Agathangel and the Cyprianites together ordained a new, uncanonical Synod with Agathangel as its head.

Shortly after this, Cyprian fell into a coma. For several years he was unconscious, in a kind of limbo from which he never emerged until his death in 2013. Meanwhile, two attempts were made to reunite the True Orthodox Church and the Cyprianites. The first, in 2009, when Archbishop Chrysostomos was still alive, failed; the second, in 2014, under the new Archbishop Kallinicos, succeeded. The Cyprianites were not asked to repent, and Cyprian himself was declared “blessed”...

The canonical question that arises is: can the Greek Synod under its new leader in 2014 reverse the decision made in relation to Cyprian by the same Synod under its previous leader in 1986 without giving any reason for such a reversal – or even proclaiming that any such reversal has taken place?...

Any attempt to compare the events of 2014 with those of 843 would clearly be in vain. The restoration of Theophilus the iconoclast cannot be compared to that of Cyprian the crypto-ecumenist. In the former case, there was no denying that Theophilus had died in heresy and without repentance. Nor was any damage done to the Orthodox confession of faith – iconoclasm was not restored together with Theophilus. In the latter case, the situation is far less clear. The Church did not publicly pray for the forgiveness of Cyprian. Nor was there any undisputed sign from God that he had been forgiven. Although the confession of faith on the basis of which the Cyprianites were restored to the Church was formally Orthodox, it did not condemn Cyprianism. Moreover, more than one Cyprianite bishop continues to assert that he was neither asked to repent, nor has in fact repented, of his Cyprianite beliefs...

The Lord, as is well known, gave His apostles and their successors the power

⁵⁵ *I Phoni tis Orthodoxias*, № 811, January-February, 1987. Cf. *Orthodoxos Khristianikos Agon*, № 8, February, 1987, p. 7.

to bind and to loose the sins of men. But this power can be exercised only *in accordance with*, and not *in spite of*, the will of God. The Church teaches that as a general rule God does not loose the sins of the man who dies in mortal sin, and that in hades there is no repentance. But there are exceptions, and the case of Theophilus the iconoclast is one of those exceptions. In response to the fervent prayer of the Church (for if “the effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (James 5.16), so how much more the prayer of the whole Church!), the Lord counted him worthy to be released from the mortal sin of heresy. But the Church *besought*: it did not *command*, it did not assume that the Head would necessarily submit to the will of His Body. For there are cases when the Lord rejects the prayer even of the greatest saints: as He once revealed to the Prophet Ezekiel, even if the righteous Noah, Daniel and Job had been in the sinful land of Israel at that time, they would only have delivered themselves by their prayers, not the whole land (Ezekiel 14,14, 20). Indeed, the Apostle John *forbids* prayers for certain sinners: “there is a sin unto death – I do not say that he should pray about that” (I John 5.16). But again there are exceptions. And the Church’s prayer for the mortal sin of Theophilus was one such exception.

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On Forgiveness Sunday we forgive each other our personal sins against each other. Purified in this way from personal sin, we fast and pray in the first week of Great Lent with strong confidence that our prayers will be heard by God. And the most fervent prayer of the Church must be that we may be united “with one heart and one mouth” in the One True Faith with the unbelievers and heretics and schismatics who have fallen away from the Church – or never belonged to it in the first place. This prayer reaches its climax on the following Sunday, the Sunday of the Triumph of Orthodoxy, when all the heresies are solemnly anathematized and the confessors of the faith glorified. And so in this one single week we experience the whole gamut of the Church’s repentance, faith, hope and love; we see the power of God, Who casts sinners into hades and raises them up again; and we understand what the apostle means when he says: “This is the victory that has overcome the world: our faith” (I John 5.4).

March 5/18, 2016.
Holy Martyr Conon.
First Week of the Holy Fast.

6. THE RACE OF LIFE

Life is a race for the prize of salvation; and few there be who win it. We are reminded of this in the service for today's feast, that of the 40 Martyrs of Sebaste: "With steadfast intent the Christ-loving mother took upon her shoulders him to whom she had given birth; and she offered him up as a fruit of piety, a martyr among martyrs, emulating the sacred action of Abraham. 'Make thy journey straight to everlasting life, O my son, the Christ-loving mother cried out to her Christ-loving child, 'for I could not bear see thee appear in second place before Christ, the Judge of the contest!'"⁵⁶

If this is an unexpected metaphor for some, let us remind ourselves that it occurs frequently in the epistles of the holy Apostle Paul. Thus "Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it." (I Corinthians 9.24) And again: "Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us." (Hebrews 12.1) And again: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." (II Timothy 4.7)

Let us pursue this metaphor a little...

What are the rules of the race of life? There are rules of faith and of conduct.

The rule of faith is the correct map to the finishing line. Such a map is given to us by the race organizer, God, through the holy Apostles and holy Fathers of the Church. Unfortunately, there are many fake maps in existence given out by pseudo-guides and race organizers. Like some modern satnavs, which lead those who follow them to the edge of a cliff, these fake maps may be wrong in only one turn, but this false turn is sufficient to ruin any chance of winning the race of life. The Lord warned about such false guides: "Those who lead you cause you to err, and destroy the way of your path" (Isaiah 3.12). And again: "Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. They [the Pharisees, the heretics, the pseudo-guides] are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch." (Matthew 15.14). And again: "Hold fast what you have, that no man take your crown" (Revelation 3.11)... Some think that following fake guides and maps should not disqualify a runner - he should be allowed to start the race again - or be rewarded for his speed of foot alone (i.e. be saved by his works alone), even if it is in the wrong direction (the wrong faith). But God has warned against false prophets, so we cannot avoid blame if we follow them. As Bishop Nikolai Velimirovich writes: "Are the people at fault if godless elders and false prophets lead them onto foreign paths? The people are not at fault to as great an extent as their elders and the false prophets, but they are at fault to some extent. For God gave to the people also to know the right path, both through their conscience and through the preaching of the word of God, so that people should not blindly have followed their blind guides, who led them by false paths that alienated them from God and His Laws."⁵⁷

⁵⁶ *Menaion*, March 9, Service to the 40 Martyrs of Sebaste, Mattins, Canon, Ode 8, troparia.

⁵⁷ Bishop Nikolai Velimirovich, *The Prologue from Ohrid*.

Then there are the rules of conduct. The first of these relate to registration: legitimate runners must confess the true faith and have received the bath of baptism. They will then be given special colours which indicate to the angels, the race stewards, that they have been written in the list of legitimate contestants – that is, the book of life – from which, however, they can still be erased at a later stage. The rules of conduct allow runners to have coaches and doctors – priests and holy intercessors. In fact, they stand little chance of winning without them. Also necessary is the use of rest-points, the churches, where vital food is given, the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ. Without this, the runners will soon collapse from exhaustion, for the race is long and hard... However, by the side of the road there are also illegitimate rest-points with quack doctors, and even pleasure parks and bordellos, which competitors must avoid... Since the runners will be attacked along the way by snakes and wild beasts, the evil passions, they are given special instruments – the sword of faith, in particular – to ward them off. If, however, they are wounded by these animals, they are allowed to stop in at a legitimate rest-point and receive treatment from properly trained doctors. A special danger is other runners – wolves in sheep’s clothing – who try and trip up the legitimate runners. The latter are given special instructions on how to ward them off (the breastplate of righteousness is a vital defence). They are warned, however, that they must not retaliate against these false brethren, but must rather help them if they fall into trouble. This rule has been considered unfair by many competitors, but the race organizer has insisted that refusal to help fellow competitors leads to disqualification. And to encourage competitors, they are told that, if they help a fellow competitor, and especially a hostile fellow competitor, they will be given special wings that take them several miles ahead in the twinkling of any eye... Indeed, it is an open secret that even very unfit and sluggish competitors can win the race of life by this means alone...

Special problems arise for competitors in the last times. First, the race in that period is almost empty of competitors; the roads look very empty. This removes a certain incentive to race hard, instills thoughts of loneliness, even despair, and also tempts competitors to think that they must be on the wrong path. For in the distance they see many competitors running joyfully in the opposite direction - but do not see them falling over the cliff... However, they have been warned at the beginning: “Do not follow thousands to destruction.” ... To make things worse, there are very few correct maps, and almost no properly qualified doctors or rest-points. However, this generation of competitors are consoled by the knowledge that the race organizer is aware of the special difficulties of their struggle and takes account of them in His final judgements...

When the competitors cross the finishing line, the process of adjudication (the “toll-houses”) begins, and lasts a few days. The stewards examine all complaints of foul play, and the race organizer, assisted by the holy Apostles sitting on special thrones, gives the final verdicts, crowns and punishments. There is no appeal process...

*March 9/22, 2016.
Holy Forty Martyrs of Sebaste.*

7. THE FALL OF OLD ROME

St. Constantine's transfer of his capital from Old Rome to the New Rome of Constantinople marked the beginning of the end of the Western Empire. For the old capital, weighed down by its pagan past, was in no position to defend and unify the newly Christianized empire, and would soon prove incapable of defending even herself. As for the new capital, in the words of St. Gregory the Theologian, it was to be "a bond of union between East and West to which the most distant extremes from all sides were to come together, and to which they look up as the common centre and emporium of their faith."⁵⁸

Hoping in this way to make a fresh start for the Christian empire, St. Constantine implicitly admitted that the old capital was irredeemable.⁵⁹ The symbolism of his act was clear: if the state, like the individual man, was to be redeemed and enjoy a long and spiritually fruitful life, it, too, had to make a complete break with the past, renounce the demonic sacrifices and pagan gods and philosophies that it had loved, and receive a new birth by water and the Spirit. For Old Rome, in contrast to many of her individual citizens, had never been baptized. There was a pagan rottenness at the heart of the western empire that even its Christian head, the Emperor, was not able to cut out.⁶⁰ And so its doom was sealed.

"As the Oxford historians Peter Heather and Bryan Ward-Perkins have argued, the final breakdown in the Western Roman Empire began in 406, when Germanic invaders poured across the Rhine into Gaul and then Italy. Rome itself was sacked by the Goths in 410. Co-opted by an enfeebled emperor, the Goths then fought the Vandals for control of Spain, but this merely shifted the problem south. Between 429 and 439, Genseric led the Vandals to victory after victory in North Africa, culminating in the fall of Carthage. Rome lost its southern Mediterranean bread-basket and, along with it, a huge source of tax revenue. Roman soldiers were just barely able to defeat Attila's Huns as they swept west from the Balkans. By 452, the Western Roman Empire had lost all of Britain, most of Spain, the richest provinces of North Africa, and southwestern and southeastern Gaul. Not much was left besides Italy. Basiliscus, brother-in-law of [the Eastern] Emperor Leo I, tried and failed to recapture Carthage in 468. Byzantium lived on, but the Western Roman Empire was dead. By 476, Rome was the fiefdom of Odoacer, king of the Goths.

"What is most striking about this history is the speed of the Roman Empire's collapse. In just five decades, the population of Rome itself fell by three-quarters. Archaeological evidence from the late fifth century – inferior housing, more primitive pottery, fewer coins, smaller cattle – shows that the benign influence of Rome diminished rapidly in the rest of western Europe. What

⁵⁸ St. Gregory, in Michael Grant, *The Fall of the Roman Empire*, London: Phoenix, 1997, p. 198.

⁵⁹ But New Rome quickly filled up with the statues and monuments of paganism. See Judith Herrin, *Women in Purple: Rulers of Medieval Byzantium*, London: Phoenix Press, 2001, p. 11.

⁶⁰ See Dirk Bennett, "Ecstasy in Late Imperial Rome", *History Today*, vol. 48 (10), October, 1998, pp. 27-32.

Ward-Perkins calls 'the end of civilization' came within the span of a single generation."⁶¹

And so the fall lasted for about seventy years, from Alaric's invasion in 406 to the formal deposition of the last emperor in 476. Thus the fifth century proved to be the great watershed, the "stone of separation" (Zachariah 4.10) that revealed the rottenness still nestling in the heart of the Empire, and cut it away in an operation so deep that the patient died under the knife. For a barbarian officer in the Roman army, Odovacar, killed the father and uncle of Romulus Augustulus and sent Romulus himself into retirement. But then, instead of taking the imperial crown himself, he did a remarkable thing: he declared that "there was no need of a divided rule and that one, shared emperor was sufficient for both [Eastern and Western imperial] territories". And then he sent the imperial cloak and diadem to the Eastern Emperor Zeno... The empire of Old Rome was dead, the translatio imperii to the New Rome was complete.⁶²

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When Rome fell for the first time, Blessed Jerome wrote from Bethlehem: "At the news my speech failed me, and sobs choked the words that I was dictating. She has been captured – the City by whom the whole world had once been taken captive. She dies of hunger before dying by the sword – scarcely do any men survive to be led off into captivity. The fury of the starving fastens on to nourishment unspeakable; they tear each other to pieces, the mother not sparing even the infant at her own breast."⁶³

Cannibalism had taken place also during the Fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD. It was a characteristic sign of God's turning away from His people. Therefore a theological and historiosophical explanation that reflected the spiritual, not less than the political and social gravity of the situation was required... And if Tertullian had said: "In the Emperor we reverence the judgement of God, Who has set him over the nations"⁶⁴, the fall of the last western emperor had to express the reversal of God's judgement, His guilty verdict against the Romans, perhaps the whole oikoumene. Indeed, for patriotic Romans like Jerome, the fall of the City of Old Rome was equivalent to the fall of the whole of humanity: "The flame of the world has been extinguished and in the destruction of a single city, the whole human race has perished!"⁶⁵

Of course, the pagans were quick to come forward with their own explanation of the tragedy: that Rome had fallen because she had deserted her gods. They pointed out that it was precisely since the ban on pagan practices

⁶¹ Niall Ferguson, "Complexity and Collapse: Empires on the Edges of Chaos", *Foreign Affairs*, March-April, 2010, pp. 27-28.

⁶² Heather, op. cit., p. xiii.

⁶³ St. Jerome, Letter 127, *P.L.* 22, col. 1094.

⁶⁴ Tertullian, *Apologeticum*, 32.

⁶⁵ St. Jerome, *Commentary on Ezekiel*, prologue.

imposed by Theodosius the Great in 380 that the barbarians had begun to overwhelm the empire. Augustine wrote the first five books of his *City of God*, written shortly after Alaric's sack of Rome, to refute this notion, and to show that the disasters suffered by the empire were allowed by God to chasten and purify His people. For "God's providence," he wrote, "constantly uses war to correct and chasten the corrupt morals of mankind, as it also uses such afflictions to train men in a righteous and laudable way of life. It removes to a better state those whose life is approved, or keeps them in this world for further service."⁶⁶

In the second part of the work, he describes the origin, history and final destiny of two Cities - the City of God, which is holy and destined for eternal bliss, and the City of Man, which is sinful and destined for the eternal fire. The Roman Empire, he wrote, like the Church herself of which it is the ally, contains citizens of both Cities, both wheat and tares. When the state is ruled by a truly Christian ruler, like Theodosius, one can see "a faint shadowy resemblance between the Roman Empire and the Heavenly City"; which is why one must obey the law and render one's patriotic and civic duty to the State.

However, this view was juxtaposed, in Augustine's thought, with a more radical, apolitical and even anti-political view. Thus at one point he calls Rome a "second Babylon".⁶⁷ He points out that there was always a demonic element at the heart of the Roman state, which has not been eliminated even now. Sin, fratricide - Romulus' murder of Remus - lie at the very root of the Roman state, just as sin and fratricide - Cain's murder of Abel - lie at the beginning of the history of fallen humanity.

Therefore it should not surprise us that the Roman Empire should decline and fall. "If heaven and earth are to pass away, why is it surprising if at some time the state is going to come to an end? If what God has made will one day vanish, then surely what Romulus made will disappear much sooner." "As for this mortal life, which ends after a few days' course, what does it matter under whose rule a man lives, being so soon to die, provided that the rulers do not force him to impious and wicked acts?"⁶⁸ For it is the Jerusalem above that is our *real* Fatherland, not Rome here below.

Augustine's purpose was to wean men away from trust in men and in political institutions, whether pagan or Christian, and to trust in God alone. Christian rulers were, of course, better than pagan ones. But politics in general was suspect. The empire had been built up through a multitude of wars, many of them quite unjust. And yet "without justice what are governments but bands of brigands?"⁶⁹ It was not that Augustine was not a loyal Roman citizen, but the fall of Old Rome contributed to an atmosphere of introspection and self-

⁶⁶ St. Augustine, *The City of God*, I, 1.

⁶⁷ St. Augustine, *The City of God*, XVIII, 2.

⁶⁸ St. Augustine, *The City of God*, V, 17.

⁶⁹ St. Augustine, *The City of God*, IV, 4.

criticism that sought explanations for the fall in sin, both at the individual and at the collective level. Thus Augustine distanced himself from the perhaps too close identification of Romanitas (Romanness) and Christianitas (Christianity) that had been common in the first century after Constantine's conversion. As F. van der Meer interprets his thought: "Compared with Christianity, what significance was there in things, admittedly good in themselves, like the order, unity and authority of the Roman Empire?..."⁷⁰

However, "the order, unity and authority of the Roman Empire" was of value. Even the barbarian conquerors of Rome recognized that. Thus Ataulf, the son of the famous Alaric, said: "To begin with, I ardently desired to efface the very name of the Romans and to transform the Roman Empire into a Gothic Empire. Romania, as it is commonly called, would have become Gothia; Ataulf would have replaced Caesar Augustus. But long experience taught me that the unruly barbarism of the Goths was incompatible with the laws. Now, without laws there is no state. I therefore decided rather to aspire to the glory of restoring the fame of Rome in all its integrity, and of increasing it by means of the Gothic strength. I hope to go down to posterity as the restorer of Rome, since it is not possible that I should be its supplanter."⁷¹

The Romans attached enormous importance to *law*. As Peter Heather writes, "Roman imperial state ideology had long since identified the existence of written law as the single factor which distinguished the Roman world as a higher order of divinely inspired human society, far superior to that of any known or conceivable neighbour."⁷² Thus in the second preface to his *Judicial Code* the Emperor Justinian wrote: "The maintenance of the integrity of the government depends upon two things, namely, the force of arms and the observance of the laws: and, for this reason, the fortunate race of the Romans obtained power and precedence over all other nations in former times, and will do so forever, if God should be propitious; since each of these has ever required the aid of the other, for, as military affairs are rendered secure by the laws, so also are the laws preserved by force of arms."⁷³

The Goths (not only Ataulf, but also the Ostrogothic King Theoderic later in the century) bought in to this vision, to the extent of seeing themselves as restorers, rather than supplanters, of Rome and the upholders of her laws. Even the Huns, who were still more barbaric than the Goths, respected the greatness of Rome. Thus Attila was turned back from sacking Rome in 452 by the eloquent embassy of Pope Leo I and a vision of Saints Peter and Paul, who appeared in a vision with St. Leo and threatened the Hun with death.⁷⁴

⁷⁰ Van der Meer, *Augustine the Bishop*, London: Sheed and Ward, 1961, p. 584.

⁷¹ Ataulf, in Grant, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

⁷² Heather, *The Restoration of Rome*, London: Pan Books, 2013, p. 118.

⁷³ <http://faculty.cua.edu/pennington/Law508/Roman%20Law/JustinianCodexEnglish.htm>.

⁷⁴ Patrick Howarth, *Attila*, London: Robinson, 2001, p. 132.

Augustine believed Rome had not been destroyed, but chastized. By this tribulation God was purifying the Roman nation, as He had purified Israel in Old Testament times. Rome would emerge from this period of affliction cleansed and better able to carry out her civilising mission in the world... But the catastrophe of 410 did not produce the regeneration of Rome that Augustine had hoped for. If it was still true at the beginning of the century that Rome was being chastized, not destroyed, by the end it had to be admitted that the disease was more serious and chronic, and the treatment more radical, than Augustine had recognised...

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For the sad fact was that Old Rome was still not profiting from the opportunity presented by the conversion of St. Constantine to regenerate herself. She remained throughout the fifth century in a situation of spiritual and political crisis not dissimilar to that in the time of Diocletian.

Christopher Dawson writes: ““It was literally Rome that killed Rome. The great cosmopolitan city of gold and marble, the successor of Alexandria and Antioch, had nothing in common with the old capital and rural Latin state. It served no social function, it was an end in itself, and its population drawn from every nation under heaven existed mainly to draw their Government doles, and to attend the free spectacles with which the Government provided them. It was a vast useless burden on the back of the empire which broke at last under the increasing strain.”⁷⁵

The real rulers of the later western empire when the emperor was campaigning against the barbarians, were the senators. Snobbish and immensely rich, they had much to lose from the empire’s fall. However, as a visitor to Rome remarked, they did not want to serve the State, “preferring to enjoy their property at leisure”.⁷⁶

“In spite of frequent lip-service to the romantic concept of Eternal Rome,” writes Grant, “many noblemen were not prepared to lift a finger to save it... They also undermined the state in a very active fashion. For of all the obstacles to efficient and honest administration, they were the worst. They forcibly ejected collectors of taxes, harboured deserters and brigands, and repeatedly took the law into their own hands... They often remained hostile to the Emperor, and estranged from his advisers. For a long time many were pagans while their ruler was Christian.”⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Dawson, *Progress and Decay*.

⁷⁶ Grant, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

⁷⁷ Grant, *op. cit.*, pp. 75, 76, 78.

The free poor of Rome did not come far behind the senators in corruption. Although the Christian Emperor Honorius had supposedly abolished the circuses in 404, Grant writes that "a hundred and seventy-five days of the year were given up to public shows, as opposed to a mere hundred and thirty-five two centuries earlier; moreover the fabric of the Colosseum was restored as late as 438. It is also true that in the mid-fourth century 300,000 Romans held bread tickets which entitled them to draw free rations from the government; and even a century later, when the population of the city had greatly diminished, there were still 120,000 recipients of these free supplies. Certainly the population of Rome was largely parasitic. However, the city proletariat played little active part in guiding the course of events which brought the later Roman Empire to a halt.

"It was, on the other hand, the 'free' poor of the rural countryside upon whom the government, struggling to raise money for the army, imposed the full rigours and terrors of taxation. Although technically still distinguishable from slaves, they were no better off and perhaps worse off, since they often found themselves driven into total destitution. Between these rustic poor and the government, the relationship was that of oppressed and oppressor, of foe and foe.

"This is perhaps the greatest of all the disunities that afflicted the Western Empire. The state and the unprivileged bulk of its rural subjects were set against each other in a destructive and suicidal disharmony, which played a very large and direct part in the downfall that followed. It was because of this rift that the taxes that were needed to pay the army could not be raised. And because they could not be raised, the Empire failed to find defenders, and collapsed."⁷⁸

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Another vitally important disunity, of course, was that between the Romans and the barbarians. Not that the barbarians, who settled in the empire through necessity to escape the hordes that pressed on them from the east, were always resolved to destroy it. On the contrary, as we have seen, they came to admire and emulate it. But the Romans themselves were not interested in converting or integrating them, even when they became permanent citizens of the empire.

One of the greatest and most enduring legacies of Roman civilization was the principle - enshrined in law in 222 - that every citizen is equal before the law, whatever his nationality or faith. This was no empty principle, as we see as early as the career of St. Paul, who, though a member of the despised race of the Jews, was able to win a trial in Rome because he was a Roman citizen. But by the fifth century this principle was no longer being applied; universalism

⁷⁸ Grant, *op. cit.*, p. 60. Another reason that enough taxes could not be raised was that more and more barbarian groups occupied more and more of the taxable agricultural land.

had given way to a new kind of tribalism. And this in spite of the fact that the official religion of Rome was now Christianity, the most universalist of faiths.

There were exceptions of course: churchmen such as the Italian St. Paulinus, Bishop of Nola, the Spanish priest Orosius and the Gallic priest Salvian of Marseilles, were hopeful that a new Romano-Germanic order could be constructed.⁷⁹ After all, the fall of Rome could be seen, not just as God's wrath against the Romans, but also His mercy towards the barbarians, by creating an unprecedented opportunity to bring them to the Christian Faith. For as Orosius, a priest from Braga who fled to Hippo from the Vandals, wrote: "It would seem that the mercy of God ought to be praised and glorified in that so many [barbarian] nations are receiving, even at the cost of our own weakening, a knowledge of the truth which they never could have had but for this opportunity."⁸⁰ Moreover, they had the example of the Gothic Christian Martyrs Sabbas (+372) and Nicetas (+378), and the very early translation of the Bible into the Gothic language, to show that a real conversion of the barbarians was possible.⁸¹

However, many, perhaps most Christians did not rise to the universalist spirit that alone could have saved Rome at this hour, making a Romano-Germanic Christian order a real possibility. Thus the Christian poet Prudentius, who had once declared that the peoples of the empire were "equals and bound by a single name", nevertheless despised the barbarians:

*As beasts from men, as dumb from those who speak,
As from the good who God's commandments seek,
Differ the foolish heathen, so Rome stands
Alone in pride above barbarian lands.*⁸²

In the last analysis it was this pride, more than any purely political or economic factors, that destroyed Old Rome. Rome ceased to be the universal ruler when she abandoned her own tradition of universalism, transmuted now into *Christian* universalism. By refusing to come to terms with Alaric because

⁷⁹ And not only churchmen. The senator and philosopher Themistius, writing in about 370, said that "it is the task of kings – those who have a right to that title – rather than rooting out completely this surfeit of human temperament whenever they restrain the insurgent barbarians, to safeguard and protect them as an integral part of the empire. For this is how things are: he who harries the barbarians to no good purpose sets himself up as king of the Romans alone, while he who shows compassion in his triumph knows himself to be king of all men, especially over those whom he protected and watched over when he had the chance to destroy them utterly" (*Oration 10*; in M.J. Cohen and John Major, *History in Quotations*, London: Cassel, 2004, p. 113).

⁸⁰ Orosius, *Seven Books of History against the Pagans*, VII, 41.

⁸¹ Unfortunately, most of the Goths were converted to Arianism rather than Orthodox Christianity, in spite of the intense efforts of St. John Chrysostom (+407) to draw them to the truth faith... See J.W.C. Wand, *A History of the Early Church to A.D.500*, London: Methuen, 1982, pp. 181-184.

⁸² Prudentius, in Grant, *op. cit.*, p. 132.

he was a Goth (albeit a Christian Goth), although he was not seeking to destroy Rome but only find a place for his people within her empire, the Romans provoked the first sack of Rome in 410, which weakened the State and made later, still more catastrophic sacks inevitable.

It was not the Emperors that were to blame: although there were no really distinguished Emperors after Theodosius I, they remained faithful to Orthodox Christianity. The burdens they imposed on the people were not imposed willingly, but because the desperate situation of the empire called for drastic remedies. The remedies failed because Roman society was divided both against itself and against her non-Roman subjects and foederati - and a divided house cannot stand...

In the past Rome had not been too proud to learn from, and unite with, the nations whom she conquered. The classic example was the Classical Greeks who conquered Rome culturally while submitting to her politically. Nor, centuries later, had she despised the humble fishermen who preached a Jewish God Whom they themselves had crucified. The success of the apostles even among the emperor's own family was witnessed by St. Paul, who declared: "My bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace [of the emperor]" (Philippians 1.13), and came to fruition with the conversion of St. Constantine. Even when the last pagan Roman emperor, Julian the apostate, tried to reverse the Constantinian revolution, the momentum proved unstoppable. Like all the previous persecutors of the Christians, he perished in agony, crying, "You have triumphed, Galilean!" And when the last Emperor to unite East and West, Theodosius the Great, bowed in penitence before a Christian bishop, Ambrose of Milan, it seemed as if Ambrose's dream of a Rome purged of its pagan vices and uniting its traditional virtues to the Cross of Christ - a Rome truly invicta and aeterna because united to the invincible and eternal God - had been realized.

For, as St. Leo the Great, Pope of Rome, said in the next century, addressing Rome: "[The Apostles] promoted thee to such glory, that being made a holy nation, a chosen people, a priestly and royal state, and the head of the world through the blessed Peter's holy See thou didst attain a wider sway by the worship of God than by earthly government. For although thou wast increased by many victories, and didst extend thy rule on land and sea, yet what thy toils in war subdued is less than what the peace of Christ has conquered... That state, in ignorance of the Author of its aggrandisement, though it ruled almost all nations, was enthralled by the errors of them all, and seemed to itself to have fostered religion greatly, because it rejected no falsehood [an excellent definition of ecumenism]. And hence its emancipation through Christ was the more wondrous in that it had been so fast bound by Satan."⁸³

However, while the Western Empire died, Christian Romanitas itself did not die in the West. Although the Antichrist took its place temporarily in the sense

⁸³ St. Leo, *Sermon LXXXII*, on the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul.

that pagan and heretical rulers took the place of Orthodox ones, under the rubble of the old empire new kingdoms were arising that were to restore Orthodoxy and reincarnate the spirit of Christian Rome, uniting Romans and barbarians in the One, Holy and Catholic Church. As Peter Heather writes, “new rulers at the head of politically reasonably coherent bodies of military manpower, which had within living memory originated from beyond the imperial frontier, were now masters of the bulk of the old Roman west. Alongside Odovacar, Anglo-Saxon kings controlled most of central and southern Britain, their Frankish counterparts ran northern and eastern Gaul, Visigothic monarchs controlled south-western Gaul and Spain, Burgundian dynasts the Rhone valley, and the richest lands of Roman North Africa were in the hands of the Vandalic Hasding dynasty. Groups from the old north-central zone of Europe as it had stood at the birth of Christ thus generated a huge revolution on Roman soil, replacing the old monolithic empire with a series of successor states.”⁸⁴

Moreover, the memory of Old Rome and her achievement did not die; it was to remain profoundly influential for centuries to come. And there continued to be great native Romans, such as St. Gregory the Great, who remained passionately attached to bringing the glorious traditions of Rome – both Christian and pre-Christian – to the unenlightened barbarians. Even the twentieth-century atheist philosopher Bertrand Russell concluded: “The problem of a durable and satisfactory social order can only be solved by combining the solidity of the Roman Empire with the idealism of St. Augustine’s *City of God*...”⁸⁵

*March 12/25, 2016.
St. Gregory the Great, Pope of Rome.*

⁸⁴ Heather, *op. cit.*, p. xvii.

⁸⁵ Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy*, London: Allen Unwin, 1946, p. 515.

8. THE RETURN OF SOCIALISM

Today's world is very complicated and confusing, with many opposing tendencies simultaneously at work. However, one trend is clear that would have been hard to predict only twenty years ago: the return of Socialism. Weren't we supposed to have reached "the End of History" and the worldwide triumph of liberal democracy and the free market at the end of the Cold War? What happened to that liberal optimism? Why is a system that was supposed to have been finally discredited become so popular again?

And we are not talking only about the nostalgia for Stalin and Stalinism that has resurfaced in Russia. That could have been predicted from the fact that Communism was never rooted out in Eastern Europe the way Nazism was after the Second World War. Soviet Russia was never defeated militarily; there were no trials of Soviet political leaders or camp commanders, no lustration process; and so the virus was never expelled from the organism. And now it has re-emerged – purged, it is true, of much of its Marxist ideological content – but alive and well, and with an extra nationalist colouring that makes it still more dangerous. It is Socialism with a Fascist face...

However, as we said, this could have been predicted. What has been much more unexpected is the rise of Socialism in the West. Let us take three leading Western countries, pillars of the Western Alliance in the Cold War period: France, Britain and the United States. France is burdened with the Socialist government of François Hollande, and is a leading supporter of that quintessentially Socialist project, the European Union. Britain has a Conservative government, but large sections of the electorate have recently opted for extreme Left parties – the Scottish Nationalist Party and the "old look" Labour Party of the Marxist Jeremy Corbyn. Meanwhile, the United States has seen a similar surge in support for the Marxist Bernie Sanders.

And what are we to make of the fact that Greeks, whose pagan ancestors were the first to make freedom and democracy into national ideals, have elected the hardline Marxist Party of Syriza?... The West as a whole appears to have taken a turn for the extreme Left at just the moment when the liberal model seemed to have triumphed worldwide... How are we to explain this resurgence of Socialism in spite of the fact that old and new failures of the system – such as Kim Il Sung's North Korea, or Chavez's Venezuela – are still not hard to find?

Of course, Socialism, it should not be forgotten, is a western teaching. Marx and Engels lived and worked in the West, and the German Social Democratic Party was a powerful contender for power long before the Russian Social Democrats got going. And, as in Eastern Europe, Socialism in the West was never rooted out of the system: it merely waxed and waned with changes in intellectual fashion and the results of various wars, both hot and cold.

When Solzhenitsyn came to the West in the 1970s and noted sadly how many western intellectuals were still willing to support Soviet Socialism in spite of the (to him) manifest failure, not to say massive criminality, of the system, he speculated that westerners would never understand it until they had experienced its joys on their own back. Over forty years later, the Romanian-American Professor Florin Curta has expressed a similar thought. Asked why he thought socialist ideology was gaining in popularity among Americans, he said: "It's a matter of certain segments of that population, especially the young ones, and I think that has something to do with two factors, one of which is the distance in time between the real experience, the historical significance of communism. In other words, the parents of those young people who are now very enthusiastic about socialism and Bernie Sanders were those lived during the Cold War. So to them, socialism, or even more so communism, was a real threat. And they could see under their own eyes how that form of living was out there.

"Also the lack of historical knowledge. I would say the school system is responsible for that. You get courses at the university on the Holocaust, but you don't get courses on the history of communism. Last time I checked, [it was estimated] 100 million people were killed under communism by various regimes in various parts of the world. That seems to have passed without a note in the academic world. I think that lack of prominence in the curriculum, in other words, not teaching what really happened, and the sheer ignorance about the disaster in terms of human cost, economic cost, in tragedy in general is responsible for this rosy picture of socialism."⁸⁶

This is plausible. And yet it throws up some puzzling paradoxes... Let us ask again the question: why should people living in the relative comfort and prosperity of the West – that is, relative to almost every civilization in history – want to destroy it for another system proven to *destroy* comfort and prosperity? Curta points not only to a failure of historical education in the West, but also to the ideals of social justice, which are so dear to the hearts of young people. These two factors are inter-linked, because if the young people knew more history, they would know that, contrary to Socialist propaganda, Socialism not only does not destroy social injustice but actually creates incomparably greater injustice and poverty – not to mention tyranny and sadistic cruelty – than is found in pre-socialist or capitalist systems.

But this explanation does not satisfy. As Curta points out, everyone knows about the six million victims of the Holocaust, so why do they not know about the 100 million people (at least) who perished miserably under Socialism? Western historical education may be defective, but for anyone who wants to

⁸⁶ Julianne Stanford, "Professor raised under communism explains academics' love of socialism – and why they're wrong", *The College Fix*, March 23, 2016, <http://www.thecollegefix.com/post/26717/>

know the truth it is not difficult to unearth the crimes of the Soviet Gulag, the Chinese Great Leap Forward and the Cambodian killing fields...

However, here's the rub: do they want to know the truth? Is not the real explanation that in spite of the abundance of information freely available in the West, people *do not love the truth* and therefore, as St. Paul says, "God sends them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, that they all may be condemned who do not believe the truth" (II Thessalonians 2.11-2). Western man does not love the truth, and so God is allowing him to be seduced again by an old lie.

Where, finally, does this leave Eastern man? Curta says that the parents of today's young people in Eastern Europe had a direct knowledge of the evils of Socialism, and so "to them, socialism, or even more so communism, was a real threat". And yet the opposite is happening now: it is especially the older generation in the former Soviet Union that is fiercely upholding the reputation of Stalin!

Here we need a deeper explanation. Part of it can be found in the psychological phenomenon known as "cognitive dissonance". A man is proved wrong in a certain belief. But this offends his pride, so instead of abandoning the false belief, he insists on it even more strongly than before. The more clearly it has been exposed as false, the more energy and passion he puts into proving that it was true after all.

But we need to go still deeper, towards a *spiritual* explanation. It is not only the truth about Socialism that Eastern man is rejecting: he is also rejecting the truth of *Orthodoxy* that he embraced before the revolution. Orthodoxy exists in the collective unconscious of both Western and Eastern man, for the whole of Europe was once Orthodox. But it is closer to the surface in the East than in the West simply because Orthodoxy was the official religion of the East less than one hundred years ago, whereas the West was last Orthodox nearly one thousand years ago. And so the need to repress it with violence is felt more strongly and urgently in the East.

Paradoxically, of course - and here we see the extraordinary cunning of the devil - "Orthodoxy" is now enjoying something of a revival in the East. In this way Eastern man can console himself that he is indeed going back to the faith of his fathers. And yet in his heart of hearts he knows that it is not so; he knows that "Patriarch" Cyril has nothing in common with St. Tikhon of Moscow, and that Putin is the very opposite of that mildest and most right-believing of monarchs, Tsar-Martyr Nicholas II... But until he comes to himself he will insist with maniacal energy that today's neo-Soviet (and neo-Fascist) Russia is truly continuous with pre-revolutionary Russia, and that the "Russian world" of Putinism is infinitely superior to the corrupt and atheist West. Nor will he fear to destroy both himself and Western man in his fanatical and hate-filled determination to prove his point...

*March 12/25, 2016.
St. Gregory the Great, Pope of Rome.*

9. THE HEREDITARY PRINCIPLE AND THE TIME OF TROUBLES

The whole of Russian history from Riurik to Nicholas II (862-1917) was the history of only two, interrelated dynasties – the Riuriks and the Romanovs. Only in the Time of Troubles (1598-1612) was that continuity of dynasty briefly interrupted. This continuity of the hereditary principle in Russian history has no parallel in world history with the possible exception of the very different case of China.

And yet the Troubles themselves cannot be understood if we do not take into account the continuing importance of the hereditary principle in the Russian mind in that period. According to V.O. Kliuchevsky, the soil for the Time of Troubles “was prepared by the harassed state of the people’s minds, by a general state of discontent with the reign of Ivan the Terrible – discontent that increased under Boris Godunov. The end of the dynasty and the subsequent attempt to revive it in the persons of the pretenders provided a stimulus for the Troubles. Their basic causes were, first, the people’s view of the old dynasty’s relation to the Muscovite state and consequently their difficulty in grasping the idea of an elected tsar, and secondly – the political structure of the state, which created social discord by its heavy demands on the people and an inequitable distribution of state dues. The first cause gave rise to the need of reviving the extinct ruling line, and thus furthered the pretenders’ success; the second transformed a dynastic squabble into social and political anarchy.”⁸⁷

The Russian people understood the state to be the personal property of the tsar and of his blood descendants. They could not conceive of a non-hereditary tsar, a legitimate ruler who was not the heir by blood of the previous tsar; hence the confusion when the last Riurik tsar, Theodore, died without issue. Boris Godunov was related to the Riuriks by marriage – but may have killed the Tsarevich Dmitri. So he, in the end, was rejected by the people. Tsar Vasili Shuisky was not a Riurik, but was “the boyars’ tsar”. So he, too, was not acceptable. The pretenders were followed because they claimed to be the Tsarevich. But their claims were of course false.

The tsar had to be a “born tsar”. Only Michael Romanov fitted that role because his family was related to the Riuriks through Ivan IV’s first wife, Anastasia Romanova... And so in almost all his proclamations Michael called himself the grandson of Ivan the Terrible.

Since the hereditary principle is commonly considered to be irrational insofar as it supposedly places the government of the State “at the mercy of chance”, it will be worth examining its significance in Russian Orthodox statehood more closely.

⁸⁷ Kliuchevsky, *A Course in Russian History: The Seventeenth Century*, Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1994, p. 60.

Some points need emphasizing. First, the hereditary principle was upheld by a still deeper principle: that the tsar had to be Orthodox. The second False Dmitri and the Polish King Sigismund's son Vladislav were both rejected by St. Hermogen, Patriarch of Moscow, because they were Catholics.

Secondly, after electing the first Romanov tsar, the people retained no right to depose him or any of his successors. On the contrary, they elected a hereditary dynasty, and specifically bound themselves by an oath to be loyal to that dynasty *forever*. Hence the peculiar horror and *accursedness* of their rejection of Tsar Nicholas II in 1917... As Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow said in 1851: "God established a king on earth in the image of His single rule in the heavens; He arranged for an autocratic king on earth in the image of His almighty power; and He placed an hereditary king on earth in the image of His imperishable Kingdom, which lasts from ages to ages."⁸⁸

It follows that the hereditary tsar's rule is inviolable. As Metropolitan Philaret writes: "A government that is not fenced about by an inviolability that is venerated religiously by the whole people cannot act with the whole fullness of power or that freedom of zeal that is necessary for the construction and preservation of the public good and security. How can it develop its whole strength in its most beneficial direction, when its power constantly finds itself in an insecure position, struggling with other powers that cut short its actions in as many different directions as are the opinions, prejudices and passions more or less dominant in society? How can it surrender itself to the full force of its zeal, when it must of necessity divide its attentions between care for the prosperity of society and anxiety about its own security? But if the government is so lacking in firmness, then the State is also lacking in firmness. Such a State is like a city built on a volcanic mountain: what significance does its hard earth have when under it is hidden a power that can at any minute turn everything into ruins? Subjects who do not recognize the inviolability of rulers are incited by the hope of licence to achieve licence and predominance, and between the horrors of anarchy and oppression they cannot establish in themselves that obedient freedom which is the focus and soul of public life."⁸⁹

Thirdly, while the Zemsky Sobor of 1613 was, of course, an election, it was by no means a democratic election in the modern sense, but rather a recognition of *God's* election of a ruler on the model of the Israelites' election of Jephtha (Judges 11.11). For, as Fr. Lev Lebedev writes: "Tsars are not elected! And a Council, even a Zemsky Sobor, cannot be the source of his power. The kingdom is a calling of God, the Council can determine who is the lawful Tsar and summon him."⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Metropolitan Philaret, "Slovo v den' Blagochestivejshego Gosudaria Imperatora Nikolaia Pavlovich" (Sermon on the day of his Most Pious Majesty Emperor Nicholas Pavlovich).

⁸⁹ Metropolitan Philaret, *Sochinenia* (Works), 1848, vol. 2, p. 134; *Pravoslavnaia Zhizn'* (Orthodox Life), 49, N 9 (573), September, 1997, p. 6.

⁹⁰ Lebedev, *Velikorossia*, St. Petersburg, 1999, p. 126.

Again, as Ivan Solonevich writes, “when, after the Time of Troubles, the question was raised concerning the restoration of the monarchy, there was no hint of an ‘election to the kingdom’. There was a ‘search’ for people who had the greatest hereditary right to the throne. And not an ‘election’ of the more worthy. There were not, and could not be, any ‘merits’ in the young Michael Fyodorovich. But since only the hereditary principle affords the advantage of absolutely indisputability, it was on this that the ‘election’ was based.”⁹¹

St. John Maximovich writes: “It was almost impossible to elect some person as tsar for his qualities; everyone evaluated the candidates from his own point of view....

“What drew the hearts of all to Michael Romanov? He had neither experience of statecraft, nor had he done any service to the state. He was not distinguished by the state wisdom of Boris Godunov or by the eminence of his race, as was Basil Shuisky. He was sixteen years old, and ‘Misha Romanov’, as he was generally known, had not yet managed to show his worth in anything. But why did the Russian people rest on him, and why with his crowning did all the quarrels and disturbances regarding the royal throne come to an end? The Russian people longed for a lawful, ‘native’ Sovereign, and was convinced that without him there could be no order or peace in Russia. When Boris Godunov and Prince Basil Shuisky were elected, although they had, to a certain degree, rights to the throne through their kinship with the previous tsars, they were not elected by reason of their exclusive rights, but their personalities were taken into account. There was no strict lawful succession in their case. This explained the success of the pretenders. However, it was almost impossible to elect someone as tsar for his qualities. Everyone evaluated the candidates from their point of view. However, the absence of a definite law which would have provided an heir in the case of the cutting off of the line of the Great Princes and Tsars of Moscow made it necessary for the people itself to indicate who they wanted as tsar. The descendants of the appanage princes, although they came from the same race as that of the Moscow Tsars (and never forgot that), were in the eyes of the people simple noblemen, ‘serfs’ of the Moscow sovereigns; their distant kinship with the royal line had already lost its significance. Moreover, it was difficult to establish precisely which of the descendants of St. Vladimir on the male side had the most grounds for being recognized as the closest heir to the defunct royal line. In such circumstances all united in the suggestion that the extinct Royal branch should be continued by the closest relative of the last ‘native’, lawful Tsar. The closest relatives of Tsar Theodore Ioannovich were his cousins on his mother’s side: Theodore, in monasticism Philaret, and Ivan Nikitich Romanov, both of whom had sons. In that case the throne had to pass to Theodore, as the eldest, but his monasticism and the rank of Metropolitan of Rostov was an obstacle to this. His heir was his only son Michael. Thus the question was no longer about the election of a Tsar, but about the recognition that a definite person had the rights to the throne. The Russian people, tormented by the time of troubles and the lawlessness,

⁹¹ Solonevich, *Narodnaia Monarkhia* (Popular Monarchy), Minsk, 1998, pp. 82-83.

welcomed this decision, since it saw that order could be restored only by a lawful 'native' Tsar. The people remembered the services of the Romanovs to their homeland, their sufferings for it, the meek Tsaritsa Anastasia Romanova, the firmness of Philaret Nikitich. All this still more strongly attracted the hearts of the people to the announced tsar. But these qualities were possessed also by some other statesmen and sorrowers for Rus'. And this was not the reason for the election of Tsar Michael Romanovich, but the fact that in him Rus' saw their most lawful and native Sovereign.

"In the acts on the election to the kingdom of Michael Fyodorovich, the idea that he was ascending the throne by virtue of his election by the people was carefully avoided, and it was pointed out that the new Tsar was the elect of God, the direct descendant of the last lawful Sovereign."⁹²

Fourthly, the tsar is above the law. As Solonevich writes: "The fundamental idea of the Russian monarchy was most vividly and clearly expressed by A.S. Pushkin just before the end of his life: 'There must be one person standing higher than everybody, higher even than the law.' In this formulation, 'one man', Man is placed in very big letters above the law. This formulation is completely unacceptable for the Roman-European cast of mind, for which the law is everything: *dura lex, sed lex*. The Russian mind places, man, mankind, the soul higher than the law, giving to the law only that place which it should occupy: the place occupied by traffic rules. Of course, with corresponding punishments for driving on the left side. Man is not for the sabbath, but the sabbath for man. It is not that man is for the fulfilment of the law, but the law is for the preservation of man...

"The whole history of humanity is filled with the struggle of tribes, people, nations, classes, estates, groups, parties, religions and whatever you like. It's almost as Hobbes put it: 'War by everyone against everyone'. How are we to find a neutral point of support in this struggle? An arbiter standing above the tribes, nations, peoples, classes, estates, etc.? Uniting the people, classes and religions into a common whole? Submitting the interests of the part to the interests of the whole? And placing moral principles above egoism, which is always characteristic of every group of people pushed forward the summit of public life?"⁹³

But if the tsar is above the law, how can he not be a tyrant, insofar as, in the famous words of Lord Acton, "power corrupts, and absolute power absolutely corrupts"?

In order to answer this question we must remember, first, that as we have seen, the tsar's power is not absolute insofar as he is limited by the law of God and Orthodoxy.

⁹² St. John Maximovich, *Proiskhozhdenie zakona o prestolonasledii v Rossii* (The Origin of the Law of Succession in Russia), Podolsk, 1994, pp. 13, 43-45.

⁹³ Solonevich, *op. cit.*, pp. 84, 85.

Secondly, it is not only tsars, but rulers of all kinds that are subject to the temptations of power. Indeed, these temptations may even be worse with democratic rulers; for whereas the tsar stands above all factional interests, an elected president necessarily represents the interests only of his party at the expense of the country as a whole. "Western thought," writes Solonevich, "sways from the dictatorship of capitalism to the dictatorship of the proletariat, but no representative of this thought has even so much as thought of 'the dictatorship of conscience'."⁹⁴

"The distinguishing characteristic of Russian monarchy, which was given to it at its birth, consists in the fact that the Russian monarchy expressed the will not of the most powerful, but the will of the whole nation, religiously given shape by Orthodoxy and politically given shape by the Empire. The will of the nation, religiously given shape by Orthodoxy will be 'the dictatorship of conscience' Only in this way can we explain the possibility of the manifesto of February 19, 1861 [when Tsar Alexander II freed the peasants]: 'the dictatorship of conscience' was able overcome the opposition of the ruling class, and the ruling class proved powerless. We must always have this distinction in mind: the Russian monarchy is the expression of the will, that is: the conscience, of the nation, not the will of the capitalists, which both French Napoleons expressed, or the will of the aristocracy, which all the other monarchies of Europe expressed: the Russian monarchy is the closest approximation to the ideal of monarchy in general. This ideal was never attained by the Russian monarchy - for the well-known reason that no ideal is realisable in our life. In the history of the Russian monarchy, as in the whole of our world, there were periods of decline, of deviation, of failure, but there were also periods of recovery such as world history has never known."⁹⁵

Now State power, which, like power in the family or the tribe, always includes in itself an element of coercion, "is constructed in three ways: by inheritance, by election and by seizure: monarchy, republic, dictatorship. In practice all of these change places: the man who seizes power becomes a hereditary monarch (Napoleon I), the elected president becomes the same (Napoleon III), or tries to become it (Oliver Cromwell). The elected 'chancellor', Hitler, becomes a seizer of power. But in general these are nevertheless exceptions.

"Both a republic and a dictatorship presuppose a struggle for power - democratic in the first case and necessarily bloody in the second: Stalin - Trotsky, Mussolini-Matteotti, Hitler-Röhm. In a republic, as a rule, the struggle is unbloody. However, even an unbloody struggle is not completely without cost. Aristide Briand, who became French Prime Minister several times, admitted that 95% of his strength was spent on the struggle for power and only

⁹⁴ Solonevich, *op. cit.*, pp. 85-86.

⁹⁵ Solonevich, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

five percent on the work of power. And even this five percent was exceptionally short-lived.

“Election and seizure are, so to speak, rationalist methods. Hereditary power is, strictly speaking, the power of chance, indisputable if only because the chance of birth is completely indisputable. You can recognise or not recognise the principle of monarchy in general. But no one can deny the existence of the positive law presenting the right of inheriting the throne to the first son of the reigning monarch. Having recourse to a somewhat crude comparison, this is something like an ace in cards... An ace is an ace. No election, no merit, and consequently no quarrel. Power passes without quarrel and pain: the king is dead, long live the king!”⁹⁶

We may interrupt Solonevich’s argument here to qualify his use of the word “chance”. The fact that a man inherits the throne only because he is the firstborn of his father may be “by chance” from a human point of view. But from the Divine point of view it is *election*. For, as Bishop Ignaty Brianchaninov writes: “There is no blind chance! God rules the world, and everything that takes place in heaven and beneath the heavens takes place according to the judgement of the All-wise and All-powerful God.”⁹⁷ Moreover, as Bishop Ignaty also writes, “in blessed Russia, according to the spirit of the pious people, the Tsar and the fatherland constitute one whole, as in a family the parents and their children constitute one whole.”⁹⁸ This being so, it was only natural that the law of succession should be hereditary, from father to son.

Solonevich continues: “The human individual, born by chance as heir to the throne, is placed in circumstances which guarantee him the best possible professional preparation from a technical point of view. His Majesty Emperor Nicholas Alexandrovich was probably one of the most educated people of his time. The best professors of Russia taught him both law and strategy and history and literature. He spoke with complete freedom in three foreign languages. His knowledge was not one-sided... and was, if one can so express it, living knowledge...

“The Russian tsar was in charge of everything and was obliged to know everything - it goes without saying, as far as humanly possible. He was a ‘specialist’ in that sphere which excludes all specialization. This was a specialism standing above all the specialisms of the world and embracing them all. That is, the general volume of erudition of the Russian monarch had in mind that which every philosophy has in mind: the concentration in one point of the whole sum of human knowledge. However, with this colossal qualification, that ‘the sum of knowledge’ of the Russian tsars grew in a seamless manner from the living practice of the past and was checked against

⁹⁶ Solonevich, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

⁹⁷ Brianchaninov, “Sud’by Bozhii” (The Judgements of God), *Polnoe Sobranie Tvorenij* (Complete Collection of Works), volume II, Moscow, 2001, p. 72.

⁹⁸ Brianchaninov, *Pis’ma* (Letters), Moscow, 2000, p. 781.

the living practice of the present. True, that is how almost all philosophy is checked – for example, with Robespierre, Lenin and Hitler – but, fortunately for humanity, such checking takes place comparatively rarely....

“The heir to the Throne, later the possessor of the Throne, is placed in such conditions under which temptations are reduced... to a minimum. He is given everything he needs beforehand. At his birth he receives an order, which he, of course, did not manage to earn, and the temptation of vainglory is liquidated in embryo. He is absolutely provided for materially – the temptation of avarice is liquidated in embryo. He is the only one having the Right – and so competition falls away, together with everything linked with it. Everything is organized in such a way that the personal destiny of the individual should be welded together into one whole with the destiny of the nation. Everything that a person would want to have for himself is already given him. And the person automatically merges with the general good.

“One could say that all this is possessed also by a dictator of the type of Napoleon, Stalin or Hitler. But this would be less than half true: everything that the dictator has he conquered, and all this he must constantly defend – both against competitors and against the nation. The dictator is forced to prove every day that it is precisely he who is the most brilliant, great, greatest and inimitable, for if not he, but someone else, is not the most brilliant, then it is obvious that that other person has the right to power...

“We can, of course, quarrel over the principle of ‘chance’ itself. A banal, rationalist, pitifully scientific point of view is usually formulated thus: the chance of birth may produce a defective man. But we, we will elect the best... Of course, ‘the chance of birth’ can produce a defective man. We have examples of this: Tsar Theodore Ivanovich. Nothing terrible happened. For the monarchy ‘is not the arbitrariness of a single man’, but ‘a system of institutions’, - a system can operate temporarily even without a ‘man’. But simple statistics show that the chances of such ‘chance’ events occurring are very small. The chance of ‘a genius on the throne’ appearing is still smaller.

“I proceed from the axiom that a genius in politics is worse than the plague. For a genius is a person who thinks up something that is new in principle. In thinking up something that is new in principle, he invades the organic life of the country and cripples it, as it was crippled by Napoleon, Stalin and Hitler...

“The power of the tsar is the power of the average, averagely clever man over two hundred million average, averagely clever people... V. Klyuchevsky said with some perplexity that the first Muscovite princes, the first gatherers of the Russian land, were completely average people: - and yet, look, they gathered the Russian land. This is quite simple: average people have acted in the interests of average people and the line of the nation has coincided with the line of power. So the average people of the Novgorodian army went over to the

side of the average people of Moscow, while the average people of the USSR are running away in all directions from the genius of Stalin.”⁹⁹

Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow expressed the superiority of the hereditary over the elective principle as follows: “What conflict does election for public posts produce in other peoples! With what conflict, and sometimes also with what alarm do they attain the legalization of the right of public election! Then there begins the struggle, sometimes dying down and sometimes rising up again, sometimes for the extension and sometimes for the restriction of this right. The incorrect extension of the right of social election is followed by its incorrect use. It would be difficult to believe it if we did not read in foreign newspapers that elective votes are sold; that sympathy or lack of sympathy for those seeking election is expressed not only by votes for and votes against, but also by sticks and stones, as if a man can be born from a beast, and rational business out of the fury of the passions; that ignorant people make the choice between those in whom wisdom of state is envisaged, lawless people participate in the election of future lawgivers, peasants and craftsmen discuss and vote, not about who could best keep order in the village or the society of craftsmen, but about who is capable of administering the State.

“Thanks be to God! It is not so in our fatherland. Autocratic power, established on the age-old law of heredity, which once, at a time of impoverished heredity, was renewed and strengthened on its former basis by a pure and rational election, stands in inviolable firmness and acts with calm majesty. Its subjects do not think of striving for the right of election to public posts in the assurance that the authorities care for the common good and know through whom and how to construct it.”¹⁰⁰

“God, in accordance with the image of His heavenly single rule, has established a tsar on earth; in accordance with the image of His almighty power, He has established an autocratic tsar; in accordance with the image of His everlasting Kingdom, which continues from age to age, He has established a hereditary tsar.”¹⁰¹

An elected president is installed by the will of man, and can be said to be installed by the will of God only indirectly, by permission. By contrast, the determination of who will be born as the heir to the throne is completely beyond the power of man, and so entirely within the power of God. The hereditary principle therefore ensures that the tsar will indeed be elected – but by God, not by man.

March 26 / April 8, 2016.

Afterfeast of the Annunciation of the Mother of God.

⁹⁹ Solonevich, *op. cit.*, pp. 87-88, 89-90, 91-92.

¹⁰⁰ Metropolitan Philaret, *Sochinenia* (Works), 1861, vol. 3, pp. 322-323; *Pravoslavnaia Zhizn'* (Orthodox Life), 49, N 9 (573), September, 1997, p. 9.

¹⁰¹ Metropolitan Philaret, *Sochinenia* (Works), 1877, vol. 3, p. 442; *Pravoslavnaia Zhizn'* (Orthodox Life), 49, N 9 (573), September, 1997, p. 5.

Holy Archangel Gabriel.

10. THE GEORGIAN MONARCHY

Georgia, the lot of the Most Holy Mother of God, had played only a minor role in Orthodox history since her baptism by St. Nina in the fourth century. However, in 1008 a political and ecclesiastical unification took place between the kingdom of Abkhazia (much larger then than now, with its capital at Kutaisi) and Kartli (with its capital in Uplistsikhe) under the authority of King Bagrat III, who was now called “the king of kings of All Georgia”.

Since the western kingdom contained two metropolias under the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the Byzantine Emperor Basil II sent an army into Georgia in 1014, but it was soundly beaten. In 1021-1022, however, the Byzantine army, strengthened by the presence of Varangians (probably Russians from Kievan Rus') overcame the Georgians. But the Byzantines wisely did not crush the Georgian state system, which gradually strengthened under Byzantine tutelage.

Moreover, in the course of the next two centuries Byzantine influence in general became stronger, and Byzantine liturgical practice became the norm throughout the autocephalous Church of Georgia...¹⁰²

It is from the moment of the union of 1008, writes Aristides Papadakis, “that we may speak of Georgia...”

“The new unity... brought Church and State closer together. The ecclesiastical hierarchy were doubtless advocates of national unity and in this sense were of the greatest benefit to Georgia’s Bagratid rulers. The catholicus on the other hand retained control of ecclesiastical affairs and administration, and was even formally recognised as the spiritual king of the nation. However, the Georgian primate along with all major bishops and abbots were temporal princes of the realm as well, and actually sat on the council of state or Darbazi together with the feudal princes of Georgia...”

“Arguably, the two most important members of the new Caucasian monarchy were David II (1089-1125) and Queen Tamar (1184-1212). Both of these Bagratid sovereigns were in the end canonized as saints by the Georgian Orthodox Church. By extending Georgia’s power far beyond its historic frontiers, these rulers were in the final analysis responsible for creating a genuine Georgian hegemony not only over Georgians but over Muslims and Armenians as well. David II was surnamed by contemporaries the Restorer or Rebuilder (aghmashenebeli) for good reason...His reign constitutes a genuine ‘epic period’ in the history of medieval Georgia. David’s victories against the Muslims were especially important since they paved the way for the Transcaucasian multinational empire of his successors. In 1122 he was able to gain control of Tiflis (it had been for centuries an Islamic

¹⁰² V.M. Lurye, “Tysiacha let Gruzinskogo Imperializma” (One Thousand Years of Georgian Imperialism), *Russkij Zhurnal* (Russian Journal), August, 2008; Alexander Dvorkin, *Ocherki po Istorii Vselenskoj Pravoslavnoj Istorii* (Sketches on the History of the Universal Orthodox Church), Nizhni-Novgorod, 2006, pp. 824-825.

town) and to reestablish it as Georgia's capital. But his great triumph was without doubt his decisively humiliating defeat of the Seljuks a year earlier at the battle of Didgori (12 August).¹⁰³ Georgians to this day celebrate the victory annually as a holiday in August.

"In addition to a strengthened monarchy and a magnified Georgia, David II also bequeathed to his descendants a reformed Church. The attention he was willing to devote to the welfare of the Church as a whole, was doubtlessly genuine. He was also evidently concerned with Christian unity and repeatedly labored to convince the separated Armenian community to return to the unity of the Orthodox Church by accepting Chalcedonian Christology and by renouncing schism. His vigorous efforts to establish ecclesiastical discipline, eliminate abuses, and reorganize the Church, culminated in 1103 at the synod of Ruisi-Urbnisi. This meeting – one of the most famous in Georgian history – was presided over by the king who had also convened it...

"It was during [Queen Tamar's] rule that the great golden age of Georgian history and culture reached its summit. There is no denying the multinational nature of her kingdom by the dawn of the thirteenth century. By then Georgia was one of the most powerful states in the Near East. As a result of Queen Tamar's numerous campaigns, which took her armies to the shores of the Black Sea, Paphlagonia and further east into Iranian territory, the Georgian state extended far beyond its original borders. By 1212 the entire Caucasus, the southern coast of the Black Sea, most of Armenia and Iranian Azerbaijan, had in fact been annexed to the Georgian state....

"[The queen was in general friendly towards] Saladin, who was actually responsible in the end for the return to the Georgians in the Holy City of properties that had once belonged to them. In contrast, Tamar's relations with the Latins in the crusader states... were rarely courteous or fraternal. The Orthodox Georgians never actually directly involved themselves with the crusades. This may have been at the root of the friendship Muslims felt for them."¹⁰⁴

However, Tamar defeated the Turks when they tried to conquer Georgia. "During two terrible battles she herself saw the finger of God directing her to the fight, and, with her soldiers, witnessed the miraculous conversion of one of the Mohammedan generals who was made prisoner."¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ "On his own testimony, while meeting an attack from the Turks, both he and his enemies saw S. George protecting him; and on another occasion, he was saved from instant death by a special act of faith, when a thunderbolt falling upon him was prevented from hurting him by the golden image of the Archangel Michael which he wore on his breast" (P. Ioseliani, *A Short History of the Georgian Church*, Jordanville, NY: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1983, p. 115). (V.M.)

¹⁰⁴ Papadakis, *The Orthodox East and the Rise of the Papacy*, Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1994, pp. 139, 140, 141, 143-144.

¹⁰⁵ Ioseliani, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

The Georgians in this, their golden age, saw themselves as sons of the Byzantines. Thus Antony Eastmond writes: "The two hundred years before Tamar's reign saw a very marked change in the depiction of power in Georgia in an attempt to establish an effective form of royal presentation. The Georgian monarchy came increasingly to model itself on imperial rule in Byzantium. The Bagrat'ioni kings began to see themselves as inheritors of Byzantine royal traditions, and displayed themselves as the descendants of Constantine the Great, rather than their own Georgian ancestors, such as Vakhtang Gorgasalan (the great Georgian king who ruled c. 446-510). Between the ninth and twelfth centuries it is possible to trace the way the Bagrat'ionis began to adopt more and more of the trappings of Byzantine political ideas. In the ninth century, Ashot' I the Great (786-826), the first Bagrat'ioni ruler, showed his dependence on Byzantine ideas by accepting the title of Kouropalates; although the only surviving image of the king shows him in a very abstract, indistinguishable form of dress. By the tenth century the Georgians had adopted a more positive Byzantine identity. At the church of Oshk'i (built 963-73), the two founder brothers, Davit and Bagrat' are shown in a donor relief on the exterior wearing very ornate, 'orientalized', Byzantine costume. All earlier royal images in Georgia, as well as the contemporary image of the rival King Leo III of Abkhazia (a neighbouring Georgian Christian kingdom) in the church of K'umurdo (built 964), had shown the rulers in less distinct, or clearly local forms of dress. The choice of dress at Oshk'I showed the outward adherence of the Bagrat'ionis to the Byzantine political system...."

"This gradual process of Byzantinization continued throughout the eleventh century, becoming increasingly dominant. It was encouraged by closer links between the Georgian and Byzantine royal families. Bagrat' IV (1027-72) married Helena, the niece of Romanos III Agyros in 1032; and his daughter, Maria 'of Alania' married two successive Byzantine emperors (Michael VII Doukas and Nikephoros III Botaneiates).

"By the beginning of the twelfth century, there had been a transformation in the whole presentation of the Georgian royal family. In addition to Byzantine court dress, all aspects of the royal environment became 'Byzantinized'. In the royal churches standard Byzantine forms were adopted...

"At Gelati, built between 1106 and 1130 by Davit IV and his son Demet're (1125-54), this Byzantinization reaches its peak... The point of strongest Byzantine influence at Gelati comes in the fresco scenes in the narthex. These show the earliest surviving monumental images of the seven ecumenical councils... Davit IV himself convened and presided at two sets of church councils in his reign, and clearly saw himself as a successor to the early Byzantine emperors and their domination of the church: Davit IV's biographer even calls him a second Constantine..."¹⁰⁶

The most striking example of Georgia's filial relationship to Byzantium can be

¹⁰⁶ Eastwood, "Royal renewal in Georgia: the case of Queen Tamar", in Paul Magdalino (ed.), *New Constantines: the Rhythm of Imperial Renewal in Byzantium, 4th-13th Centuries*, Aldershot: Variorum, 1994, pp. 284, 285, 286.

seen after the capture of Constantinople by the Crusaders in 1204, when “a Georgian army immediately took Trebizond and handed it over to a relative of the queen [Tamara], Alexis Comnenus. He became the first emperor of Trebizond. The empire of the Great Comneni, which at first existed under the vassalage of Georgia, continued to exist for almost three hundred years, outlasting Constantinople, and was destroyed by the Turks only in 1461.”¹⁰⁷

As we ponder why little Georgia should have fared so prosperously and heroically at a time when the Byzantine Empire was being defeated by her enemies, we should remember two factors.

One was the internal unity of the State under its strong and pious rulers. A second was its strictness in relation to heresy. Thus the Georgians were much firmer in relation to the heretical Armenians than the Byzantines were in relation to the heretical Latins during the same period. This refusal to make concessions on the faith for the sake of political gains reaped both spiritual and material fruits for the Georgians.

Thus the Synod of Ruisi-Urbnisis decreed that “an Orthodox Christian was not authorized to contract a marriage either with a heretic or an infidel... Armenians and other monophysite dissidents upon returning to the unity of the Orthodox faith were legally compelled to be rebaptized.”¹⁰⁸

In Tamara’s reign there was an official debate between the Georgians and Armenians at which a great miracle took place: a dog fled in fear from the Orthodox Mysteries of the Georgians, but immediately devoured the sacrifice of the Armenians. As a result, the Armenian nobleman John Mkhargradzeli accepted Orthodoxy and was baptized by Patriarch John.¹⁰⁹

The unity of the kingdom was not achieved without a struggle, even a struggle, at one point, against a form of parliamentary democracy! Thus “in the first year of Tamara’s reign, an officer of the royal court, Kurltu-Arslan, whose dream was to become the Minister of Defense, insisted that a parliament be established in Iani, where, according to his plan, all internal and external problems of the country were to be discussed, and only after that was a notice to be sent to the king for approval. The Isani Parliament was planned to appropriate the legislative power and leave the monarch a symbolic right to approve decisions already made and give orders to carry out the will of the members of this parliament. Thus, the very foundations of the royal institution blessed by God Himself were shaken and the country found itself face to face with the danger of civil war.

“Tamara ordered that Kurlu-Arslan be arrested, but his followers, bearing arms, demanded the release of their leader. In order to avoid imminent bloodshed, Tamara came to a most wise and noble solution, sending to the camp of the rebels

¹⁰⁷ Dvorkin, *op. cit.*, p. 828.

¹⁰⁸ Papadakis, *op. cit.*, p. 142.

¹⁰⁹ *The Life of St. Tamara.*

as negotiators two of the most respectable and revered ladies: Huashak Tsokali, the mother of the Prince Rati, and Kravai Jakeli. The intermediation of the two noble mothers had such an effect on the conspirators that they 'obeyed the orders of their mistress and knelt in repentance before her envoys and swore to serve the queen loyally.' The country felt the strong arm of the king. Tamara appointed her loyal servants to key government posts..."¹¹⁰

Queen Tamara is called a second Constantine, a David and a Solomon in the chronicles.¹¹¹ She deserves both titles as having been great in both peace and war, and having defended Orthodox autocracy against the threat of constitutionalism...

The contrast between Georgia and Bulgaria is instructive: the Georgian kings saw themselves as sons of the Byzantines, and prospered, whereas the Bulgarian tsars saw themselves as rivals, and were brought low...

¹¹⁰ "Holy Righteous Queen Tamara of Georgia", *Orthodox Life*, vol. 53, № 2, March-April, 2003, p. 9.

¹¹¹ Eastwood, *op. cit.*, p. 289.

11. PATRIARCH NIKON AND THE CRISIS OF THE MUSCOVITE AUTOCRACY

Introduction

By the middle of the seventeenth century, and in spite of its defeats at the hands of the Poles and Swedes, the prestige of the Muscovite monarchy among the Orthodox was reaching its height. Even the Greeks were looking to it to deliver them from the Turkish yoke and take over the throne of the Byzantine Emperors. Thus in 1645, during the coronation of Tsar Alexei, Patriarch Joseph for the first time read the "Prayer of Philaret" on the enthronement of the Russian Tsar over the whole *oikoumene*. And in 1649 Patriarch Paisius of Jerusalem wrote to the tsar: "May the All-Holy Trinity multiply you more than all the tsars, and count you worthy to grasp the most lofty throne of the great King Constantine, your forefather, and liberate the peoples of the pious and Orthodox Christians from impious hands. May you be a new Moses, may you liberate us from captivity just as he liberated the sons of Israel from the hands of Pharaoh."¹¹²

As V.M. Lourié writes: "At that time hopes in Greece for a miraculous re-establishment of Constantinople before the end of the world [based on the prophecies of Leo the Wise and others], were somewhat strengthened, if not squeezed out, by hopes on Russia. Anastasius Gordius (1654-1729), the author of what later became an authoritative historical-eschatological interpretation of the Apocalypse (1717-23) called the Russian Empire the guardian of the faith to the very coming of the Messiah. The hopes of the Greeks for liberation from the Turks that were linked with Russia, which had become traditional already from the time of St. Maximus the Greek (1470-1555), also found their place in the interpretations of the Apocalypse. Until the middle of the 19th century itself – until the Greeks, on a wave of pan-European nationalism thought up their 'Great Idea' – Russia would take the place of Byzantium in their eschatological hopes, as being the last Christian Empire. They considered the Russian Empire to be their own, and the Russian Tsar Nicholas (not their Lutheran King Otto) as their own, to the great astonishment and annoyance of European travellers."¹¹³

¹¹² Quoted in Sergius Fomin, *Rossia pered vtorym prishestviem* (Russia before the Second Coming), Sergiev Posad: Holy Trinity – St. Sergius monastery, first edition, 1993, p. 20. Under Alexis Mikhailovich, writes Alexander Solzhenitsyn, "the principle of the 'ministry' (prikaz) did not cease to take precedence over the principle of the 'land' (zemskij): instead of the healthy forces of local government, there was a badly organized bureaucracy – and that for three hundred years to come. The reign of Alexis Mikhailovich is full of rebellions: protests of the people against the voevodas and the central ministries..." (*Le 'Problème Russe' à la fin du xxe siècle*, Paris: Fayard, 1994, p. 13)

¹¹³ Lourié, "O Vozmozhnosti Kontsa Sveta v Odnog Otdel'no Vzyatoj Strane" ("On the Possibility of the End of the World in One Separate Country"), pp. 1-2 (MS).

Tragically, however, it was at precisely this time, when Russia seemed ready to take the place of the Christian Roman Empire in the eyes of all the Orthodox, that the Russian autocracy and Church suffered a simultaneous attack from two sides from which it never fully recovered. From the right came the attack of the "Old Ritualists" or "Old Believers", as they came to be called, who expressed the schismatic and nationalist idea that the only true Orthodoxy was Russian Orthodoxy. From the left came the attack of the westernizing Russian aristocracy and the Greek pseudo-hierarchs of the council of 1666-67, who succeeded in removing the champion of the traditional Orthodox symphony of powers, Patriarch Nikon of Moscow.

The fact that these attacks were able to cause such long-term damage proves that the Russian autocracy was not in such a flourishing condition as it appeared to many of its contemporaries...

1. The Monastyrskij Prikaz

All of the first three Romanov tsars came to power when they were in their teens. This inevitably meant that the power of the tsars was weaker and that, in spite of the good influence of powerful patriarchs such as Philaret and Nikon, some of that power devolved to the boyars. This fact, combined with the continuing greed of the boyars and the general instability that continued to reverberate from the Time of Troubles, caused frequent uprisings among the people during the reign of the second Romanov tsar, Alexei Mikhailovich.

The most serious of these took place in June, 1648 in Moscow. "The June riots," writes V.O. Kliuchevsky, "were a rebellion of the common people against the strong. 'The rabble rose against the boyars,' began plundering their houses and those of the gentry and government clerks, and attacked the most hated of the high officials.

"The lesson had a considerable effect. The court was greatly alarmed. Steps were taken to mollify the Muscovite soldiery and the mob. At the Tsar's command the streltsy [musketeers] were treated to drinks. For several days the Tsar's father-in-law entertained delegates from the taxpaying population of the capital in his home. The Tsar himself, during a church procession, addressed the people with a speech that sounded like an apology, and with tears in his eyes 'begged the rabble' to spare his dear friend and relative Morozov. Promises were lavishly given. The rulers began to fear the community. Rumors went about that the Tsar had become gracious and was driving the strong men out of his realm, that they were being stoned and beaten. Under the old dynasty Moscow had never experienced such stormy manifestations of popular resentment against the ruling classes, had never seen such a rapid transition from contempt for the people to pandering to them or heard such unseemly speeches about the Tsar as spread through the city after the riots. 'The Tsar is a fool. He does what the boyars Morozov and Miloslavsky tell him. They are the real masters, and the Tsar himself knows it, but he says nothing. The devil robbed him of his wits.'

“It was not the Moscow riot of June 1648, soon reenacted in other towns, that prompted the idea of compiling the new law code – there were other reasons for this – but it caused the government to invite representatives of the people to take part in the work. The Zemsky Sobor, called for September 1 of the same year to hear and confirm the new code, was regarded by the government as a means of pacifying the people. We may well believe Patriarch Nikon, who wrote, as though it were a matter of common knowledge, that the Zemsky Sobor was summoned ‘out of fear of the common people and of civil strife, and not for the cause of truth’. There is no doubt that although the riots were not the original reason for undertaking the work of codification, they affected the course of it. The government’s alarm interfered with the work.”¹¹⁴

We may compare Tsar Alexei’s law code, or Ulozhenie, with the Emperor Justinian’s similar and much more famous work of codification, the Corpus juris civilis, also compiled during a period of civil unrest (the Nika riots). Just as Justinian’s code preceded the expansion of his empire to the West (the code was immediately introduced into reconquered Italy), so Alexei’s code preceded the expansion of his empire to the west and the south. The Ulozhenie was the first systematization of law in Russian history. It combined Church canons with laws of the Byzantine emperors, the laws of Russian tsars and great princes and completely new laws. An impressive and necessary work, it was published in 1649 with two print runs of 1200 copies each.

Now the Ulozhenie laid great emphasis on the defence of the Orthodox Faith, and on the rights of the Patriarch and the clergy. Thus in the very first article, strict punishments up to and including the death penalty were prescribed for heresy, and articles 27 to 89 of chapter 10 were devoted to various punishments for offending the clergy, while there were no special sanctions prescribed for offending the tsar.¹¹⁵ And yet by the end of the reign the Patriarch had been deposed, the Church humbled, and the power of the Tsar exalted, a development that was continued and greatly magnified, with enormous consequences for the whole history of Russia, by Tsar Alexei’s son, Peter the Great...

This turn-round began with a controversial section of the Ulozhenie itself, the establishment of the so-called Monastyrskij Prikaz (chapter 13), a purely secular institution that administered disputes between clergy and laity, and also suits involving monasteries, monks and parish clergy. Patriarch Nikon tried hard to get it abolished, but failed. Eventually, in 1675, after Nikon’s fall, it was abolished, but, as Fr. Alexis Nikolin writes, “the interference of the state in church life steadily increased. The property privileges of church institutions

¹¹⁴ Kliuchevsky, *A Course in Russian History. The Seventeenth Century*, Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1994, pp. 142-143.

¹¹⁵ Fr. Alexei Nikolin, *Tserkov’ i Gosudarstvo* (The Church and the State), Moscow: Sretensky monastery, 1997, pp. 70-71.

and the clergy were gradually limited or completely removed. Gradually state obligations were extended to ecclesiastical estates..."¹¹⁶

Of particular significance in this respect was article 42 of chapter 17 of the Ulozhenie, which forbade the giving or sale of estates to the Church. This article "did not deprive the spiritual authorities and monasteries of the right to own property, but only stopped any increase in their possessions. Chapter 19 already contained norms that presupposed or even directly prescribed such deprivations. Article 1 of this chapter established the requisitioning of church estates in Moscow and near Moscow. On the face of it, this was a violation of the decrees of the *Laws of St. Vladimir and Yaroslav*, the 49th canon of the Sixth Ecumenical Council and the 12th canon of the Seventh Ecumenical Council."¹¹⁷

2. The Old Ritualist Schism

A few years later, there began the rebellion of the Old Ritualists against both the State and the Orthodox Church, and more particularly against the Orthodox idea of the Universal Empire...

The beginnings of the tragedy lay in the arrival in Moscow of some educated monks from the south of Russia, which at that time was under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Constantinople and under the cultural and political influence of Catholic Poland. They (and Greek hierarchs visiting Moscow) pointed to the existence of several differences between the Muscovite service books and those employed in the Greek Church. These differences concerned such matters as how the word "Jesus" was to be spelt, whether two or three "alleluias" should be chanted at certain points in the Divine services, whether the sign of the Cross should be made with two or three fingers, etc.

A group of leading Muscovite clergy led by Protopriests John Neronov and Avvakum rejected these criticisms. They said that the reforms contradicted the decrees of the famous Stoglav council of 1551, which had anathematized the three-fingered sign of the cross, and they suspected that the southerners were tainted with Latinism through their long subjection to Polish rule. Therefore they were unwilling to bow unquestioningly to their superior knowledge. However, the Stoglav council, while important, was never as authoritative as the Ecumenical Councils, and certain of its provisions have never been accepted in their full force by the Russian Church - for example, its 40th chapter, which decreed that anyone who shaved his beard, and died in such a state (i.e. without repenting), should be denied a Christian burial and numbered among the unbelievers. Another controversial canon of the council was the 55th, which declared that if any patriarch had a quarrel with a metropolitan or clergyman, no other patriarch could presume to interfere or judge the matter - except the Patriarchate of Constantinople.¹¹⁸ Needless to say,

¹¹⁶ Nikolin, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

¹¹⁷ Nikolin, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

¹¹⁸ Dan Mureşan, "Rome hérétique? Sur les décisions des conciles de Moscou et de Constantinople (1589, 1590 et 1593",

the ascription of such quasi-papist universal jurisdiction to the Ecumenical Patriarch was never accepted by the Orthodox Church.

Moreover, in elevating ritual differences into an issue of dogmatic faith, the “zealots for piety” were undoubtedly displaying a Judaizing attachment to the letter of the law that quenches the Spirit. In the long run it led to their rejection of Greek Orthodoxy, and therefore of the need of any agreement with the Greeks whether on rites or anything else, a rejection that threatened the foundations of the Ecumenical Church.¹¹⁹

This was the situation in 1652 when the close friend of the tsar, Metropolitan Nikon of Novgorod, was elected patriarch. Knowing of the various inner divisions within Russian society caused by incipient westernism and Old Ritualism, the new patriarch demanded, and obtained a solemn oath from the tsar and all the people that they should obey him in all Church matters. The tsar was very willing to give such an oath because he regarded Nikon as his “special friend” and father, giving him the same title of “Great Sovereign” that Tsar Michael had given to his father, Patriarch Philaret.

The “zealots of piety” were also happy to submit to Nikon because he had been a member of their circle and shared, as they thought, their views. However, in 1653 Nikon issued an order mandating the number of prostrations (four full-length and 12 to the waist) to be performed during the Prayer of St. Ephraim in Lent and the three-fingered cross. Since this was different from the current practice in Rus’ (all prostrations full-length and the two-fingered cross), the Protopriests protested against the “non-prostration heresy”.¹²⁰ They were exiled, and the schism had begun...

“Not immediately,” writes Archpriest Lev Lebedev, “but after many years of thought (since 1646), and conversations with the tsar, Fr. Stefan [Bonifatiev], the Greek and Kievan scholars and Patriarch Paisius of Jerusalem, [Nikon] had come to the conviction that the criterion of the rightness of the correction of Russian books and rites consisted in their correspondence with that which from ages past had been accepted by the Eastern Greek Church and handed down by it to Rus’ and, consequently, must be preserved also in the ancient Russian customs and books, and that therefore for the correction of the Russian books and rites it was necessary to take the advice of contemporary Eastern authorities, although their opinion had to be approached with great caution and in a critical spirit. It was with these convictions that Nikon completed the work begun before him of the correction of the Church rites and books, finishing it completely in 1656. At that time he did not know that the correctors

file:///localhost/Users/anthonymoss/Documents/Rome%20he%CC%81re%CC%81tique%20%20%20Sur%20les%20de%CC%81cisions%20des%20conciles%20de%20Moscou%20et%20de%20Constantinople%20(1589,%201590%20et%201593).html.

¹¹⁹ Thus “Protopriests Neronov, Habbakuk, Longinus and others considered that the faith of the Greeks ‘had become leprous from the Godless Turks’, and that it was impossible to trust the Greeks” (Lebedev, *Velikorossia*, St. Petersburg, 1999, p. 136).

¹²⁰ A.P. Dobroklonsky, *Rukovodstvo po Istorii Russkoj Tserkvi*, Moscow, 2001, pp. 402, 406.

of the books had placed at the foundation of their work, not the ancient, but the contemporary Greek books, which had been published in the West, mainly in Venice (although in the most important cases they had nevertheless used both ancient Greek and Slavonic texts). The volume of work in the correction and publishing of books was so great that the patriarch was simply unable to check its technical side and was convinced that they were correcting them according to the ancient texts.

“However, the correction of the rites was carried out completely under his supervision and was accomplished in no other way than in consultation with the conciliar opinion in the Eastern Churches and with special councils of the Russian hierarchs and clergy. Instead of using two fingers in the sign of the cross, the doctrine of which had been introduced into a series of very important books under Patriarch Joseph under the influence of the party of Neronov and Avvakum, the three-fingered sign was confirmed, since it corresponded more to ancient Russian customs¹²¹ and the age-old practice of the Orthodox East. A series of other Church customs were changed, and all Divine service books published earlier with the help of the ‘zealots’ were re-published.

“As was to be expected, J. Neronov, Avvakum, Longinus, Lazarus, Daniel and some of those who thought like them rose up against the corrections made by his Holiness.¹²² Thus was laid the doctrinal basis of the Church schism, but the schism itself, as a broad movement among the people, began much later,

¹²¹ But not to Russian practice since the *Stoglav* council of 1551, which had legislated in favour of the two-fingered sign because in some places the two-fingered sign was used, and in others the three-fingered (Lebedev, *op. cit.*, p. 70).

According to S.A. Zenkovsky, following the researches of Golubinsky, Kapterev and others, the two-fingered sign of the cross came from the Constantinopolitan (Studite) typicon, whereas the three-fingered sign was from the Jerusalem typicon of St. Sabbas. “In the 12th-13th centuries in Byzantium, the Studite typicon was for various reasons squeezed out by the Jerusalemite and at almost the same time the two-fingered sign of the cross was replaced by the three-fingered in order to emphasise the importance of the dogma of the All-Holy Trinity. Difficult relations with Byzantium during the Mongol yoke did not allow the spread of the Jerusalemite typicon in Rus’ in the 13th-14th centuries. Only under Metropolitans Cyprian and Photius (end of the 14th, beginning of the 15th centuries) was the Jerusalemite typicon partly introduced into Rus’ (gradually, one detail after another), but, since, after the council of Florence in 1439 Rus’ had broken relations with uniate Constantinople, this reform was not carried out to the end. In the Russian typicon, therefore, a series of features of the Studite typicon – the two-fingered sign of the cross, processing in the direction of the sun, chanting alleluia twice and other features – were preserved” (“Staroobriadchestvo, Tserkov’ i Gosudarstvo” (Old Ritualism, the Church and the State), *Russkoe Vozrozhdenie* (Russian Regeneration), 1987- I, p. 86. (V.M.)

¹²² This elicited the following comments by Epiphany Slavinetsky, one of the main correctors of the books: “Blind ignoramuses, hardly able to read one syllable at a time, having no understanding of grammar, not to mention rhetoric, philosophy, or theology, people who have not even tasted of study, dare to interpret divine writings, or, rather, to distort them, and slander and judge men well-versed in Slavonic and Greek languages. The ignoramuses cannot see that we did not correct the dogmas of faith, but only some expressions which had been altered through the carelessness and errors of uneducated scribes, or through the ignorance of correctors at the Printing Office”. And he compared the Old Ritualists to Korah and Abiram, who had rebelled against Moses (in Paul Meyendorff, *Russia, Ritual & Reform*, Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1991, p. 113). (V.M.)

without Nikon and independently of him. Patriarch Nikon took all the necessary measures that this should not happen. In particular, on condition of their obedience to the Church, he permitted those who wished it (J. Neronov) to serve according to the old books and rites, in this way allowing a variety of opinions and practices in Church matters that did not touch the essence of the faith. [In this tolerance Nikon followed the wise advice of Patriarch Paisius of Constantinople.] This gave the Church historian Metropolitan Macarius (Bulgakov) a basis on which to assert, with justice, that 'if Nikon had not left his see and his administration had continued, there would have been no schism in the Russian Church.'¹²³

This important point is confirmed by other authors, such as Archbishop Anthony (Khrapovitsky)¹²⁴ and Paul Meyendorff.¹²⁵ Again, Sergei Firsov writes: "At the end of his patriarchy Nikon said about the old and new (corrected) church-service books: 'Both the ones and the others are good; it doesn't matter, serve according to whichever books you want'. In citing these words, V.O. Klyuchevsky noted: 'This means that the matter was not one of rites, but of resistance to ecclesiastical authority'. The Old Believers' refusal to submit was taken by the church hierarchy and the state authorities as a rebellion, and at the Council of 1666-1667 the disobedient were excommunicated from the Church and cursed 'for their resistance to the canonical authority of the pastors of the Church'."¹²⁶

All this is true, but fails to take into account the long-term effect of the actions of the Greek hierarchs, especially Patriarch Macarius of Antioch, in anathematizing the old books and practices...

Early in 1656 this patriarch was asked by Patriarch Nikon to give his opinion on the question of the sign of the cross. On the Sunday of Orthodoxy, "during the anathemas, Macarius stood before the crowd, put the three large fingers of his hand together 'in the image of the most holy and undivided Trinity, and said: 'Every Orthodox Christian must make the sign of the Cross on his face with these three first fingers: and if anyone does it based on the writing of Theodoret and on false tradition, let him be anathema!' The anathemas were then repeated by Gabriel and Gregory. Nikon further obtained written condemnations of the two-fingered sign of the Cross from all these foreign bishops.

"On April 23, a new council was called in Moscow. Its purpose was twofold: first, Nikon wanted to affirm the three-fingered sign of the Cross by conciliar decree; second, he wanted sanction for the publication of the *Skrizhal'*. Once

¹²³ Lebedev, *Moskva Patriarshaia*, pp. 36-37.

¹²⁴ See Archbishop Nikon (Rklitsky), *Zhizneopisanie Blazhennejshago Antonia, Mitropolita Kievskago i Galitskago* (Life of his Beatitude Anthony, Metropolitan of Kiev and Galich), volume 3, New York, 1957, p. 161.

¹²⁵ Meyendorff, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

¹²⁶ Firsov, *Russkaia Tserkov' nakanune peremen (konets 1890-kh – 1918 gg.)* (The Russian Church on the Eve of the Changes (the end of the 1890s to 1918)), Moscow, 2002, p. 252.

again, the presence of foreign bishops in Moscow served his purpose. In his speech to the assembled council, Nikon explains the reasons for his request. The two-fingered sign of the Cross, he states, does not adequately express the mysteries of the Trinity and the Incarnation...

“The significance of this council lies chiefly in its formal condemnation of those who rejected the three-fingered sign of the Cross – and, by extension, those who rejected the Greek model – as heretics. For those who make the sign of the Cross by folding their thumb together with their two small fingers ‘are demonstrating the inequality of the Holy Trinity, which is Arianism’, or ‘Nestorianism’. By branding his opponents as heretics, Nikon was making schism inevitable.”¹²⁷

Whether it made schism inevitable or not, it was certainly a serious mistake. And, together with the Old Ritualists’ blasphemous rejection of the sacraments of the Orthodox Church, on the one hand, and the over-strict police measures of the State against them, on the other, it probably contributed to the hardening of the schism.¹²⁸ Paradoxically, however, this mistake was the same mistake as that made by the Old Ritualists. That is, like the Old Ritualists, Nikon was asserting that differences in rite, and in particular in the making of the sign of the cross, reflected differences in faith. But this was not so, as had been pointed out to Nikon by Patriarch Paisius of Constantinople and his Synod the previous year. And while, as noted above, Nikon himself backed away from a practical implementation of the decisions of the 1656 council¹²⁹, the fact is that the decisions of that council remained on the statute books. Moreover, they were confirmed – again with the active connivance of Greek hierarchs – at the council of 1667. Only later, with the yedinoverie of 1801, was it permitted to be a member of the Russian Church and serve on the old books.

The process of removing the curses on the old rites began at the Preconciliar Convention in 1906. The section on the Old Ritual, presided over by Archbishop Anthony (Khrapovitsky), decreed: “Bearing in mind the benefit to the Holy Church, the pacification of those praying with the two-fingered cross and the lightening of the difficulties encountered by missionaries in explaining the curses on those praying with the two-fingered cross pronounced by Patriarch Macarius of Antioch and a Council of Russian hierarchs in 1656, - to petition the All-Russian Council to remove the indicated curses, as imposed

¹²⁷ Meyendorff, op. cit., pp. 61, 62.

¹²⁸ Rklitsky, op. cit., p. 162.

¹²⁹ Paul Meyendorff writes, “to its credit, the Russian Church appears to have realized its tactical error and tried to repair the damage. As early as 1656, Nikon made peace with Neronov, one of the leading opponents of the reform, and permitted him to remain in Moscow and even to use the old books at the Cathedral of the Dormition. After Nikon left the patriarchal throne in 1658, Tsar Alexis made repeated attempts to pacify the future Old-Believers, insisting only that they cease condemning the new books, but willing to allow the continued use of the old. This was the only demand made of the Old-Believers at the 1666 Moscow Council. Only after all these attempts to restore peace had failed did the 1667 Council, with Greek bishops present, condemn the old books and revoke the 1551 ‘Stoglav (Hundred Chapters)’ Council.” (op. cit., p. 33)

out of 'not good understanding' (cf. Canon 12 of the Sixth Ecumenical Council) by Patriarch Macarius of the meaning of our two-fingered cross, which misunderstanding was caused in the patriarch by his getting to know an incorrect edition of the so-called 'Theodorit's Word', which was printed in our books in the middle of the 17th century..., just as the Council of 1667 'destroyed' the curse of the Stoglav Council laid on those not baptised with the two-fingered cross."¹³⁰

The All-Russian Council did not get round to removing the curses in 1917-1918. But in 1974 the Russian Church Abroad did remove the anathemas on the Old Rite (as did the sergianist Moscow Patriarchate).

"However," writes Lebedev, the differences between the Orthodox and the Old Ritualists were not only "with regard to the correction of books and rites. The point was the deep differences in perception of the ideas forming the basis of the conception of 'the third Rome', and in the contradictions of the Russian Church's self-consciousness at the time."¹³¹

The differences over the concept of the Third Rome, on the one hand, and over books and rites, on the other hand, were linked in the following way...

After consolidating itself in the first half of the seventeenth century, the Russian State was now ready to go on the offensive against Catholic Poland, and rescue the Orthodox Christians who were being persecuted by the Polish and uniate authorities. In 1654 Eastern Ukraine was wrested from Poland and came within the bounds of Russia again. But the Orthodox Church in the Ukraine had been under the jurisdiction of Constantinople and employed Greek practices, which, as we have seen, differed somewhat from those in the Muscovite Russian Church. So if Moscow was to be the Third Rome in the sense of the protector of all Orthodox Christians, it was necessary that the faith and practice of the Moscow Patriarchate should be in harmony with the faith and practice of the Orthodox Church as a whole. That is why Nikon, supported by the Grecophile Tsar Alexis, encouraged the reform of the service-books to bring them into line with the practices of the Greek Church.

In pursuing this policy the Tsar and the Patriarch were continuing the work of St. Maximus the Greek, who had been invited to Russia to carry out translations from Greek into Russian and correct the Russian service books against the Greek originals. For this he was persecuted by Metropolitan Daniel. And yet "the mistakes in the Russian Divine service books were so great," writes Professor N.N. Pokrovsky, "that the Russian Church finally had to agree with Maximus' corrections - true, some 120 years after his trial, under Patriarch Nikon (for example, in the Symbol of the faith)."¹³²

¹³⁰ Rklitsky, *op. cit.*, p. 175.

¹³¹ Lebedev, *Moskva Patriarshaia*, p. 37.

¹³² Pokrovsky, *Puteshestvia za redkimi knigami (Journeys for rare books)*, Moscow, 1988; http://catacomb.org.ua/modules.php?name=Pages&go=print_page&pid=779. The mistake in the Creed consisted in adding the word "true" after "and in the Holy Spirit, the Lord".

Paradoxically, the Old Ritualists cited St. Maximus the Greek in their support because he made no objection to the two-fingered sign. However, Professor Pokrovsky has shown that he probably passed over this as being of secondary importance by comparison with his main task, which was to broaden the horizons of the Russian Church and State, making it more ecumenical in spirit – and more sympathetic to the pleas for help of the Orthodox Christians of the Balkans. On more important issues – for example, the text of the Symbol of faith, the canonical subjection of the Russian metropolitan to the Ecumenical Patriarch, and a more balanced relationship between Church and State – he made no concessions.

The Old Ritualists represented a serious threat to the achievement of the ideal of Ecumenical Orthodoxy. Like their opponents, they believed in the ideology of the Third Rome, but understood it differently. First, they resented the lead that the patriarch was taking in this affair. In their opinion, the initiative in such matters should come from the tsar insofar as it was the tsar, rather than the hierarchs, who defended the Church from heresies. Here they were thinking of the Russian Church's struggle against the false council of Florence and the Judaizing heresy, when the great prince did indeed take a leading role in the defence of Orthodoxy while some of the hierarchs fell away from the truth. However, they ignored the no less frequent cases – most recently, in the Time of Troubles – when it had been the Orthodox hierarchs who had defended the Church against apostate tsars.

Secondly, whereas for the Grecophiles of the “Greco-Russian Church” Moscow the Third Rome was the continuation of Christian Rome, which in no wise implied any break with Greek Orthodoxy, for the Old Ritualists the influence of the Greeks, who had betrayed Orthodoxy at the council of Florence, could only be harmful. They believed that the Russian Church did not need help from, or agreement with, the Greeks; she was self-sufficient. Moreover, the Greeks could not be Orthodox, according to the Old Ritualists, not only because they had apostasized at the council of Florence, but also because they were “powerless”, that is, without an emperor. And when Russia, too, in their view, became “powerless” through the tsar's “apostasy”, they prepared for the end of the world. For, as V.M. Lourié writes, “the Niconite reforms were perceived by Old Ritualism as apostasy from Orthodoxy, and consequently... as the end of the last (Roman) Empire, which was to come immediately before the end of the world.”¹³³

This anti-Greek attitude was exemplified particularly by Archpriest Avvakum, who wrote from his prison cell to Tsar Alexis: "Say in good Russian 'Lord have mercy on me'. Leave all those Kyrie Eleisons to the Greeks: that's their language, spit on them! You are Russian, Alexei, not Greek. Speak your mother tongue and be not ashamed of it, either in church or at home!" And in the trial of 1667, Avvakum told the Greek bishops: “You, ecumenical teachers!

¹³³ Lourié, “O Vozmozhnosti”, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

Rome has long since fallen, and lies on the ground, and the Poles have gone under with her, for to the present day they have been enemies of the Christians. But with you, too, Orthodoxy became a varied mixture under the violence of the Turkish Mohammed. Nor is that surprising: you have become powerless. From now on you must come to us to learn: through God's grace we have the autocracy. Before the apostate Nikon the whole of Orthodoxy was pure and spotless in our Russia under the pious rulers and tsars, and the Church knew no rebellion. But the wolf Nikon along with the devil introduced the tradition that one had to cross oneself with three fingers..."¹³⁴

3. Patriarch Nikon and Moscow the Third Rome

It was this attempt to force the Russian Church into schism from the Greeks that was the real sin of the Old Ritualists, making theirs the first nationalist schism in Russian history. And it was against this narrow, nationalistic and state-centred conception of "Moscow – the Third Rome", that Patriarch Nikon erected a more universalistic, Church-centred conception which stressed the unity of the Russian Church with the Churches of the East. "In the idea of 'the Third Rome'," writes Lebedev, "his Holiness saw first of all its ecclesiastical, spiritual content, which was also expressed in the still more ancient idea of 'the Russian land – the New Jerusalem'. This idea was to a large degree synonymous with 'the Third Rome'. To a large extent, but not completely! It placed the accent on the Christian striving of Holy Rus' for the world on high.

"In calling Rus' to this great idea, Patriarch Nikon successively created a series of architectural complexes in which was laid the idea of the pan-human, universal significance of Holy Rus'. These were the Valдай Iveron church, and the Kii Cross monastery, but especially the Resurrection New-Jerusalem monastery, which was deliberately populated with an Orthodox, but multi-racial brotherhood (Russians, Ukrainians, Belorussians, Lithuanians, Germans, Jews, Poles and Greeks).

"This monastery, together with the complex of 'Greater Muscovite Palestine', was in the process of creation from 1656 to 1666, and was then completed after the death of the patriarch towards the end of the 17th century. As has been clarified only comparatively recently, this whole complex, including in itself Jordan, Nazareth, Bethlehem, Capernaum, Ramah, Bethany, Tabor, Hermon, the Mount of Olives, the Garden of Gethsemane, etc., was basically a monastery, and in it the Resurrection cathedral, built in the likeness of the church of the Sepulchre of the Lord in Jerusalem with Golgotha and the Sepulchre of the Saviour, was a double image – an icon of the historical 'promised land' of Palestine and at the same time an icon of the promised land of the Heavenly Kingdom, 'the New Jerusalem'.

¹³⁴ Avvakum, translated in Wil van den Bercken, *Holy Russia and Christian Europe*, London: SCM Press, 1999, p. 165.

“In this way it turned out that the true union of the representatives of all the peoples (pan-human unity) in Christ on earth and in heaven can be realised only on the basis of Orthodoxy, and, moreover, by the will of God, in its Russian expression. This was a clear, almost demonstrative opposition of the union of mankind in the Church of Christ to its unity in the anti-church of ‘the great architect of nature’ with its aim of constructing the tower of Babylon. But it also turned out that ‘Greater Muscovite Palestine’ with its centre in the New Jerusalem became the spiritual focus of the whole of World Orthodoxy. At the same time that the tsar was only just beginning to dream of becoming the master of the East, Patriarch Nikon as the archimandrite of New Jerusalem had already become the central figure of the Universal Church.

“This also laid a beginning to the disharmony between the tsar and the patriarch, between the ecclesiastical and state authorities in Russia. Alexis Mikhailovich, at first inwardly, but then also outwardly, was against Nikon’s plans for the New Jerusalem. He insisted that only his capital, Moscow, was the image of the heavenly city, and that the Russian tsar (and not the patriarch) was the head of the whole Orthodox world. From 1657 there began the quarrels between the tsar and the patriarch, in which the tsar revealed a clear striving to take into his hands the administration of Church affairs, for he made himself the chief person responsible for them.”¹³⁵

This intrusion of the tsar into the ecclesiastical administration, leading to the deposition of Patriarch Nikon, was the decisive factor allowing the Old Ritualist movement to gain credibility and momentum... On becoming patriarch in 1652, as we have seen, Nikon secured from the Tsar, his boyars and the bishops a solemn oath to the effect that they would keep the sacred laws of the Church and State “and promise... to obey us as your chief pastor and supreme father in all things which I shall announce to you out of the divine commandments and laws.” There followed a short, but remarkable period in which “the undivided, although unconfused, union of state and ecclesiastical powers constituted the natural basis of public life of Russia. The spiritual leadership in this belonged, of course, to the Church, but this leadership was precisely spiritual and was never turned into political leadership. In his turn the tsar... never used his political autocracy for arbitrariness in relation to the Church, since the final meaning of life for the whole of Russian society consisted in acquiring temporal and eternal union with God in and through the Church...”¹³⁶

Although the patriarch had complete control of Church administration and services, and the appointment and judgement of clerics in ecclesiastical matters, “Church possessions and financial resources were considered a pan-national inheritance. In cases of special need (for example, war) the tsar could

¹³⁵ Lebedev, *Moskva Patriarshaia*, pp. 40-41.

¹³⁶ Lebedev, *Moskva Patriarshaia*, p. 87. This relationship was characterized in a service book published in Moscow in 1653, as “the diarchy, complementary, God-chosen” (Fr. Sergei Hackel, “Questions of Church and State in ‘Holy Russia’: some attitudes of the Romanov period”, *Eastern Churches Review*, vol. II, no. 1, Spring, 1970, p. 8).

take as much of the resources of the Church as he needed without paying them back. The diocesan and monastic authorities could spend only strictly determined sums on their everyday needs. All unforeseen and major expenses were made only with the permission of the tsar. In all monastic and diocesan administrations state officials were constantly present; ecclesiastical properties and resources were under their watchful control. And they judged ecclesiastical peasants and other people in civil and criminal matters. A special Monastirskij Prikaz [or “Ministry of Monasticism”], established in Moscow in accordance with the Ulozhenie [legal code] of 1649, was in charge of the whole clergy, except the patriarch, in civil and criminal matters. Although in 1649 Nikon together with all the others had put his signature to the Ulozhenie, inwardly he was not in agreement with it, and on becoming patriarch declared this opinion openly. He was most of all disturbed by the fact that secular people – the boyars of the Monastirskij Prikaz – had the right to judge clergy in civil suits. He considered this situation radically unecclesiastical and unchristian. When Nikon had still been Metropolitan of Novgorod, the tsar, knowing his views, had given him a ‘document of exemption’ for the whole metropolia, in accordance with which all the affairs of people subject to the Church, except for affairs of ‘murder, robbery and theft’, were transferred from the administration of the Monastirskij Prikaz to the metropolitan’s court. On becoming patriarch, Nikon obtained a similar exemption from the Monastirskij Prikaz for his patriarchal diocese (at that time the patriarch, like all the ruling bishops, had his own special diocese consisting of Moscow and spacious lands adjacent to it). As if to counteract the Ulozhenie of 1649, Nikon published ‘The Rudder’, which contains the holy canons of the Church and various enactments concerning the Church of the ancient pious Greek emperors. As we shall see, until the end of his patriarchy Nikon did not cease to fight against the Monastirskij Prikaz. It should be pointed out that this was not a struggle for the complete ‘freedom’ of the Church from the State (which was impossible in Russia at that time), but only for the re-establishment of the canonical authority of the patriarch and the whole clergy in strictly spiritual matters, and also for such a broadening of the right of the ecclesiastical authorities over people subject to them in civil matters as was permitted by conditions in Russia.”¹³⁷

From May, 1654 to January, 1657, while the tsar was away from the capital fighting the Poles, the patriarch acted as regent, a duty he carried out with great distinction. Some later saw in this evidence of the political ambitions of the patriarch. However, he undertook this duty only at the request of the tsar, and was very glad to return the reins of political administration when the tsar returned. Nevertheless, from 1656, the boyars succeeded in undermining the tsar’s confidence in the patriarch, falsely insinuating that the tsar’s authority was being undermined by Nikon’s ambition. And they began to apply the Ulozhenie in Church affairs, even increasing the rights given by the Ulozhenie to the Monastirskij Prikaz. Another bone of contention was the tsar’s desire to appoint Silvester Kossov as Metropolitan of Kiev, which Nikon considered

¹³⁷ Lebedev, *Moskva Patriarshaia*, pp. 88-89.

uncanonical in that the Kievan Metropolitan was in the jurisdiction of the Patriarch of Constantinople at that time.¹³⁸

Since the tsar was clearly determined to have his way, and was snubbing the patriarch in many ways, on July 10, 1658 Nikon withdrew to his monastery of New Jerusalem, near Moscow... He compared this move to the flight of the Woman clothed with the sun into the wilderness in Revelation 12, and quoted the 17th Canon of Sardica¹³⁹ and the words of the Gospel: "If they persecute you in one city, depart to another, shaking off the dust from your feet".¹⁴⁰ "The whole state knows," he said, "that in view of his anger against me the tsar does not go to the Holy Catholic Church, and I am leaving Moscow. I hope that the tsar will have more freedom without me."¹⁴¹

Some have regarded Nikon's action as an elaborate bluff that failed. Whatever the truth about his personal motivation, which is known to God alone, there can be no doubt that the patriarch, unlike his opponents, correctly gauged the seriousness of the issue involved. For the quarrel between the tsar and the patriarch signified, in effect, the beginning of the schism of Church and State in Russia. In withdrawing from Moscow to New Jerusalem, the patriarch demonstrated that "in truth 'the New Jerusalem', 'the Kingdom of God', the beginning of the Heavenly Kingdom in Russia was the Church, its Orthodox spiritual piety, and not the material earthly capital, although it represented... 'the Third Rome'."¹⁴²

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

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

¹³⁸ M.V. Zyzykin, *Patriarkh Nikon*, Warsaw: Synodal Press, 1931, part II, p. 101.

¹³⁹ "If any Bishop who has suffered violence has been cast out unjustly, either on account of his science or on account of his confession of the Catholic Church, or on account of his insisting upon the truth, and fleeing from peril, when he is innocent and in danger, should come to another city, let him not be prevented from living there, until he can return or find relief from the insolent treatment he had received. For it is cruel and most burdensome for one who has had to suffer an unjust expulsion not to be accorded a welcome by us. For such a person ought to be shown great kindness and courtesy."

¹⁴⁰ Fomin & Fomina, *op. cit.*, volume I, p. 23; Zyzykin, *op. cit.*, part II, p. 105.

¹⁴¹ Zyzykin, *op. cit.*, part II, p. 104.

¹⁴² Lebedev, *Moskva Patriarshaia*, p. 141. Italics mine (V.M.).

Moscow had done in the affairs of Ivan the Terrible.¹⁴³ And so, in 1660, they convened a council which appointed a patriarchal locum tenens, Metropolitan Pitirim, to administer the Church independently without seeking the advice of the patriarch and without commemorating his name. Nikon rejected this council, and cursed Pitirim...

4. The Council of 1666-67

But the State that encroaches on the Church is itself subject to destruction. Thus in 1661 Patriarch Nikon had a vision in which he saw the Moscow Dormition cathedral full of fire: "The hierarchs who had previously died were standing there. Peter the metropolitan rose from his tomb, went up to the altar and laid his hand on the Gospel. All the hierarchs did the same, and so did I. And Peter began to speak: 'Brother Nikon! Speak to the Tsar: why has he offended the Holy Church, and fearlessly taken possession of the immovable things collected by us. This will not be to his benefit. Tell him to return what he has taken, for the great wrath of God has fallen upon him because of this: twice there have been pestilences, and so many people have died, and now he has nobody with whom to stand against his enemies.' I replied: 'He will not listen to me; it would be good if one of you appeared to him.' Peter continued: 'The judgements of God have not decreed this. You tell him; if he does not listen to you, then if one of us appeared to him, he would not listen to him. And look! Here is a sign for him.' Following the movement of his hand I turned towards the west towards the royal palace and I saw: there was no church wall, the palace was completely visible, and the fire which was in the church came together and went towards the royal court and burned it up. 'If he will not come to his senses, punishments greater than the first will be added,' said Peter. Then another grey-haired man said: 'Now the Tsar wants to take the court you bought for the churchmen and turn it into a bazaar for mammon's sake. But he will not rejoice over his acquisition.'"¹⁴⁴

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

¹⁴³ Zyzykin, op. cit., part II, pp. 106-107.

¹⁴⁴ Fomin and Fomina, op. cit., volume I, pp. 24-25.

“The first part of the council sessions, with the participation only of Russian bishops, went quite smoothly and moderately. Before it, individual discussions of each bishop with the tsar had prepared almost all the decisions. The council did not condemn the old typicon, and was very conciliatory towards its defenders, who, with the exception of Avvakum, agreed to sign the decisions of the council and not break with the Church. The stubborn Avvakum refused, and was for that defrocked and excommunicated from the Church. The second part of the council sessions, with the eastern patriarchs, was completely under the influence of Metropolitan Paisius Ligarides of Gaza (in Palestine) [who had been defrocked by the Patriarch of Jerusalem and was in the pay of the Vatican]. He adopted the most radical position in relation to the old Russian ecclesiastical traditions. The old Russian rite was condemned and those who followed it were excommunicated from the Church (anathema). Also condemned at that time were such Russian writings as the Story of the White Klobuk (on Moscow as the Third Rome), the decrees of the Stoglav council, and other things.”¹⁴⁵

The council then turned its attention to Patriarch Nikon. On December 12, 1666 he was reduced to the rank of a monk on the grounds that “he annoyed his great majesty [the tsar], interfering in matters which did not belong to the patriarchal rank and authority”.¹⁴⁶ The truth was the exact opposite: that the tsar and his boyars had interfered in matters which did not belong to their rank and authority, breaking the oath they had made to the patriarch.¹⁴⁷ Another charge against the patriarch was that in 1654 he had defrocked and exiled the most senior of the opponents to his reforms, Bishop Paul of Kolomna, on his own authority, without convening a council of bishops.¹⁴⁸ But, as Lebedev writes, “Nikon refuted this accusation, referring to the conciliar decree on this bishop, which at that time was still in the patriarchal court. Entering then [in 1654] on the path of an authoritative review of everything connected with the correction of the rites, Nikon of course could not on his own condemn a bishop, when earlier even complaints against prominent protopriests were reviewed by him at a Council of the clergy.”¹⁴⁹

The council also sinned in approving the Tomos sent by the Eastern Patriarchs to Moscow in 1663 to justify the supposed lawfulness of Nikon’s deposition. Under the name of *Patriarchal Replies* it expressed a caesaropapist doctrine, according to which the Patriarch was exhorted to obey the tsar and the tsar was permitted to remove the patriarch in case of conflict with him. Patriarch Dionysius of Constantinople expressed this doctrine as follows in a

¹⁴⁵ Zenkovsky, *op. cit.*, pp. 88-89.

¹⁴⁶ Vladimir Rusak, *Istoria Rossijskoj Tserkvi* (A History of the Russian Church), USA, 1993, p. 191.

¹⁴⁷ Ironically, they also transgressed those articles of the Ulozhenie, chapter X, which envisaged various punishments for offending the clergy (Nikolin, *op. cit.*, p. 71).

¹⁴⁸ Dobroklonsky, *op. cit.*, p. 290; S.G. Burgaft and I.A. Ushakov, *Staroobriadchestvo* (Old Ritualism), Moscow, 1996, pp. 206-207. According to the Old Ritualists, Bishop Paul said that, in view of Nikon’s “violation” of Orthodoxy, his people should be received into communion with the Old Ritualists by the second rite, i.e. chrismation.

¹⁴⁹ Lebedev, *Moskva Patriarshaia*, p. 100.

letter to the tsar: "You have the power to have a patriarch and all your councillors established by you, for in one autocratic state there must not be two principles, but one must be the senior."

To which Lebedev justly replied: "It is only to be wondered at how the Greeks by the highest authority established and confirmed in the Russian kingdom that [caesaropapism] as a result of which they themselves had lost their monarchy! It was not Paisius Ligarides who undermined Alexis Mikhailovich: it was the ecumenical patriarchs who deliberately decided the matter in favour of the tsar."¹⁵⁰

However, opposition was voiced by Metropolitans Paul of Krutitsa and Hilarion of Ryazan, who feared "that the *Patriarchal Replies* would put the hierarchs into the complete control of the royal power, and thereby of a Tsar who would not be as pious as Alexis Mikhailovich and could turn out to be dangerous for the Church". They particularly objected to the following sentence in the report on the affair of the patriarch: "It is recognized that his Majesty the Tsar alone should be in charge of spiritual matters, and that the Patriarch should be obedient to him", which they considered to be humiliating for ecclesiastical power and to offer a broad scope for the interference of the secular power in Church affairs.¹⁵¹

So, as Zyzykin writes, "the Patriarchs were forced to write an explanatory note, in which they gave another interpretation to the second chapter of the patriarchal replies... The Council came to a unanimous conclusion: 'Let it be recognized that the Tsar has the pre-eminence in civil affairs, and the Patriarch in ecclesiastical affairs, so that in this way the harmony of the ecclesiastical institution may be preserved whole and unshaken.' This was the principled triumph of the Nikonian idea, as was the resolution of the Council to close the Monastirskij Prikaz and the return to the Church of judgement over clergy in civil matters (the later remained in force until 1700)."¹⁵²

And yet it had been a close-run thing. During the 1666 Council Ligarides had given voice to an essentially pagan view of tsarist power: "[The tsar] will be called the new Constantine. He will be both tsar and hierarch, just as the great Constantine, who was so devoted to the faith of Christ, is praised among us at Great Vespers as priest and tsar. Yes, and both among the Romans and the Egyptians the tsar united in himself the power of the priesthood and of the kingship." If this doctrine had triumphed at the Council, then Russia would indeed have entered the era of the Antichrist, as the Old Ritualists believed.

And if the good sense of the Russian hierarchs finally averted a catastrophe, the unjust condemnation of Patriarch Nikon, the chief supporter of the Orthodox doctrine, cast a long shadow over the proceedings, and meant that

¹⁵⁰ Lebedev, *Moskva Patriarshaia*, p. 132.

¹⁵¹ Dobroklonsky, *op. cit.*, p. 350.

¹⁵² Zyzykin, *op. cit.*, part III, pp. 274, 275.

within a generation the attempt to impose absolutism on Russia would begin again...

Indeed, it could be said to have begun well before that, for, as Robert Massie writes, "Nikon's successor, the new Patriarch Joachim, well understood his designated role when he addressed the Tsar saying: 'Sovereign, I know neither the old nor the new faith, but whatever the Sovereign orders, I am prepared to follow and obey in all respects.'" ¹⁵³

True, the tsar asked forgiveness of Nikon just before his death. But the reconciliation was not complete. For the patriarch replied to the tsar's messenger: "Imitating my teacher Christ, who commanded us to remit the sins of our neighbours, I say: may God forgive the deceased, but a written forgiveness I will not give, because during his life he did not free us from imprisonment" ¹⁵⁴

5. Patriarch Nikon on Church-State Relations

What should be the relationship of an Orthodox King to the Orthodox Church within his dominions? "There is no question," writes Lebedev, "that the Orthodox Sovereign cares for the Orthodox Church, defends her, protects her, takes part in all her most important affairs. But not he in the first place; and not he mainly. The Church has her own head on earth – the Patriarch. Relations between the head of the state and the head of the Church in Russia, beginning from the holy equal-to-the-apostles Great Prince Vladimir and continuing with Tsar Alexis Mikhailovich and Patriarch Nikon, were always formed in a spirit of symphony.

"Not without exceptions, but, as a rule, this symphony was not broken and constituted the basis of the inner spiritual strength of the whole of Rus', the whole of the Russian state and society. The complexity of the symphony consisted in the fact that the Tsar and Patriarch were identically responsible for everything that took place in the people, in society, in the state. But at the same time the Tsar especially answered for worldly matters, matters of state, while the Patriarch especially answered for Church and spiritual affairs. In council they both decided literally everything. But in worldly affairs the last word lay with the Tsar; and in Church and spiritual affairs – with the Patriarch. The Patriarch unfailingly took part in the sessions of the State Duma, that is, of the government. The Tsar unfailingly took part in the Church Councils. In the State Duma the last word was with the Sovereign, and in the Church Councils – with the Patriarch. This common responsibility for everything and special responsibility for the state and the Church with the Tsar and the Patriarch was the principle of symphony or agreement."¹⁵⁵

¹⁵³ Massie, *Peter the Great: His Life and World*, London: Phoenix, 2001, p. 61.

¹⁵⁴ Nikon, in Rusak, *op. cit.*, p. 193.

¹⁵⁵ Lebedev, "Razmyshlenia vozle sten novogo Ierusalima" ("Thoughts next to the Walls of New Jerusalem"), *Vozvrashchenie* (Return), NN 12-13, 1999, p. 60.

That Tsar Alexis Mikhailovich sincerely believed this teaching is clear from his letter to the Patriarch of Jerusalem: "The most important task of the Orthodox Tsar is care for the faith, the Church, and all the affairs of the Church." However, it was he who introduced the Ulozhenie, the first serious breach in Church-State symphony. And it was he who deposed Patriarch Nikon...

Therefore while it is customary to date the breakdown of Church-State symphony or agreement in Russia to the time of Peter the Great, the foundations of Holy Russia had been undermined already in the time of his father, Tsar Alexis Mikhailovich. As M.V. Zyzykin writes, "in Church-State questions, Nikon fought with the same corruption that had crept into Muscovite political ideas after the middle of the 15th century and emerged as political Old Ritualism, which defended the tendency towards caesaropapism that had established itself. The fact that the guardian of Orthodoxy, at the time of the falling away of the Constantinopolitan Emperor and Patriarch and Russian Metropolitan into the unia, turned out to be the Muscovite Great Prince had too great an influence on the exaltation of his significance in the Church. And if we remember that at that time, shortly after the unia, the Muscovite Great Prince took the place of the Byzantine Emperor, and that with the establishment of the de facto independence of the Russian Church from the Constantinopolitan Patriarch the Muscovite first-hierarchs lost a support for their ecclesiastical independence from the Great Princes, then it will become clear to us that the Muscovite Great Prince became de facto one of the chief factors in Church affairs, having the opportunity to impose his authority on the hierarchy."¹⁵⁶

Patriarch Nikon corrected the caesaropapist bias of the Russian Church as expressed especially by Ligarides in his famous work Razzorenje ("Destruction"), in which he defined the rights and duties of the tsar as follows: "The tsar undoubtedly has power to give rights and honours, but within the limits set by God; he cannot give spiritual power to Bishops and archimandrites and other spiritual persons: spiritual things belong to the decision of God, and earthly things to the king" (I, 555).¹⁵⁷

"The main duty of the tsar is to care for the Church, for the dominion of the tsar can never be firmly established and prosperous when his mother, the Church of God, is not strongly established, for the Church of God, most glorious tsar, is thy mother, and if thou art obliged to honour thy natural mother, who gave thee birth, then all the more art thou obliged to love thy spiritual mother, who gave birth to thee in Holy Baptism and anointed thee to the kingdom with the oil and chrism of gladness."¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁶ Zyzykin, op. cit., part II, p. 9.

¹⁵⁷ Zyzykin, op. cit., part II, p. 15.

¹⁵⁸ Zyzykin, op. cit., part II, p. 16.

Indeed, “none of the kings won victory without the prayers of the priests” (I, 187).¹⁵⁹ For “Bishops are the successors of the Apostles and the servants of God, so that the honour accorded to them is given to God Himself.”¹⁶⁰ “It was when the evangelical faith began to shine that the Episcopate was venerated; but when the spite of pride spread, the honour of the Episcopate was betrayed.”

“A true hierarch of Christ is everything. For when kingdom falls on kingdom, the kingdom and house that is divided in itself will not stand.”¹⁶¹ “The tsar is entrusted with the bodies, but the priests with the souls of men. The tsar remits money debts, but the priests – sins. The one compels, the other comforts. The one wars with enemies, the other with the princes and rulers of the darkness of this world. Therefore the priesthood is much higher than the kingdom.”¹⁶²

The superiority of the priesthood is proved by the fact that the tsar is anointed by the patriarch and not vice-versa. “The highest authority of the priesthood was not received from the tsars, but the tsars are anointed to the kingdom through the priesthood... We know no other lawgiver than Christ, Who gave the power to bind and to loose. What power did the tsar give me? This one? No, but he himself seized it for himself... Know that even he who is distinguished by the diadem is subject to the power of the priest, and he who is bound by him will be bound also in the heavens.”¹⁶³

The patriarch explains why, on the one hand, the priesthood is higher than the kingdom, and on the other, the kingdom cannot be abolished by the priesthood: “The kingdom is given by God to the world, but in wrath, and it is given through anointing from the priests with a material oil, but the priesthood is a direct anointing from the Holy Spirit, as also our Lord Jesus Christ was raised to the high-priesthood directly by the Holy Spirit, as were the Apostles. Therefore, at the consecration to the episcopate, the consecrator holds an open Gospel over the head of him who is being consecrated” (I, 234, 235)... There is no human judgement over the tsar, but there is a warning from the pastors of the Church and the judgement of God.”¹⁶⁴ However, the fact that the tsar cannot be judged by man shows that the kingdom is given him directly by God, and not by man. “For even if he was not crowned, he would still be king.” But he can only be called an Orthodox, anointed king if he is crowned by the Bishop. Thus “he receives and retains his royal power by the sword *de facto*. But the name of king (that is, the name of a consecrated and Christian or

¹⁵⁹ Zyzykin, *op. cit.*, part II, p. 41.

¹⁶⁰ Zyzykin, *op. cit.*, part II, p. 91.

¹⁶¹ Zyzykin, *op. cit.*, part II, p. 86.

¹⁶² Zyzykin, *op. cit.*, part II, p. 17.

¹⁶³ Zyzykin, *op. cit.*, part II, pp. 30, 32.

¹⁶⁴ Zyzykin, *op. cit.*, part II, p. 41. As Zyzykin says in another place, Nikon “not only does not call for human sanctions against the abuses of tsarist power, but definitely says that there is no human power [that can act] against them, but there is the wrath of God, as in the words of Samuel to Saul: ‘It is not I that turn away from thee, in that thou has rejected the Word of the Lord, but the Lord has rejected thee, that thou shouldst not be king over Israel’ (I Kings 15.26)” (*op. cit.*, part II, p. 17).

Orthodox king) he receives from the Episcopal consecration, for which the Bishop is the accomplisher and source." (I, 254).¹⁶⁵

We see here how far Nikon is from the papocaesarism of a Pope Gregory VII, who claimed to be able to depose kings precisely "as kings". And yet he received a reputation for papocaesarism (which prevented his recognition at least until the Russian Council of 1917-18) because of his fearless exposure of the caesaropapism of the Russian tsar: "Everyone should know his measure. Saul offered the sacrifice, but lost his kingdom; Uzziah, who burned incense in the temple, became a leper. Although thou art tsar, remain within thy limits. Wilt thou say that the heart of the king is in the hand of God? Yes, but the heart of the king is in the hand of God [only] when the king remains within the boundaries set for him by God."¹⁶⁶

In another passage Nikon combines the metaphor of the two swords with that of the sun and moon. The latter metaphor had been used by Pope Innocent III; but Nikon's development of it is Orthodox and does not exalt the power of the priesthood any more than did the Fathers of the fourth century: "The all-powerful God, in creating the heaven and the earth, order the two great luminaries - the sun and the moon - to shine upon the earth in their course; by one of them - the sun - He prefigured the episcopal power, while by the other - the moon - He prefigured the tsarist power. For the sun is the greater luminary, it shines by day, like the Bishop who enlightens the soul. But the lesser luminary shines by night, by which we must understand the body. As the moon borrows its light from the sun, and in proportion to its distance from it receives a fuller radiance, so the tsar derives his consecration, anointing and coronation (but not power) from the Bishop, and, having received it, has his own light, that is, his consecrated power and authority. The similarity between these two persons in every Christian society is exactly the same as that between the sun and the moon in the material world. For the episcopal power shines by day, that is, over souls; while the tsarist power shines in the things of this world. And this power, which is the tsarist sword, must be ready to act against the enemies of the Orthodox faith. The episcopate and all the clergy need this defence from all unrighteousness and violence. This is what the secular power is obliged to do. For secular people are in need of freedom for their souls, while spiritual people are in need of secular people for the defence of their bodies. And so in this neither of them is higher than the other, but each has power from God."¹⁶⁷

But Nikon insists that when the tsar encroaches on the Church he loses his power. For "there is in fact no man more powerless than he who attacks the Divine laws, and there is nothing more powerful than a man who fights for them. For he who commits sin is the slave of sin, even if he bears a thousand crowns on his head, but he who does righteous deeds is greater than the tsar

¹⁶⁵ Zyzykin, *op. cit.*, part II, p. 55.

¹⁶⁶ Zyzykin, *op. cit.*, part II, pp. 19-20.

¹⁶⁷ Zyzykin, *op. cit.*, part II, p. 59.

himself, even if he is the last of all.”¹⁶⁸ So a tsar who himself chooses patriarchs and metropolitans, breaking his oath to the patriarch “is unworthy even to enter the church, but he must spend his whole life in repentance, and only at the hour of death can he be admitted to communion... Chrysostom forbade every one who breaks his oath ... from crossing the threshold of the church, even in he were the tsar himself.”¹⁶⁹

Nicon comes very close to identifying the caesaropapist tsar with the Antichrist. For, as Zyzykin points out, “Nicon looked on the apostasy of the State law from Church norms (i.e. their destruction) as the worship by the State of the Antichrist, ‘This antichrist is not satan, but a man, who will receive from satan the whole power of his energy. A man will be revealed who will be raised above God, and he will be the opponent of God and will destroy all gods and will order that people worship him instead of God, and he will sit, not in the temple of Jerusalem, but in the Churches, giving himself out as God. As the Median empire was destroyed by Babylon, and the Babylonian by the Persian, and the Persian by the Macedonian, and the Macedonian by the Roman, thus must the Roman empire be destroyed by the antichrist, and he - by Christ. This is revealed to us by the Prophet Daniel. The divine Apostle warned us about things to come, and they have come for us through you and your evil deeds (he is speaking to the author of the *Ulozhenie*, Prince Odoyevsky) Has not the apostasy from the Holy Gospel and the traditions of the Holy Apostles and holy fathers appeared? (Nicon has in mind the invasion by the secular authorities into the administration of the Church through the *Ulozhenie*). Has not the man of sin been discovered - the son of destruction, who will exalt himself about everything that is called God, or that is worshipped? And what can be more destructive than abandoning God and His commandments, as they have preferred the traditions of men, that is, their codex full of spite and cunning? But who is this? Satan? No. This is a man, who has received the work of Satan, who has united to himself many others like you, composer of lies, and your comrades. Sitting in the temple of God does not mean in the temple of Jerusalem, but everywhere in the Churches. And sitting not literally in all the Churches, but as exerting power over all the Churches. The Church is not stone walls, but the ecclesiastical laws and the pastors, against whom thou, apostate, hast arisen, in accordance with the work of satan, and in the *Ulozhenie* thou hast presented secular people with jurisdiction over the Patriarch, the Metropolitans, the Archbishops, the Bishops, and over all the clergy, without thinking about the work of God. As the Lord said on one occasion: ‘Depart from Me, satan, for thou thinkest not about what is pleasing to God, but about what is pleasing to men.’ ‘Ye are of your father the devil and you carry out his lusts.’ Concerning such Churches Christ said: ‘My house will be called a house of prayer, but you will make it a den of thieves’; as Jeremiah says (7.4): ‘Do not rely on deceiving words of those who say to you: here is the temple of the Lord.’ How can it be the temple of God if it is under the power of the tsar and his subjects, and they order whatever they want in it? Such a Church is no longer

¹⁶⁸ Zyzykin, *op. cit.*, part II, p. 62.

¹⁶⁹ Zyzykin, *op. cit.*, part II, pp. 63-64.

the temple of God, but the house of those who have power over it, for, if it were the temple of God, nobody, out of fear of God, would be capable of usurping power over it or taking anything away from it. But as far as the persecution of the Church is concerned, God has revealed about this to His beloved disciple and best theologian John (I, 403-408),... [who] witnesses, saying that the Antichrist is already in the world. But nobody has seen or heard him perceptibly, that is, the secular authorities will begin to rule over the Churches of God in transgression of the commandments of God.' For the word 'throne' signifies having ecclesiastical authority, and not simply sitting... And he will command people to bow down to him not externally or perceptibly, but in the same way as now the Bishops, abandoning their priestly dignity and honour, bow down to the tsars as to their masters. And they ask them for everything and seek honours from them" (I, 193)."¹⁷⁰ For "there is apostasy also in the fact that the Bishops, abandoning their dignity, bow down before the tsar as their master in spiritual matters, and seek honours from him."¹⁷¹

The power of the Roman emperors, of which the Russian tsardom is the lawful successor, is "that which restraineth" the coming of the Antichrist. And yet "the mystery of iniquity is already being accomplished" in the shape of those kings, such as Nero, who ascribed to themselves divine worship.¹⁷²

The warning was clear: that which restrains the antichrist can be swiftly transformed into the antichrist himself. Even the present tsar could suffer such a transformation; for "what is more iniquitous than for a tsar to judge bishops, taking to himself a power which has not been given him by God?... This is apostasy from God."¹⁷³

Conclusion

It was not only the Russian State that had sinned in Nikon's deposition: both the Russian hierarchs and the Eastern Patriarchs had submitted to the pressure of tsar and boyars. (In 1676 Patriarch Joachim convened a council which hurled yet more accusations against him...¹⁷⁴) But judgement was deferred for a generation or two, while the Russian autocracy restored the Ukraine, "Little Russia", to the Great Russian kingdom. With the weakening of Poland and the increase in strength of the generally pro-Muscovite Cossacks under Hetman Bogdan Khmel'nitsky, large areas of Belorussia and the Ukraine, including Kiev, were freed from Latin control, which could only be joyful news for the native Orthodox population who had suffered so much from the Polish-Jesuit yoke. Moreover, the liberated areas were returned to the jurisdiction of the Russian Church in 1686. This meant that most of the Russian lands were now, for the first time for centuries, united under a single, independent Russian State and Church. The Russian national Church had been restored to almost its

¹⁷⁰ Zyzykin, *op. cit.*, part II, pp. 24-25, 28.

¹⁷¹ Zyzykin, *op. cit.*, part II, p. 27.

¹⁷² Zyzykin, *op. cit.*, part II, p. 48.

¹⁷³ Quoted in Hackel, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

¹⁷⁴ Rusak, *op. cit.*, pp. 193-194.

original dimensions. The final step would be accomplished by Tsar Nicholas II in 1915, just before the fall of the empire...

However, Constantinople's agreement to the transfer of the Ukraine to the jurisdiction of the Russian Church was extracted only under heavy pressure from the Sultan, who wanted to ensure Moscow's neutrality in his war with the Sacred League in Europe. Ironically, the fact that he succumbed to this pressure tends to give strength to the argument that it was better for Kiev to be under the free Church of Russia rather than the Ecumenical Patriarchate, which was in captivity to the godless Turks... In any case, in 1687 Dionysius was removed for this act, and the transfer of Kiev to Moscow denounced as anti-canonical by the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Things were made worse when, in 1688, Moscow reneged on its promise to give Kiev the status of an autonomous metropolia and turned it into an ordinary diocese. This had consequences in the twentieth century, when Constantinople granted the Polish Church autocephaly in 1924, and then, from the beginning of the 1990s, began to lay claims to the Ukraine.

At the coronation of Tsar Theodore Alexeyevich certain additions were made to the rite that showed that the Russian Church now looked on the tsardom as a quasi-priestly rank. "These additions were: 1) the proclamation of the symbol of faith by the tsar before his crowning, as was always the case with ordinations, 2) the vesting of the tsar in royal garments signifying his putting on his rank, and 3) communion in the altar of the Body and Blood separately in accordance with the priestly order, which was permitted only for persons of the three hierarchical sacred ranks. These additions greatly exalted the royal rank, and Professor Pokrovsky explained their introduction by the fact that at the correction of the liturgical books in Moscow in the second half of the 17th century, the attention of people was drawn to the difference in the rites of the Byzantine and Muscovite coronation and the additions were introduced under the influence of the Council of 1667, which wanted to exalt the royal rank."¹⁷⁵

The pious tsar did not use his exalted position to humiliate the Church. On the contrary, he tried, as far as it was in his power, to correct the great wrong that had been done to the Church in his father's reign. Thus when Patriarch Nikon died it was the tsar who ordered "that the body should be conveyed to New Jerusalem. The patriarch did not want to give the reposed hierarchical honours. [So] his Majesty persuaded Metropolitan Cornelius of Novgorod to carry out the burial. He himself carried the coffin with the remains."¹⁷⁶

Again, it was the tsar rather than the patriarch who obtained a gramota from the Eastern Patriarchs in 1682 restoring Nikon to patriarchal status and "declaring that he could be forgiven in view of his redemption of his guilt by his humble patience in prison".¹⁷⁷ This was hardly an adequate summary of the

¹⁷⁵ Zyzykin, op. cit., part I, p. 165.

¹⁷⁶ Rusak, op. cit., p. 194.

¹⁷⁷ Zyzykin, op. cit., part I, p. 26.

situation. But it did go some of the way to helping the Greeks redeem their guilt in the deposition of the most Grecophile of Russian patriarchs...

12. THE QUESTION OF GEORGIAN AUTOCEPHALY

The Georgians were one of the first peoples to receive Christianity – through St. Nino, a cousin of St. George, in the fourth century, who converted the king of Kartalinia (Iberia) to Orthodoxy. St. Constantine the Great sent priests to help her, but in the early centuries all Georgian bishops were consecrated in Antioch before being sent to Iberia. In about 480 Patriarch Peter the Fuller of Antioch elevated the Bishop Mtskheta to the rank of Catholicos of Kartalinia with the blessing of the Byzantine Emperor Zeno. Until the 740s the Catholicos could appoint local bishops, but his own election had to be confirmed by the Holy Synod of the Antiochian Church. In 1010 the Catholicos was raised to the rank of Patriarch of All Georgia.

This elevation coincided with the emergence of a powerful Georgian State under the Bagration dynasty, and under the holy Kings David the Restorer and Tamara Georgia entered her Golden Age, from the eleventh to the early thirteenth centuries. However, the invasions first of the Mongols (in the 1220s), then of Persians and then of the Turks threatened to destroy the state's existence and the people's Orthodoxy. Their kings began to look around for a powerful Orthodox protector...

In the sixteenth century Georgia found herself in a terrible plight. For, as Ioseliani writes, "oppressed by internal discord, and by the dissensions of ambitious and unsettled princes, Georgia was again exposed to a severe persecution on the part of the Persians. These enemies of the Christian name ceased not to lay their sacrilegious hands on the riches of Iberia. The messengers of King Alexander to Moscow lamented the fearful misfortunes of their country, and represented how the great Shah-Abbas, having endeavoured to keep for himself the protection of the kingdom of Georgia, made the Georgians in reality into enemies of the Russian Tzar.

"In the year 1587 King Alexander II, having declared himself a vassal of Russia, sent to Moscow the priests Joachim, Cyril, and others; and, pressed on all sides as he was by the Persians and the Turks, entreated with tears the Russian Tzar Theodore Iohannovitch to take Iberia under his protection, and thus to rescue her from the grasp of infidels. 'The present disastrous times,' wrote he, 'for the Christian faith were foreseen by many men inspired by God. We, brethren of the same faith with the Russians, groan under the hand of wicked men. Thou, crowned head of the Orthodox faith, canst alone save both our lives and our souls. I bow to thee with my face to the earth, with all my people, and we shall be thine forever.' The Tzar Theodore Iohannovitch having taken Iberia under his protection, busied himself earnestly in rendering her assistance and in works of faith. He sent into Georgia teachers in holy orders for the regulation of Church ceremonies, and painters to decorate the temples with images of saints; and Job, patriarch of all the Russias, addressed to the Georgian king a letter touching the faith. King Alexander humbly replied that the favourable answer of the Tzar had fallen upon him from Heaven, and brought him out of darkness into light; that the clergy of the Russian Church

were angels for the clergy of Iberia, buried in ignorance. The Prince Zvenigorod, ambassador to Georgia, promised in the name of Russia the freedom of all Georgia, and the restoration of all her churches and monasteries."¹⁷⁸

However, because of her internal and external troubles, Russia was not able to offer significant military aid to Georgia for some time. And so "in 1617," writes A.P. Dobroklonsky, "Georgia was again subjected to destruction from the Persians: the churches were devastated, the land was ravaged. Therefore in 1619 Teimuraz, king of Kakhetia, Imeretia and Kartalinia, accepted Russian citizenship, and Persia was restrained from war by peaceful negotiations. But the peace was not stable. In 1634 the Persian Shah placed the Crown Prince Rostom on the throne of Kartalinia. He accepted Islam, and began to drive the Orthodox out of Kartalinia. [In fact, from 1634 until the crowning of King Wakhtang in 1701, all the sovereigns of Georgia were Muslim.] The renewal of raids on Georgia had a disturbing effect on ecclesiastical affairs there, so that in 1637 an archimandrite, two priests and two icon-painters with a craftsman and materials for the construction of churches were sent from Moscow 'to review and correct the peasants' faith'. And in 1650 Prince Alexander of Imeretia and in 1658 Teimuraz of Kakhetia renewed their oath of allegiance to the Russian Tsar. Nevertheless, even after this the woes continued. Many Georgians, restricted by the Muslims in their homeland, fled to Russia and there found refuge. But Georgia did not receive any real help from Russia throughout this period..."¹⁷⁹

Real help from Russia began only in the reign of Catherine the Great. "The Russian army," writes Lado Mirianashvili, "finally freed Georgia from the unremitting incursions at the end of the 18th century. In 1783 the kingdom of Kartli-Kakheti (central and eastern Georgia) concluded the Georgievsk treaty with Russia. According to the treaty Russia was to assume responsibility for protecting Georgia's borders in return for the free movement of Russian troops within the country. But by 1801 Russia had abrogated the treaty and annexed Kartli-Kakheti. This was followed by the annexation of Samegrelo and Imereti (western Georgia) in 1803 and 1804, respectively. Within ten years the Russian authorities had abolished the Georgian monarchy, the Church's autocephaly, and the patriarchal throne – all of which had withstood the Turks, the Mongols, and the Persians. During the subsequent 106 years, nineteen exarches of the Russian Synod ruled the Georgian Church. Church services in Georgian were terminated, frescoes were whitewashed, and ancient Georgian icons and manuscripts were either sold or destroyed."¹⁸⁰

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¹⁷⁸ P. Ioseliani, *A Short History of the Georgian Church*, Jordanville, N.Y.: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1983, pp. 146-148.

¹⁷⁹ Dobroklonsky, *Rukovodstvo po istorii russkoj tserkvi* (Guide to the History of the Russian Church), Moscow, 2001, pp. 278-279.

¹⁸⁰ Archpriest Zakaria Michitadze, *Lives of the Georgian Saints*, Platina: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 2006, pp. 25-27.

However, these facts should be understood in the context of the truly mortal danger that Georgia found herself in, which led to many of her holy elders welcoming annexation by Russia and being sincerely pro-Russian...

Thus if we go back to 1795, we find, as Ioseliani writes, that "the Persian army took the city of Tiflis, seized almost all the valuable property of the royal house, and reduced the palace and the whole of the city into a heap of ashes and of ruins. The whole of Georgia, thus left at the mercy of the ruthless enemies of the name of Christ, witnessed the profanation of everything holy, and the most abominable deeds and practices carried on in the temples of God. Neither youth nor old age could bring those cruel persecutors to pity; the churches were filled with troops of murderers and children were killed at their mothers' breasts. They took the Archbishop of Tiflis, Dositheus, who had not come out of the Synod of Sion, made him kneel down before an image of [the most holy Mother of God], and, without mercy on his old age, threw him from a balcony into the river Kur; then they plundered his house, and set fire to it. The pastors of the Church, unable to hide the treasures and other valuable property of the Church, fell a sacrifice to the ferocity of their foes. Many images of saints renowned in those days perished for ever; as, for instance, among others, the image of [the most holy Mother of God] of the Church of Metekh, and that of the Synod of Sion. The enemy, having rifled churches, destroyed images, and profaned the tombs of saints, revelled in the blood of Christians; and the inhuman Mahomed-Khan put an end to these horrors only when there remained not a living soul in Tiflis.

"King George XIII, who ascended the throne of Georgia (A.D. 1797-1800) only to see his subjects overwhelmed and rendered powerless by their incessant and hopeless struggles with unavoidable dangers from enemies of the faith and of the people, found the resources of the kingdom exhausted by the constant armaments necessary for its own protection; before his eyes lay the ruins of the city, villages plundered and laid waste, churches, monasteries, and hermitages demolished, troubles within the family, and without it the sword, fire, and inevitable ruin, not only of the Church, but also of the people, yea, even of the very name of the people. In the fear of God, and trusting to His providence, he made over Orthodox Georgia in a decided manner to the Tzar of Russia, his co-religionist; and thus obtained for her peace and quiet. It pleased God, through this king, to heal the deep wounds of an Orthodox kingdom.

"Feeling that his end was drawing near, he, with the consent of all ranks and of the people, requested the Emperor Paul I to take Georgia into his subjection for ever (A.D. 1800). The Emperor Alexander I, when he mounted the throne, promised to protect the Georgian people of the same faith with himself, which had thus given itself over to the people of Georgia (A.D. 1801) he proclaimed the following:- 'One and the same honour, and humanity laid upon us the sacred duty, after hearing the prayers of sufferers, to grant them justice and equity in

exchange for their affliction, security for their persons and for their property, and to give to all alike the protection of the law.”¹⁸¹

What we have called here “Georgia” was in fact the kingdom of Kartli-Kakheti in Eastern Georgia. But there was another independent Georgian kingdom in the West, Imeretia.

After the annexation of the eastern kingdom, “the Russian government,” as we read in the *Life* of Hieroschemonk Hilarion the Georgian of Mount Athos, “initiated correspondence with the Imeretian king concerning the uniting of his nation with Russia. King Solomon II sought the counsel of his country’s foremost nobles, and in 1804, due to pressure from Russia, he was left with little choice but to set forth the following: since the king did not have an heir to the throne, Imeretia would retain her independence until his death, remaining in brotherly relations with Russia as between two realms of the same faith. The Russian army had free passage across Imeretian territory to the Turkish border, and the Imeretian army was required to render them aid. The relations of the two countries were to be upheld in those sacred terms which are proper to God’s anointed rulers and Christian peoples united in an indivisible union of soul – eternally and unwaveringly. But after the king’s death the legislation of the Russian Empire would be introduced. The resolution was then sent to the Governor-General of the Caucasus in Tbilisi for forwarding to Tsar Alexander I.

“Despite the general approval of the resolution by the king’s subjects, one nobleman, Prince Zurab Tsereteli, began plotting how he could seize the Imeretian throne for himself. He first attempted to erode the friendly relations between the two monarchs by slandering each to the other. Unable to sow discord, he began a communication with the Russian governor-general of the Caucasus, Alexander Tormasov. Depicting the royal suite in the darkest colors to the governor-general, after repeated intrigues he finally succeeded in his designs. Eventually, the report reached the tsar. He, believing the slander, ordered Tormasov to lure Solomon II to Tbilisi and escort him to Russia, where he would remain a virtual prisoner.

“Not able to believe that others could be so base, treacherous and ignoble, the king fell into the trap set by Tormasov and Prince Zurab. Fr. Ise [the future Hieroschemonk Hilarion] had initially warned the king of Prince Zurab’s disloyalty. However, upon learning of his wife’s repose he returned to Kutaisi and was unable to further counsel the king.

“King Solomon II and his entire retinue were eventually coaxed all the way to Tbilisi. There they were put under house arrest; the plan being to send the king to live out his days in a palace in St. Petersburg. Preferring exile to imprisonment, the king and his noblemen conceived a plan of escape and fled across the border to Turkey. There, with Fr. Ise and his retinue, he lived out the

¹⁸¹ Ioseliani, pp. 190-193.

remainder of his life. After great deprivations and aborted attempts to reclaim the Imeretian Kingdom from Russia, King Solomon II reposed at Trebizond on February 19, 1815, in his forty-first year...

“After the king’s death, Fr. Ise intended to set out for Imeretia (then annexed to Russia) no matter what the consequences. He informed all the courtiers, who numbered about six hundred men, and suggested that they follow his example. Many of them accepted his decision joyfully, but fear of the tsar’s wrath hampered this plan. Fr. Ise reassured everyone, promising to take upon himself the task of mediating before the tsar. He immediately wrote out a petition in the name of all the princes and other members of the retinue, and sent it to the tsar. The sovereign graciously received their petition, restored them to their former ranks, and returned their estates...”¹⁸²

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Although union with Russia protected Georgia from the incursions of the Muslims, it had the unfortunate effect, as we have seen, of destroying the autocephaly of the Georgian Church and weakening its culture. Archpriest Zakaria Machitadze writes: “The foreign officials sent to rule in Georgia began to interfere considerably in the affairs of the Church, and it soon became clear that the Russian government [contrary to eighth paragraph of the treaty of 1783] intended to abolish the autocephaly of the Georgian Church and subordinate it to the Russian Synod.

“On June 10, 1811, Tsar Alexander summoned Anton II, Patriarch of All Georgia, to his court and from there sent him into exile. For ten years Georgia had neither a king nor a spiritual leader, and the people began to lose their sense of political and spiritual independence.

“There ensued a period of great difficulty in the life of the Georgian Church. The Church was subordinated to the Russian Synod through an exarch, or representative, of the synod. From 1811 to 1817 the Georgian nobleman Varlaam served as exarch, but after his term all the subsequent exarches were Russian by descent. The foreign exarches’ ignorance of the Georgian language, traditions, local saints, and feast gave rise to many conflicts between the foreign clergy and the Georgian Orthodox believers. The most contemptible exarches stole valuable pieces of jewelry and masterpieces of the Georgian enamel arts and sent them to Russia. Many cathedrals were left to fall into ruin, and the number of diocese in Georgia dropped dramatically from twenty-four to five. Divine services in the Georgian language and ancient polyphonic chants were replaced by services in Slavonic and the music of the post-Petrine Russian Church.

¹⁸² “Tower of Virtue: The Life and Ascetic Labors of St. Hilarion the Georgian of Mount Athos”, *The Orthodox Word*, vol. 39, NN 3-4 (230-231), May-August, 2003, pp. 117-118.

“Russian domination of the Church aroused considerable vexation and indignation in the Georgian people, and evidence of the exarchs’ anti-Georgian activities exacerbated their discontent. Despite the wise admonitions of many Russian elders to respect the portion assigned by lot to the Theotokos and converted by the holy Apostles themselves, appalling crimes continued to be committed against the Georgian Church and nation. Frescoes in churches were whitewashed, and the Khakuli Icon of the Theotokos along with other icons and objects adorned with precious gold and silver were stolen...”¹⁸³

The delicate question of the relationship between the Russian and Georgian Churches was discussed in 1901 by the great missionary and future hieromartyr Fr. John Vostorgov: “In voluntarily uniting herself voluntarily with Russia, Georgia gained much. But we must not forget that she also lost: she lost her independent existence as a separate state, that which served and serves as the object of ardent desires and bloody struggles up to now in many peoples, and which Georgia herself defended for a long series of centuries as an inestimable treasure with as lofty heroism as can be attributed to any people in history.

“Whether we recognize or not the providential significance of peoples in history, we must in any case agree that historical and geographical conditions at least place before this or that people this or that *world task*. Only from this point of view do the ardent enthusiasms of patriotism, and the fervent desire and care to bring greatness and power to one’s homeland, acquire a meaning and higher justification: her greatness and power are not an end, but the means to serve the universal, pan-human good. But what was the destiny of Russia on the universal-historical plane? It would not be an exaggeration, nor an artificial invention to point to the fact that she, as standing on the borders of the East and the West, is destined to mediate between them, and to work out in her own history a higher synthesis of the principles of life of the East and the West, which are often contradictory and hostile to one another, pushing them onto the path of bitter struggle, reconciling them in the unity of a higher, unifying cultural type. This task – a great, colossal, unique task – was bequeathed to Russia by deceased Byzantium, which in her turn inherited it from ancient Greece with her eastern-Persian armies, her powerful Hellenism, which was victoriously borne even in the time of Alexander the Great into the very heart of the East.

“But much earlier than Russia this great task was recognized and accepted by Georgia...

“In the days of the ancient struggle between Greece and Persia, the West was characterized, spiritually speaking, by the religions of anthropomorphism, and the East – by Parsism. Georgia, like Armenia, stood at that time completely on the side of the latter. The Persians placed a seal on the clothing, morals and

¹⁸³ Machitadze, *Lives of the Georgian Saints*, Platina, Ca.: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood Press, 2006, pp. 123-124.

customs of the Georgians, and on their royal dynasties, language and religion, that is perceptible to this day, because in deep antiquity the native paganism of the Georgians was supplanted by the worship of Armazd, in whose name we can undoubtedly hear the name of the Persian Ormuzd. A new, powerful influence entered into the world when the West accepted Christianity and placed it on the banner of her historical existence. And before the appearance of Christianity, under Caesar and Pompey, we see in Georgia the beginnings of an attraction towards the West. But she finally understood her own mission in the world only in the light of Christianity: under the emperor Hadrian, this was still expressed in an indecisive manner and bore the character of a certain compulsion, but under Constantine the Great this was finally and irreversibly recognized.

“It is not in vain that the year of the victory of Constantine the Great near Adrianople (323), and the declaration that Christianity was not only permitted (as it had been in 312 and 313) but the dominant religion of the Roman empire, coincides with the year of the baptism of the Georgians in Mskhet... A remarkable coincidence! King Mirian, who was by birth from a Persian dynasty, wavered quite a bit until, propelled by the historical calling of his people, in spite of his family links with Persia, he decided to make this step, which irreversibly defined the destiny of Georgia. Soon the East, in its turn, exchanged Parsism for Islam, and there began the great duel of two worlds. Western Europe responded, and responded powerfully, to this duel with its crusades. But we can say that the life and history of Georgia was one long crusade, one long heroic and martyric feat! The arena of the great struggle was continually being widened in the direction of the north: from ancient Greece to Byzantium, to Georgia, to the south-western Slavic peoples. But when Byzantium began to decline, from the tenth century, still further to the north, the young Russian people was called into the arena, bearing upon herself the seal of great powers and a great destiny. But until she grew up and thrust aside a multitude of paths that bound her childhood and youth, until she had passed through the educational suffering of her struggle with the wild hordes, with the infidels, in the crucible of the Tatar yoke, and in domestic upheavals, Georgia remained alone. It is difficult to represent and describe her boundless sufferings, her faithfulness to the Cross, her heroism worthy of eternal memory, her merits before the Christian world.

“Soon the Tatar yoke became synonymous with Islam; Russia, casting aside that yoke, moved further and further into the Muslim world, became stronger and stronger, and finally the hour of the will of God sounded: she gave the hand of help and complete union to exhausted Iberia, which had reached the final limits of exhaustion in her unequal struggle. Peoples having a single world task naturally merged into one on the level of the state also...

“But this is not all: the situation of the struggle between Islam and Christianity, between the East and the West, immediately changed. Russia, having established herself in Transcaucasia, immediately became a threat to Persia and Turkey; with unprecedented rapidity and might she cast the banner

of Islam far from the bounds of tormented Georgia. Only one century has passed since the time of the union of Russia and Georgia, and in the meantime what a huge, hitherto unseen growth has taken place in Christian Russia, and, by contrast, fall in Muslim Turkey and Persia! This demonstrates to all how much good the executed decision of the two peoples to merge into one on the basis of the communality of their world tasks brought to the history of the world one hundred years ago.

“But did both peoples understand these tasks, and do they understand them now?

“Even if they had not understood them clearly, they would have striven towards them semi-consciously: if a people is an organism, then in it there must be instincts which subconsciously direct its life purposefully and infallibly, having before it, not death, but life. But there is a force which gave to both the one and the other people an understanding of their world tasks, and the means of their fulfillment. This force is *Orthodoxy*. It alone includes in itself the principles of true Catholicity, and does not suppress nationalities, but presents to each one spiritual freedom without tying its spiritual life to a person, a place or an external discipline, while at the same time it stands higher than all nationalities. By means of undying tradition it preserves a man from confusing freedom with license, from destructive spiritual anarchy, and makes possible in him constant vitality and growth, as of a spiritual organism. Not being tied to a place or time, and including in itself the principles of true democracy and good, healthy cosmopolitanism (in the Orthodox understanding of the Church), Orthodoxy – and only Orthodoxy – serves as a religion having an eternal and global significance, uniting mankind inwardly, and not outwardly. Without suppressing nationalities, it can at the same time become a pan-popular religion in the full sense of the word. And truly it has become the fundamental strength and popular religion both for the Russians and for the Georgians. Outside Orthodoxy both Russians and Georgians cease to be themselves. But in it they find the true guarantee of the preservation of their spiritual personalities under any hostile attacks. For that reason it has become infinitely dear to the hearts of both peoples; for that reason it has so quickly and firmly united both peoples in an unbroken union hitherto unknown in history of state and Church, in spite of the absence of tribal kinship, for kinship according to faith is higher than kinship according to blood, union in the spirit is higher than union in race, and stronger than unions created for the avaricious aims of states. This is a union in life and death, for the present and the future, since it rests on spiritual, age-old foundations. And the eternal and the spiritual give sense to the temporal and make it truly fertile...”¹⁸⁴

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¹⁸⁴ Vostorgov, “Gruzia i Rossia” (Georgia and Russia), in *Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenij Protoiereia Ioanna Vostorgova* (The Complete Collection of the Works of Protopriest John Vostorgov), Moscow, 1914, vol. 1, pp. 63-67.

In the pre-revolutionary decades a movement began to preserve the Georgian nation's heritage and promote the cause of Georgian state independence and ecclesiastical autocephaly. It was led by the poet, historian and philosopher Ilia Chavchavadze, who was assassinated by revolutionaries in 1907. Georgian *State* independence could not be considered by the Russian government then, since at a time of increasing nationalist and tension, it would only undermine the whole empire. However, *Church* autocephaly was a different matter in view of the undisputed fact that the Georgian Church had once been autocephalous. And on June 2, 1906 this question was reviewed in the Alexander Nevsky Lavra in St. Petersburg during the sessions of the second section of the Preconciliar Convention.

Eugene Pavlenko writes: "The majority of those who spoke supported the state principle of Church division [that is, in one state there should be only one Church administration], but the minority insisted on a national or ethnic point of view. In winding up the second section of the Preconciliar Convention, participants accepted one of the two projects of Protopriest I. Vostorgov on giving the Georgian Church greater independence in the sphere of the use of the Georgian liturgical language, of the appointment of national Georgian clergy, etc., but the project for Georgian autocephaly was rejected."

The argument between the two sides is important and its conclusions applicable to other Churches striving for autocephaly or autonomy. So we shall follow it in Pavlenko's exposition: "The most completely phyletistic [nationalistic] argumentation of the supporters of the idea of Georgian autocephaly at the Preconciliar Consistory was sounded in the report of Bishop Kirion [Sadzagelov, of Sukhumi], 'The National Principle in the Church'.¹⁸⁵

This report began by proclaiming the principle of nationality in the Church and by affirming its antiquity. In the opinion of the Bishop, Georgia 'has the right to the independent existence of her national Church on the basis of the principle of nationality in the Church proclaimed at the beginning of the Christian faith.' What does principle consist of, and when was it proclaimed? 'It is sufficient to remember,' writes Bishop Kirion, 'the descent of the Holy Spirit on the apostles, who immediately began to glorify God in various languages and then preached the Gospel to the pagans, each in their native language.' But in our [Pavlenko's] view, references to the preaching of the apostles in connection with the affirmation of the national principle in the Church have no firm foundation. The preaching of the apostles in various languages was necessary in order to unite the peoples in the Truth of Christ, and not in order to disunite them in accordance with the national principle. That is, the principle of nationality is precisely that which Christianity has to overcome, and not that on which the Church must be founded. Since the Bulgarian schism phyletistic argumentation has characteristically sought support in references to the 34th Apostolic canon. 'The basic canonical rule,'

¹⁸⁵ *Journals and Protocols of the sessions of the Preconciliar Convention Established by His Majesty*, volume 3. On the second section on Georgia. St. Petersburg, 1907, pp. 55-58.

writes Bishop Kirion, 'by which the significance of nationality in relation to Church administration is recognised, is the 34th Apostolic canon which is so well known to canonists... According to the direct meaning of this canon in the Orthodox Church, every nationality must have its first hierarch.' But the 34th Apostolic canon... has in view 'bishops of every territory' and not 'bishops of every people'. The word *ethnos*, which is employed in this canon in the ancient language and in the language of Christian antiquity, is translated in the dictionary of Liddell and Scott first of all as 'a number of people accustomed to live together', and only then as 'a nation'. It is precisely the first sense indicated here that points to the territorial meaning of the Apostolic canon. So references to its national meaning are groundless.

"An incorrect understanding and use of the principle of conciliarity – which phyletism has in common with ecumenism – sometimes brings them closer... to the point of being completely indistinguishable. For the supporters of the division of the Church along tribal lines the principle of conciliarity is only a convenient federal form for the development by each people of its nationality idiosyncrasy. '... The federal system,' in the opinion of Bishop Kirion, 'gave our Eastern Church significant advantages from a national point of view.' And the preservation of this idiosyncrasy – in his opinion – is prescribed by conciliar decisions (cf. the 39th canon of the Council in Trullo), and acquires a very important significance from the point of view of Church freedom.' But in the 39th canon of the Council in Trullo not a word is said about 'national religious-everyday and individual particularities' and the like, but there is mention of the rights of first-hierarchs over bishops and their appointment. 'Let the customs of each [autocephalous] Church be observed,' it says in this canon, 'so that the bishop of each district should be subject to his president, and that he, in his turn, should be appointed from his bishops, according to the ancient custom.' The émigré Church of Cyprus, of which mention is made in this canon, did not become the national Church of the Cypriots, but took into herself all the peoples of the Hellespont district where they emigrated. Where is mention made here of a conciliar sanction for the preservation of 'local ecclesiastical traditions' with the aid of administrative isolation?

"'Ecclesiastically speaking,' thinks Bishop Kirion, 'each people must make use of the freedom of self-determination' and 'possesses the right to develop according to the laws of its own national spirit.' The extent to which the Bishop sees the development of each Church possible 'according to the laws of its own national spirit' becomes clear from the following quotation cited by him: 'The Bulgarian Church, after a period of difficult trials and struggle, is near to the realisation of its age-old strivings without disrupting Christian peace and love. The enslaved Syro-Arabic Church is declaring its rights to national idiosyncrasy more and more persistently. The Armenian, Syro-Jacobite and Perso-Chaldean Churches, which have, because of regrettable circumstances, been separated from ecumenical unity for a long time, are also seeking reunion, but without the disruption of their national rights which have come into being

historically.¹⁸⁶ By 'regrettable circumstances' Professor Kavalnitsky and Bishop Kirion who quotes him apparently have in mind the Council of Chalcedon, which condemned the monophysite heretics. While by 'reunion' they have in mind, as becomes clear from the following sentence, the following: 'Unity between the Churches must take place on the principle of equality, and not of absorption.'¹⁸⁷ Thus both in the schism of the Bulgarians, and in the heresy of monophysitism, there is nothing to prevent union with them, but only, in the opinion of Bishop Kirion, 'the religious variety of the Christian peoples'! Before our eyes, Bishop Kirion, a defender of Georgian autocephaly at the beginning of the century, is making a path from phyletism to ecumenism, the union of which we have already distinctly observed at the end of the century. This is the classical 'branch theory' in action. 'The peoples who accepted Christianity did not all assimilate its lofty teaching in the same way; each took from it only those elements of Christian life which it was able to in accordance with its intellectual and moral character. The Latin nations (the Catholics) developed a strict ecclesiastical organisation and created architecture of high artistic value. The Greeks, who were experienced in dialectical subtleties, worked out a complex and firmly based dogmatic system. The Russians, on accepting Christianity, mainly developed discipline and church rubrics, bringing external beauty to a high level of development. But the Georgians, having christianised their age-old national beliefs and being completely penetrated with the spirit of Christianity, attached to it the sympathetic traits of their own character: meekness, simplicity, warmth, self-sacrifice, freedom from malice and persistence. Although all the nations did not receive Christianity, in the sense of assimilate the height and fullness of its heavenly teaching, in the same way, nevertheless, enlightened by Christianity, as members of the one Body of Christ [one must suppose that Latins and Monophysites are included in this number – the author], strive for the one aim that is common to Christian humanity – the realisation of the kingdom of God on earth (!)'. The idea of chiliasm – 'the kingdom of God on earth' – is a worthy crown of this union of phyletism and ecumenism. Fitting for a report at the assembly of the World Council of Churches, whose members are expecting the coming of 'the new era of the Holy Spirit'?

"From Bishop Kirion's report it is clearly evident that the idea of the national Church, beginning with the division of the Church on national lines, leads to her 'union', not on the basis of the patristic faith, but on the basis of the idea of abstract 'equality' of separate, including heretical, churches, and through this to the idea of the coming earthly kingdom of the antichrist..."¹⁸⁸

There are stronger arguments to be made for Georgian autocephaly than those put forward by Bishop Kirion. For, as we have seen, Georgian Church autocephaly was a generally accepted fact long before the Russian Church

¹⁸⁶ Professor M.G. Kovalnitsky, *On the Significance of the National Element in the Historical Development of Christianity*, Kiev, 1880, pp. 3-4.

¹⁸⁷ *Journals and Protocols*, p. 56.

¹⁸⁸ Eugene Pavlenko, "The Heresy of Phyletism: History and the Present", *Vertograd-Inform*, September, 1999.

became autocephalous. However, Pavlenko is right to reject his essentially phyletistic argument: one (ethnic) nation – one Church, and the impulse it gives to ecumenism. For from the earliest times, the Orthodox Church has been organized on a *territorial* basis, following the demarcation of *states* rather than ethnic groups. In more recent centuries state boundaries have tended to correspond more and more closely to ethnic boundaries, so that we now talk of the Greek Church, the Russian Church, the Serbian Church, etc., as if we are talking about the Churches of the ethnic Greeks, Russians and Serbs exclusively. But this is a misleading way of speaking, and does not alter the essential principle, confirmed both in Holy Scripture and in Canon Law, that a local Church is the Church of all the people, *of all nationalities*, gathered together on one territory.

The attempt to substitute the ethnic principle for the territorial principle had already led to a schism between the Greek and the Bulgarian Churches in 1872. It would lead to a schism between the Russian and the Georgian Churches in 1917, when Bishop Kirion and a Council of the Georgian Church re-established Georgian Church autocephaly on the basis of the ethnic principle. It would thereby divide the two Churches at precisely the moment when unity between Orthodox Christians of all races was vital in the face of the international communist revolution...

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In Tbilisi in November, 1917, writes Dov Kontorer, “a Transcaucasian commissariat was established representing a combined government of Georgian socialists, Armenian Dashnaks and Azerbaidzhani Musavatists. The power of this organ extended – theoretically, at least – over the whole territory of Transcaucasia, except for the region of Baku, where the Bolsheviks were in power. The Transcaucasian commissariat refused to recognize the results of the Brest peace, according to which Soviet Russia conceded to Turkey not only the territories conquered in the First World War, but also the districts of Kars, Ardagan and Batumi. This led to the breakdown of peaceful negotiations at a conference in Trabzon in March-April, 1918. Meanwhile the continuing collapse of Statehood in Transcaucasia was combined with an excessively bold external politics. In the spring of 1918 the Turks were in quite a difficult situation. Nevertheless, at the cost of some short military actions, they succeeded in seizing Batumi, Ozurgeti, Akhaltsikhe and a series of other territories.

“It was against this background that an ‘independent federal democratic republic’ was proclaimed in Transcaucasia. It lasted for about a month. On May 26, 1918 the Georgian Mensheviks headed by N.S. Chkheidze, I.G. Tsereteli and N.N. Jordania, declared Georgia to be an independent republic... But the reality of Georgian ‘independence’ was such that the new government immediately had to summon German forces onto its territory ‘for defence against the Turks’, and at the same time to sign a peace agreement with Turkey

according to which Georgia lost even more than it had according to the conditions of the Brest peace which it had rejected.”¹⁸⁹

Georgian ecclesiastical independence had been proclaimed even earlier than Georgian political independence. On March 12, 1917, an Assembly of the bishops, clergy and laity of Georgia proclaimed the re-establishment of the autocephaly of the Georgian Church, which led to a break in communion with the Russian Church. In the summer, however, “the Georgian Church sent a special deputation to the Most Holy Russian Synod to inform the Most Holy Synod about the re-establishment of the autocephaly of the Georgian Church and greet it. The Russian Synod through the mouth of Archbishop Sergius of Finland confirmed ‘that Russian Church consciousness has never been foreign to the thought of the necessity of returning to the Georgian Church her former constitution... If this thought has not been realized up to now, for this there were special reasons’ not depending on Church actors, but ‘now, in the days of the general liberating spring, Russian Church consciousness is ready to welcome the fulfilment ... of the long-time dream’ of the Orthodox Georgians, and the Russian hierarchs hope ‘that God will order all for the good, and that certain roughnesses in this matter will be smoothed over’ and that at the forthcoming Local Council of the Russian Orthodox Church a fraternal meeting of representatives of the two Churches is bound to take place in order to find a path to mutual understanding’.”¹⁹⁰

In September, a General Council of the Georgian Church confirmed the Acts of the March Council. On October 1 Bishop Kirion Sadzaguelachvili was enthroned as Catholicos-Patriarch in Tbilisi by three vicar bishops over the protests of three Georgian hierarchs: Demetrius (Abashidze) of Simferopol, Antony of Gori and Nazarius (Lezhavy). On January 11, 1918, Patriarch Tikhon also protested against the re-establishment of Georgian autocephaly, pointedly addressing Kirion as only a bishop.

Georgia, wrote his Holiness, had united with Russia more than a century before, and from that time the highest ecclesiastical authority in Georgia had belonged to the Holy Synod. However, when, in 1905, an attempt was made to restore the autocephaly of the Georgian Church, the Holy Synod in 1906 decreed that this question should be handed over for discussion at the All-Russian Council, the decisions of which the Georgian hierarchs were obliged to wait for. “According to canon law, the agreement and permission of the Mother [kiriarkhal’noj] Church to the autocephaly of the other Local Church which before was subject to her jurisdiction is required. Usually the Church which is seeking independence addresses the Mother Church with her request, and, on the basis of data of a political and ecclesiastical character, seeks her agreement to the reception of autocephaly. The request is directed in the name of both the ecclesiastical and civil authorities of the country, and also of the

¹⁸⁹ Kontorer, “Ultima Thule”, <http://yaqir-mamlal.livejournal.com/121209.html?view=4676729#t4676729>.

¹⁹⁰ Letter of Catholicos Leonid to Patriarch Tikhon, August 5, 1919.

people; it must be a clearly expressed declaration concerning the general and unanimous desire to receive ecclesiastical independence. That is how it was in Greece, in Serbia and in Romania, but it was not like that in Bulgaria, where the well-known schism arose. And it was also not like that, unfortunately, in the Transcaucasus in 1917... In pointing out your errors and mistakes, we suggest to you, Most Reverend Bishops, that you submit to the demand of the ecclesiastical canons and, following the canonical order, appear at the All-Russian Sacred Council, and, recognising your errors, convey your desire concerning the autocephaly of the Georgian Church to the court of the whole All-Russian Council, so that you may not be subjected to the judgement of the canons and not fall into the great and terrible sin of alienation from the Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church..."¹⁹¹

However, the Russian and Georgian governments confirmed this election, pulling the carpet from under the feet of Patriarch Tikhon.¹⁹² Kirion immediately seized the exarchal house and ordered the portraits of the Tsar and the previous exarchs removed. But God did not bless his endeavours. After his first and last liturgy as Catholicos, he fell ill – he had been poisoned (according to one source, he poisoned himself). In order to recuperate he went to the monastery of St. Anthony, near Martkop, where, in June, 1918, according to some sources, he committed suicide...¹⁹³

"In December, 1918," continues Kontorer, "with the defeat of Germany in the First World War, the German soldiers in Transcaucasia were replaced by a British expeditionary force. They saw their task in guaranteeing the uninterrupted work of the oil industry and the Batumi-Baku railway, while keeping internal peace in the region interested them very little. As a lawful result of this, there began a series of embittered ethnic wars that accompanied a 'parade of sovereignties' in Transcaucasia.

"The best known was the Armenian-Azerbaijani war, which was accompanied on both sides by the massive slaughter of the peaceful population (in contemporary terminology: 'ethnic cleansing'). In the autumn of 1920 there entered into the conflict, with the agreement of Georgia, the young Kemalist state of Turkey. Having attained a rapid and complete victory on the field of battle, it imposed significant territorial concessions on Armenia in negotiations in Alexandropol. These were partially reviewed later when the RSFSR and Turkey concluded an agreement in Moscow in 1921.

¹⁹¹ M.E. Gubonin, *Akty Sviateishago Patriarkha Tikhona*, Moscow, 1994, pp. 71-75.

¹⁹² K.D. Kafafov, "Vospominania o vnutrennykh delakh Rossijskoj imperii" (Reminiscences of the Internal Affairs of the Russian Empire), *Voprosy Istorii* (Historical Questions), N 7, 2005, p. 93.

¹⁹³ However, this was covered up, and on July 7 he was given a triumphant burial in the Zion cathedral (http://www.pstbi.ru/bin/code.exe/frames/m/ind_oem.html?ans/; Archimandrite Seraphim, "Russkie sviaschennomucheniki i mucheniki v Gruzii", *Pravoslavnij Put'*, 1965, pp. 23-32).

“But it was not only the major Transcaucasian nations who warred against each other at this time. The assertion of national identity in conditions of the collapse of the previous imperial statehood was accompanied almost everywhere by bloody civil conflict. Thus in Georgia the Menshevik government of Noe Jordania conducted in relation to a whole series of national minorities a politics that would be described today as an attempt at genocide. In particular, at that time Georgia exterminated about 18,000 Osetians, which helped greatly to make the population of Northern Osetia to cling desperately to the possibility of remaining within Soviet Russia, while that part of the Osetian population which lived compactly to the south of the Great Caucasian Ridge was extremely grateful to Moscow for the creation within Georgia of the South Osetian autonomous republic.”¹⁹⁴

For in February, 1921 the Bolsheviks, at the initiative of the Georgians Stalin and Ordzhonikidze, had invaded Georgia, and after a short war of three weeks took control of the country. Soon the Church was deprived of juridical status, and churches and monasteries began to be closed...

“On February 7, 1922,” writes Fr. Elijah Melia, “Catholicos Ambrose sent to the Interallied Conference at Genoa (the highest degree of international jurisdiction at that time) a letter of protest in which, recalling the moral obligations towards the nation of his charge, he protested in the name of the people of Georgia, deprived of their rights, against the foreign occupation and demanded the intervention of civilized humanity to oppose the iniquity committed against Georgia. He was arrested in February 1923 with Archbishop Nasaire and all the members of his Council. Their trial, which took place under conditions of semi-liberty, greatly stirred up the country.

“There were three accusations: 1) the 1922 letter to the Genoa Conference, 2) the concealment of the historic treasures of the Church in order to preserve them from passing into the hands of the State and 3) the prohibition imposed [by the] Governmental Commission for Religion against the redemption of precious objects in favour of the starving. Archbishop Nasaire was assassinated during the trial [in fact, after it, on September 1, 1924], most probably in order to impress the others accused. All the members of his Council showed their solidarity with the Catholicos Ambrose, who conducted himself heroically, assuming the entire responsibility for his acts, which he declared to have been in conformity with his obligations and with the tradition of the Church of Georgia in similar cases. He was condemned to eight years imprisonment. Two members of his Council were given five and two years respectively. The Catholicos was liberated before the term of his imprisonment was over. He died on March 29, 1927.

“In August 1924, a general insurrection broke out, organized by all the active forces of the nation – the higher ranks of the army, the political parties, the university, the ecclesiastics, the population as a whole. But the uprising was

¹⁹⁴ Kontorer, *op. cit.*

doomed to fail, for the plot had been betrayed. The repression created thousands of victims. Groups of partisans still operated for some time..."¹⁹⁵

According to Slava Katamidze, the number of victims was "enormous", but "the real figure has never been published..."¹⁹⁶

But this was only the prelude to the real enslavement of the Georgian Church. At just the time that Metropolitan Sergius was destroying the independence of the Russian Church by submitting it to the Communists, the Georgian leader was doing the same for his Church. "Between June 21 and 27, 1927," writes Fr. Elijah Melia, "a Council elected as Catholicos Christopher Tsitskichvili. On August 6 he wrote to the Ecumenical Patriarch Basil III who replied addressing him as Catholicos. The new Catholicos entirely changed the attitude of the ecclesiastical hierarchy towards the Soviet power, officially declared militant atheist, in favour of submission and collaboration with the Government."¹⁹⁷

All this, according to Boris Sokolov, took place under the influence of the head of the Georgian KGB, Laurence Pavlovich Beria, who wrote in 1929: "By our lengthy labours we succeeded in creating an opposition to Catholicos Ambrose and the then leading group in the Georgian Church, and... in January, 1927 we succeeded in completely wresting the reins of the government of the Georgian Church from the hands of Ambrose, and in removing him and his supporters from a leading role in the Georgian Church. In April, after the death of Catholicos Ambrose, Metropolitan Christopher was elected Catholicos. He is completely loyal to Soviet power, and already the Council that elected Christopher has declared its loyalty to the power and has condemned the politics and activity of Ambrose, and in particular, the Georgian emigration."¹⁹⁸

There followed, as Fr. Samson Zateishvili writes, "the persecution of clergy and believers, the dissolution of monasteries, the destruction of churches and their transformation into warehouses and cattle-sheds... The situation of the Church in Georgia was, perhaps, still more tragic and hopeless [than in the Russian Church], insofar as the new trials were imposed on old, unhealed wounds which remained from previous epochs."¹⁹⁹

The change was discernible very quickly to outsiders. Thus in October, 1930, the future Archbishop Leontius of Chile wrote in his *Memoirs*: "I arrived in Tbilisi in the evening, and went straight with my letter to the cathedral church

¹⁹⁵ Melia, "The Orthodox Church of Georgia", *A Sign of God: Orthodoxy 1964*, Athens: Zoe, 1964, pp. 112-113.

¹⁹⁶ Katamidze, *Loyal Comrades, Ruthless Killers*, Staplehurst: Spellmount, 2003, p. 39.

¹⁹⁷ Melia, *op. cit.*, p. 113.

¹⁹⁸ Monk Benjamin, *Letopis' Tserkovnykh Sobytij (1928-1938)*, (Chronicle of Church Events, 1928-1938), part 2, <http://www.zlatoust.ws/letopis2.htm>, pp. 5-6.

¹⁹⁹ Zateishvili, "Gruzinskaia Tserkov' i polnota pravoslavia" (The Georgian Church and the Fullness of Orthodoxy), in Bessmertny A.R. and Filatov, S.B., *Religia i Demokratia* (Religion and Democracy), Moscow: Progress, 1993, p. 422.

of Sion... The clergy of the cathedral were so terrified of the Bolsheviks that they were afraid to give me shelter in their houses and gave me a place to sleep in the cathedral itself..."²⁰⁰

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In October, 1943 the Moscow Patriarchate, under orders from Stalin, accepted the autocephaly of the Georgian Church – which simply made them slaves of formally equal status under the same antitheist master. For a long time the Ecumenical Patriarchate refused to accept this, considering the autocephaly of any Church to be the exclusive gift of Constantinople. But in 1990, she also recognized it – which coincided quite closely with the restoration of independence to the Georgian State in the following year.

However, the long and bitter experience of the Georgian Church, first under the Muslims, and then under the Communists, has surely demonstrated to the Georgian people that formal autocephaly, and its recognition by other Local Churches, while important from a cultural and psychological point of view, is of little significance if true spiritual freedom, the freedom to worship the true God in the true Orthodox faith, is not present.

April 1/14, 2016.

²⁰⁰ A.B. Psarev, "Zhizneopisanie Arkhiepiskopa Leontia Chilijskogo (1904-1971 gg.)" (A Life of Archbishop Leontius of Chile (1904-1971), *Pravoslavnaiia Zhizn'* (Orthodox Life), № 3 (555), March, 1996, p. 20.

13. 1815: THE NEW WORLD ORDER

As Tsar Alexander pursued the remnants of Napoleon's Great Army into Poland in the winter of 1812-13, he was, writes Alan Palmer, "in a state bordering on religious ecstasy. More and more he turned to the eleventh chapter of the Book of Daniel with the apocalyptic vision of how the all-conquering King of the South is cast down by the King of the North. It seemed to him as if the prophecies, which had sustained him during the dark days of autumn and early winter, were now to be fulfilled: Easter this year would come with a new spiritual significance of hope for all Europe. 'Placing myself firmly in the hands of God I submit blindly to His will,' he informed his friend Golitsyn from Radzonow, on the Wkrka. 'My faith is sincere and warm with passion. Every day it grows firmer and I experience joys I had never known before... It is difficult to express in words the benefits I gain from reading the Scriptures, which previously I knew only superficially... All my glory I dedicate to the advancement of the reign of the Lord Jesus Christ'... At Kalisch (Kalisz) on the border of the Grand-Duchy of Warsaw and Prussia the Tsar concluded a convention with Frederick William: the agreement provided for a close military alliance between Russia and Prussia, stipulating the size of their respective contingents and promising Prussia territory as extensive as in 1806; but the final clauses went beyond the normal language of diplomacy to echo Alexander's religious inspiration. 'Let all Germany join us in our mission of liberation,' the Kalisch Treaty said. 'The hour has come for obligations to be observed with that religious faith, that sacred inviolability which holds together the power and permanence of nations.'"²⁰¹

But should Russia go further west into Germany and liberate the whole of Western Europe? Kutuzov and most of the senior officers were against it. "Even the most ardent Russian patriots, such as his Minister of the Interior Admiral Shishkov and the Archimandrite Filaret, were against Alexander's proposed liberation of Europe. The consensus was that Russia should help herself to East Prussia and much of Poland, providing herself with some territorial gain and a defensible western border, and leave it at that. But Alexander ignored them."²⁰²

Many have criticized Alexander's subsequent behaviour in the years 1813-1815. And there was indeed much to criticize. He was an indifferent general and diplomat, and at the Congress of Vienna in 1814-1815 the lack of congruence between his proclaimed principles and his actual behaviour squandered for him much of the goodwill that the great sufferings of the Russian people in 1812 had won. Nevertheless, on the critical question whether he should have stopped at the Vistula or continued all the way to Paris, in hindsight we must conclude that Alexander was right and his critics wrong. For Napoleon's power was by no means broken in 1813; and if Alexander's

²⁰¹ Palmer, *Alexander I*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1974, pp. 260-261.

²⁰² Adam Zamoyski, *Rites of Peace: The Fall of Napoleon & the Congress of Vienna*, London: Harper Perennial, 2008, p. 27.

troops had not taken part in the great battle that did finally break it, at Leipzig in October, 1813, it is likely that the ogre would have retaken the whole of Germany and Poland up to the Vistula.

True, the ever-chivalrous Alexander was unwise in giving him the island of Elba, very close to the mainland, from which he escaped in 1815, only to be finally defeated with great difficulty at Waterloo in June. However, the Tsar showed great tenacity of purpose, in contrast to his weakness at Tilsit, in pushing all the way to Paris and the complete overthrow of the antichrist-emperor. And he must take the main credit for finally seeing the restoration of legitimate monarchism in France and throughout Continental Europe.

But the Tsar's ultimate aim was still higher – not just the restoration of legitimate monarchism, but the restoration of Christianity as the guiding principle of European politics. Henry Kissinger writes: “He was convinced, as he wrote to a confidante in 1812, that triumph over Napoleon would usher in a new and harmonious world based on religious principles, and he pledged: ‘It is to the cause of hastening the true reign of Jesus Christ that I devote all my earthly glory.’ Conceiving of himself as an instrument of divine will, the Czar arrived in Vienna in 1814 with a design for a new world order in some ways even more radical than Napoleon’s in its universality: a ‘Holy Alliance’ of princes sublimating their national interests into a common search for peace and justice, forswearing the balance of power for Christian principles of brotherhood. As Alexander told Chateaubriand, the French royalist intellectual and diplomat, ‘There no longer exists an English policy, a French, Russian, Prussian or Austrian policy; there is now only one common policy, which, for the welfare of all, ought to be adopted in common by all states and all peoples.’ It was a forerunner of the American Wilsonian conception of the nature of world order, albeit on behalf of principles dramatically the opposite of the Wilsonian vision...”²⁰³

Perhaps the best measure of the Tsar's victory was the Orthodox Divine Liturgy celebrated on his namesday, September 12, 1815, on seven altars on the Plaine de Vertus, eighty miles east of Paris, in the presence of all the leading political and military leaders of the allied nations and a huge Russian army of 160,000 troops. Neither before nor since in the modern history of Europe has there been such a public, universal witness, by all the leaders of the Great Powers, to the true King of kings and Lord of lords and His true religion, Orthodox Christianity. And if this was just a diplomatic concession on the part of the non-Orthodox powers, it was much more than that for Alexander. His Orthodox spirit, so puzzling to the other leaders of Europe, was manifested in a letter he wrote that same evening: “This day has been the most beautiful in all my life. My heart was filled with love for my enemies. In tears at the foot of the Cross, I prayed with fervour that France might be saved...”²⁰⁴

²⁰³ Kissinger, *World Order*, London: Penguin, 2015, pp. 58-59.

²⁰⁴ Palmer, *op. cit.*, p. 333.

A few days later Alexander presented his fellow sovereigns with a treaty designed to bind them in a union of faith and virtue, requiring them “to take as their sole guide the precepts of the Christian religion” and insisting that the treaty be dedicated “to the Holy and Indivisible Trinity” in Paris because it was the most irreligious of all Europe’s capital cities.²⁰⁵

Only the King of Prussia welcomed the idea. The Emperor of Austria was embarrassed, and in private agreed with his chancellor, Metternich, that Alexander was mad. On the British side, the Duke of Wellington confessed that he could hardly keep a straight face; he and Castlereagh mocked it in private.²⁰⁶

Alexander’s own supporters joined in the spirit of the enterprise in spite of its ecumenist overtones. Thus Golitsyn wrote about the Alliance in positively chiliastic terms: “This act cannot be recognized as anything other than a preparation for that promised kingdom of the Lord which will be upon the earth as in the heavens.”²⁰⁷ And Archimandrite Philaret, the future Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow, wrote: “Finally the kingdoms of this world have begun to belong to our Lord and His Christ”.²⁰⁸

Stella Ghervas writes that the author of the Holy Alliance “was Alexander I himself. He wrote the preliminary notes in pencil and then gave them to his Head of Chancery, Count John Capodistrias, so that he could render them in a diplomatic language. In his turn, Capodistrias passed the document to a brilliant and cultivated secretary named Alexandre Stourdza. Stourdza later provided a detailed explanation of the text of the treaty in an unpublished piece called ‘*Considérations sur l’acte d’alliance fraternelle et chrétienne du 14/26 septembre 1815*’...

“In his ‘*Considérations*,’ Stourdza sought to demonstrate that the pact was

²⁰⁵ Palmer, *op. cit.*, p. 335.

²⁰⁶ Zamoyksi, *Rites of Peace*, pp. 520-522.

²⁰⁷ Golitsyn, quoted by Fr. Georges Florovsky, “Philaret, mitropolit Moskovskij” (“Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow”), in *Vera i Kul’tura* (Faith and Culture), St. Petersburg, 2002, p. 265.

²⁰⁸ Philaret, quoted in Metropolitan Ioann (Snychev), *Zhizn’ i deiatel’nost’ mitropolita Filareta* (The Life and Activity of Metropolitan Philaret), Tula, 1994, p. 121.

Philaret appears to have been influenced by the ecumenism of his sovereign at this time. For in 1815 he wrote in his *Conversations between one testing and one convinced of the Orthodoxy of the Greco-Russian Church*: “Insofar as the one [the Eastern Church] and the other [the Western Church] confess Jesus Christ as having come in the flesh, in this respect they have a common Spirit, which ‘is of God’... Know that, holding to the above-quoted words of Holy Scripture, I do not dare to call any Church which believes ‘that Jesus is the Christ’ false” (Snychev, *op. cit.*, pp. 402, 408). However, in defense of the holy metropolitan, it should be pointed out that in the above-quoted work he rejected the heresies of papism, and that he never served with heterodox hierarchs or sought union with the heterodox churches. And he revered his mentor, Metropolitan Platon of Moscow, who during his journey to Kiev and other Russian cities in 1804 reproached “the Russian authorities for following ‘that new-fangled mode of thinking which is called tolerance’ in their relations with the Jesuits, and blamed the Jews for the impoverishment of the Christian population in the areas in which they are numerous” (Papmehl, *Metropolitan Platon of Moscow*, p. 81).

grounded on a solid theoretical and ideological base, in order to overcome the suspicions of those who opposed the pact and to refute their objections. In his theoretical construction, Napoleon was the heir of French Revolution, and his fall the end of an epoch of social and political disorder. Referring to the recent victory of the Allies following the Hundred Days, Stourdza wrote, 'the principle of subversion against all religious and social institutions has just been slain a second time.' This European unrest found its origin, according to him, in the Seven Years' War (1765) and included the American Revolution, the French Revolution, and the succeeding Napoleonic epoch. Hence the sole solution was to restore a principle of order in public life, and therefore to 'proclaim [...] the sole conservative principles, which had been too long relegated to the subordinate sphere of domestic life.' There lies the explanation for the intentional but otherwise incomprehensible [!] intrusion of Christian principles into the political sphere. In fact the Tsar had already expressed that very idea nine months earlier, on December 31, 1814, in a diplomatic note that he had sent to the plenipotentiaries of the three great powers... More generally, the feeling from many contemporaries that they had just escaped a near-apocalyptic experience largely explains the wave of mysticism that washed over Europe in those years.

"Stourdza's testimony thus confirms that the Holy Alliance did pursue a conservative, religious, and counter-revolutionary agenda. For all that, it would be a mistake to call it a reactionary or ultra-royalist manifesto. Between these two extremes, there existed not only a vast spectrum of ideas, but also profound divergences. We should sooner speak of a middle ground, a 'defensive modernization,' which sparked a storm of criticism from both sides..."²⁰⁹

The more cynical attitude of the foreign statesmen was not unexpected. After all, religion had long ceased to be seen as the basis of political life in the West. True, the monarchs protected religion as a foundation of their own monarchical power; but in the post-1815 settlement the Catholic Church received few of its lands back, which showed their true attitude to it. The fact was that Tsar Alexander was now the most powerful man in Europe, and the others could not afford to reject his religio-political project out of hand. So, led by Metternich, they set about discreetly editing the treaty of its more mystical elements until it was signed by the monarchs of Russia, Austria and Prussia (the British and the Turks opted out, as did the Pope of Rome) on September 26. Thus the original draft read: "Conformably to the word of the Holy Scriptures, the three contracting Monarchs will remain united by the bonds of a true and indissoluble fraternity, and considering each other as fellow countrymen, they will on all occasions, and in all places lend each other aid and assistance; and regarding themselves towards their subjects and armies as fathers of families, they will lead them, in the same fraternity with which they

²⁰⁹ Ghervas, "Antidotes to Empire: From the Congress System to the European Union", in John W. Boyer and Berthold Molden (eds.), *Eutropes: The Paradox of European Empire*, Paris and Chicago, 2014, pp. 58-59.

are animated to protect religion, peace and justice.”²¹⁰ But Metternich modified the first part to remove the phrase “by the bonds of a true fraternity” to read: “The three monarchs will remain united”. Again, the original draft stated that the three Powers were three provinces of a single nation. But Metternich changed this to present them as three branches of the same family.

“Metternich,” continues Ghervas, “having obviously grasped that there was an attempt to pass political reformism under the guise of religious rhetoric (both of which he disliked), had therefore been quick to temper the enthusiasm of the Tsar. His was also the paternalist idea that the monarchs were ‘benevolent fathers.’ However, the idea that Europe represented a ‘Christian nation’ still made it into the final version of the text.

“It is obvious from the original proposition that Alexander I had sought to found a European nation ‘essentially one’ and living in peace, of which the various states would be provinces. We can easily guess the reason for Metternich’s amendments: the original wording would have united the peoples of Europe in a position, so to speak, “over the heads of the sovereigns,” while placing unprecedented constraints on the monarchs; the text would have smacked of a constitution. The original version even provided that the military forces of the respective powers would have to be considered as forming a single army—130 years before the aborted project of the European Defense Community of the early 1950s! Even though Tsar Alexander I had initially envisaged a sort of league of nations united under the authority of the sovereigns, what eventually emerged was an alliance of kings.

“From this point of view, the pact of the Holy Alliance stemmed from a line of thought of the Enlightenment. We should keep in mind that the monarchs and ministers of the post-Napoleonic era considered themselves as heirs of that movement as a matter of course: after all, they were the direct descendants of the sovereigns Frederick II of Prussia, Catherine of Russia, and Joseph II of Austria, all of whom had surprised their epoch with their intellectual audacity and rivaled one another to host in their courts philosophers such as Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot, and Kant, much to the chagrin of the conservative minds of their respective kingdoms. On the other hand, the three sovereign signatories of the Holy Alliance rejected the French Revolution with the utmost energy...”²¹¹

The great monarchical powers pledged themselves not to take major decisions on the international stage without consulting each other. Their alliance was therefore a kind of United Nations Assembly. But thanks to the Tsar, it was a consciously *Christian* United Nations; for the powers declared themselves to be, according to the original draft, ‘members of a single Christian nation’ composed of one Orthodox power, Russia, one Catholic, Austria, and one Protestant, Prussia.

²¹⁰ Palmer, *op. cit.*, pp. 333-334.

²¹¹ Ghervas, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

Another important aspect of the Holy Alliance was its anti-papism. As Ghervas writes, “the concept of a ‘Christian nation’ in Europe, an ecumenism embracing the Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox faiths was, in fact, an insidious attack aimed at the Holy See. Somewhat surprisingly, it has not been noted that the Pope of Rome, a major political actor of European history for centuries, was now being banned from the continental chess game of the Congress of Vienna and would never recover his former status.

“In fact, the statement in the treaty of the Holy Alliance that ‘the three sovereigns make up a single nation with the same Christian faith’ amounted to a notice of liquidation of the thousand-year-old political system of Western Europe, which had been founded (at least ideologically) on the alliance between the Catholic Pope and the Holy Roman Emperor. By putting Catholicism, Protestantism, and Orthodoxy on equal footing, thus making the political organization of Christian Europe ‘non-confessional,’ the sovereigns of the three powers were plainly declaring that the Pope’s claim to supremacy in Europe was null and void. From that angle, it takes the aspect of a backstage revolution. Napoleon had already damaged the prestige of the Sovereign Pontiff with his own sacrilegious coronation in 1804. Two years later, the abolition of the Holy Roman Empire had sealed the bankruptcy of the temporal side of the fellowship between the Pope and the Holy Roman Emperor. In 1815, it was the turn of the spiritual side to be liquidated. As a result, the political role of the Sovereign Pontiff was reduced to that of a sovereign of an Italian state. This ideological backlash profoundly upset Pope Pius VII; therein lies the reason why the Holy See refused to sign the pact of the Holy Alliance.

“Why had the sovereigns of the great powers engaged in such a radically anti-clerical maneuver that deliberately ousted the Pope from European politics?

... From Alexander’s point of view, a Patriarch of Rome who not only considered himself independent of the sovereigns, but historically claimed to be their suzerain, was a contestant on the European political scene that had to be remorselessly shoved out of the way.

“That rather unfriendly attitude toward the Catholic Church was shared, but for entirely different reasons, by the Protestant king of Prussia (a hereditary enemy of Roman supremacy) and the sovereign of Austria – the same who had liquidated the Holy Roman Empire and crowned himself emperor of Austria under the name of Francis I. The latter was also the nephew of the archduke Joseph II (1741–90), who had applied a policy known as Josephism, aimed precisely at subordinating the Church to the State and at restraining pontifical power. Hence, beyond the mysticism of the epoch, would it be appropriate to speak of a strand of mystification in the Holy Alliance, especially when considering the amendments from a character as down-to-earth as Metternich? In any case, there was a shared interest on the part of the three Powers to put the final nail in the coffin of Papal political authority.

“In firm opposition to the Holy Alliance, there arose, naturally enough, representatives of Roman Catholic thought, such as the Jesuits, as well as Louis de Bonald and Joseph de Maistre. In defiance of all odds, they kept advocating an alliance of sovereigns under the auspices of the Pope, as well as a return to the prerogatives of the aristocratic class. It is those views that most impressed minds in France, especially the alliance of the Bourbon monarchy and the Church of Rome, despite the fact that both were now only secondary pieces on a rather complicated European chessboard. In addition, Maistre knew the Tsar well, since he had spent several years in Saint Petersburg; if he mistrusted him, it was not for failing to know him. Maistre wrote about the Holy Alliance, even before its publication: “Let us note that the spirit behind it is not Catholic, nor Greek or Protestant; it is a peculiar spirit that I have been studying for thirty years, but to describe it here would be too long; it is enough to say that it is as good for the separated Churches as it is bad for Catholics. It is expected to melt and combine all metals; after which, the statue will be cast away.” Maistre was exposing what he had rightly perceived as a cunning maneuver: by adopting the Christian religion as the guiding principle, but diluting it at the same time into a vague whole, the three sovereigns had meant to undermine the Pope’s sphere of influence. By a process that our age would call ‘embrace, extend, and extinguish,’ they had deliberately opened the door to a European political sphere that would henceforth be free of ecclesiastical influence (though not of religion).

“Finally, the wording ‘Christian family’ offered yet another advantage in the geopolitical context of the time: it covered all states of Europe, but left out the Ottoman Empire, a Muslim state. Russia, which had concluded a war with Turkey only three years before, had been entertaining definite ambitions over it since the epoch of Peter the Great. Thus the Holy Alliance potentially gave the Russian Empire a free hand on the rather complex Eastern Question—in other words, the competition among the great powers to partition the territory of the declining Ottoman Empire.”²¹²

“To protect the new overall territorial settlement,” writes Kissinger, “the Quadruple Alliance of Britain, Prussia, Austria, and Russia was formed. A territorial guarantee – which was what the Quadruple Alliance amounted to – did not have the same significance for each of the signatories. The level of urgency with which threats were perceived varied significantly. Britain, protected by its command of the seas, felt confident in withholding definite commitments to contingencies and preferred waiting until a major threat from Europe took specific shape. The continental countries had a narrower margin of safety, assessing that their survival might be at stake from actions far less dramatic than those causing Britain to take alarm.

“This was particularly the case in the face of revolution – that is, when the threat involved the issue of legitimacy. The conservative states sought to build bulwarks against a new wave of revolution; they aimed to include mechanisms

²¹² Ghervas, *op. cit.*, pp. 64-67.

for the preservation of legitimate order – by which they meant monarchical rule. The Czar’s proposed Holy Alliance provided a mechanism for protecting the domestic status quo throughout Europe. His partners saw in the Holy Alliance – subtly redesigned – a way to curb Russian exuberance. The right of intervention was limited because, as the eventual terms stipulated, it could be exercised only in concert; in this manner, Austria and Prussia retained a veto over the more exalted schemes of the Czar.

“Three tiers of institutions buttressed the Vienna system: the Quadruple Alliance to defeat challenges to the territorial order; the Holy Alliance to overcome threats to domestic institutions; and a concert of powers institutionalized through periodic diplomatic conferences of the heads of government of the alliances to define their common purposes or to deal with emerging crises. This concert mechanism functioned like a precursor of the United Nations Security Council. Its conferences acted on a series of crises, attempting to distill a common course: the revolutions in Naples in 1820 and in Spain in 1820-23 (quelled by the Holy Alliance and France, respectively) and the Greek revolution and war of independence of 1821-32 (ultimately supported by Britain, France, and Russia). The Concert of Powers did not guarantee a unanimity of outlook, yet in each case a potentially explosive crisis was resolved without a major-power war.”²¹³

“In 1814-15,” writes Dominic Lieven, “the European great powers formed what can justly be called a system of international relations rooted in some conception of common norms, interests, and restraint. They could do this in part because all had suffered from a generation of warfare and dreaded its recurrence. The continental powers were also united by what might be described as an antidemocratic peace theory. With some justice – particularly as regards France – they believed that revolution would bring to power regimes bent on external aggression and certain to further destabilize the Continent. Britain never fully subscribed to this theory nor to the European concert, partly out of liberal principles and partly because of its traditional wish to keep the continental powers divided.

“The European order created by the Congress of Vienna was finally destroyed by the Crimean War (1853-56)...”²¹⁴

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The most important achievement of the Holy Alliance was the re-establishment of the monarchical principle, and in particular of *Christian hereditary* monarchism (but without the Pope)... Now we have seen that even Napoleon’s regime had acquired monarchical trappings; but he had failed to make it truly hereditary. Thus when an obscure general called Malet had

²¹³ Kissinger, *op. cit.*, pp. 64-65.

²¹⁴ Lieven, *Towards the Flame. Empire, War and the End of Tsarist Russia*, London: Allen Lane, 2015, p. 26.

announced Napoleon's death in Russia in October, 1812, the Emperor had been startled by how close the mutiny came to success. What touched a particularly raw nerve in him, writes Zamoycki, "was that the news of his death in Russia, announced by Malet, had led those who believed it to consider a change of regime, instead of making them proclaim the succession of his son, the King of Rome. 'Our forefathers rallied to the cry: "*The King is dead, long live the King!*" he reminded them, adding that 'These few words encompass the principal advantages of monarchy.' That they had not been uttered on the night of 23 October revealed to him that for all its trappings, the monarchy he had created lacked consistency, and he was still just a general who had seized power, a parvenu with no title to rule beyond his ability to hold on to it. He felt this setback personally, and the sense of insecurity it induced would have a profound effect on how he behaved over the next two years, making him more aggressive and less amenable, and leading inexorably to his downfall..."²¹⁵

A hereditary monarch may not be an admirable person, and may suffer many defeats in the field; but he is the king, and in a society that still believes in kingship, this gives his regime solidity and strength. And if he fails or dies, his son will succeed him, and command the same reverence and loyalty. But once Napoleon had been defeated, and the magical aura of invincibility surrounding him began to fade, it was the end both for him and for his upstart dynasty – as he himself recognized after Waterloo.

However, while the Congress of Vienna succeeded in re-establishing the *principle* of hereditary monarchism as the only true principle of political legitimacy, *in practice* hereditary monarchs by no means always recovered their thrones and territories. The great powers, as was to be expected, did not restore the map of Europe to what it had been before 1792. They increased their own power, and many hundreds of smaller rulers were partially or wholly dispossessed in the complex negotiations and horse-trading that took place between them in Vienna and Paris.

Moreover, millions of ordinary people, especially in Germany and Italy, now found themselves under new rulers. This created almost as much disruption and discontent as had the Napoleonic invasions. And this in turn created a kind of nostalgia for the Napoleonic times in some.

In addition to this, in spite of the defeat of the French revolution, the idea of nationalism that the revolution had spawned continued to grow in influence. This was the idea that not only the rulers, but also the nations over which they ruled, had rights and privileges, and that a nation represented an organic and even moral unity that could not be simply cut up and parcelled out as, for example, Poland was. The settlement of 1815, and the congresses of the great powers that took place in the decade that followed, have been much criticized for not taking sufficient account of these new developments, and of vainly

²¹⁵ Zamoycki, *Rites of Peace*, p. 5.

trying to resist an unstoppable development by crude police methods and repression.

An eloquent exponent of this point of view is Adam Zamoyski, who writes: "The Vienna settlement imposed an orthodoxy which not only denied political existence to many nations; it enshrined a particularly stultified form of monarchical government; institutionalised social hierarchies as rigid as any that had existed under the ancient regime; and preserved archaic disabilities – serfdom was not abolished in Russia until half a century after the congress. By excluding whole classes and nations from a share in its benefits, this system nurtured envy and resentment, which flourished into socialism and aggressive nationalism. And when, after the 'Concert of Europe' had fought itself to extinction in the Great War, those forces were at last unleashed, they visited on Europe events more horrific than the worst fears Metternich or any of his colleagues could have entertained.

"It would be idle to propose that the arrangements made in 1815 caused the terrible cataclysms of the twentieth century. But anyone who attempted to argue that what happened in Russia after 1917, in Italy and Germany in the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s, and in many other parts of central and southern Europe at various other moments of the last century had no connection with them would be exposing themselves to ridicule..."²¹⁶

And yet, as Zamoyski admits, the peacemakers of 1815 "did face a formidable task, one that defied any ideal solution. Just because certain arrangements they made turned out to have evil consequences, it does not follow that the opposite course would have yielded more benign results."²¹⁷

Indeed, the opposite course of giving in to the propaganda of the French revolution might well have brought the cataclysm of 1914-45 forward by several decades. The kernel of truth in Zamoyski's argument is that the great powers did not cure the disease of Europe, but only arrested or repressed it by crude counter-revolutionary measures that were often counter-productive. But the only real cure for the disease was for the peoples of Europe to accept the true faith from their liberator, Russia – a near-impossible task, since the attitude of the Europeans to Russia was one of supercilious condescension and non-comprehension, while Russia would soon herself begin struggling to contain the revolutionary disease within herself.

In this context, the attempt of Tsar Alexander to save Europe by preaching the faith to his fellow monarchs – even if that faith was seen through the prism of an Enlightenment education – acquires an extra poignancy. He failed because his fellow monarchs and their peoples were not interested in the faith. But his failure was less his than that of Europe as a whole; for the only hope for a real

²¹⁶ Zamoyski, *Rites of Peace*, p. 569.

²¹⁷ Zamoyski, *Rites of Peace*, p. 566.

resurrection of Christian and monarchical Europe lay in accepting the lead of Russia in both the spiritual and the political spheres...

In the final analysis, the defeat of Napoleon and the re-establishment of monarchical order in Europe proved the viability of traditional kingship in the face of the most powerful and determined attempt to overthrow it yet seen in European history. It established an order that, in spite of many upheavals and changes, remained essentially in place until 1914, when the anti-monarchical movements of revolutionary socialism and nationalism finally destroyed the old order. That the old order survived for as long as it did was owing to no small degree to that former-freethinker-turned-Orthodox-monarchist, Tsar Alexander the Blessed...

April 5/18, 2016.

14. CHRIST THE KING AND THE FALL OF JERUSALEM

Christ was “the Son of David”, that is, a descendant of the old royal dynastic line of Israel; He came to restore that line and make it eternal. For, as the Archangel Gabriel said to the Virgin at the Annunciation: “He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His Kingdom there will be no end” (Luke 1.32-33).

What kind of Kingdom was meant here, and what kind of kingdom did the Jews have in mind for themselves?

William Barclay writes: “Throughout all their existence, the Jews never forgot that they were in a very special sense God's chosen people. Because of that, they naturally looked to a very special place in the world. In the early days, they looked forward to achieving that position by what we might call natural means. They always regarded the greatest days in their history as the days of David; and they dreamed of a day when there would arise another king of David's line, a king who would make them great in righteousness and in power (Isaiah 9:7, 11:1; Jeremiah 22:4, 23:5, 30:9).

“But as time went on, it came to be pitilessly clear that this dreamed-of greatness would never be achieved by natural means. The ten tribes had been carried off to Assyria and lost forever. The Babylonians conquered Jerusalem and carried the Jews away captive. Then came the Persians as their masters; then the Greeks; then the Romans. So far from knowing anything like dominion, for centuries the Jews never even knew what it was to be completely free and independent.

“So another line of thought grew up. It is true that the idea of a great king of David's line never entirely vanished and was always intertwined in some way with their thought; but more and more they began to dream of a day when God would intervene in history and achieve by supernatural means that which natural means could never achieve. They looked for divine power to do what human power was helpless to do.

“In between the Testaments were written a whole flood of books which were dreams and forecasts of this new age and the intervention of God. As a class, they are called *Apocalypses*. The word literally means *unveilings*. These books were meant to be unveilings of the future. It is to them that we must turn to find out what the Jews believed in the time of Jesus about the Messiah and the work of the Messiah and the new age. It is against their dreams that we must set the dream of Jesus.

“In these books, certain basic ideas occur. We follow here the classification of these ideas given by Emil Schuerer, who wrote *A History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ*.

“(1) Before the Messiah came, there would be a time of terrible tribulation. There

would be a messianic travail. It would be the birth-pangs of a new world. Every conceivable terror would burst upon the world; every standard of honour and decency would be torn down; the world would become a physical and moral chaos.... The time which preceded the coming of the Messiah was to be a time when the world was torn in pieces and every bond relaxed. The physical and the moral order would collapse.

“(2) Into this chaos there would come Elijah as the forerunner and herald of the Messiah. He was to heal the breaches and bring order into the chaos to prepare the way for the Messiah. In particular he was to mend disputes....

“(3) Then there would enter the Messiah.... Sometimes the Messiah was thought of as a king of David's line, but more often he was thought of as a great, superhuman figure crashing into history to remake the world and in the end to vindicate God's people.

“(4) The nations would ally themselves and gather themselves together against the champion of God....

“(5) The result would be the total destruction of these hostile powers. The Jewish philosopher Philo said that the Messiah would 'take the field and make war and destroy great and populous nations'.... The Messiah will be the most destructive conqueror in history, smashing his enemies into utter extinction.

“(6) There would follow the renovation of Jerusalem. Sometimes this was thought of as the purification of the existing city. More often it was thought of as the coming down of the new Jerusalem from heaven....

“(7) The Jews who were dispersed all over the world would be gathered into the city of the new Jerusalem.... It is easy to see how Jewish this new world was to be. The nationalistic element is dominant all the time.

“(8) Palestine would be the centre of the world and the rest of the world subject to it. All the nations would be subdued. Sometimes it was thought of as a peaceful subjugation.... More often, the fate of the Gentiles was utter destruction at which Israel would exult and rejoice.... It was a grim picture. Israel would rejoice to see her enemies broken and in hell. Even the dead Israelites were to be raised up to share in the new world.

“(9) Finally, there would come the new age of peace and goodness which would last forever.

“These are the messianic ideas which were in people's minds when Jesus came...”²¹⁸

Christ by no means rejected all of these apocalyptic ideas. After all, several of

²¹⁸ Barclay, *The Gospel of Mark*, pp. 223-230.

them were grounded in the God-inspired Scriptures. But He rejected their cruelty, their national ambition, and their anti-Gentilism.

He was Himself the Messiah, the Son of David. But He came as the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53, not the ferocious war-lord of the apocalypses. And He came to restore Israel, not as a State ruling over all the nations by the power of the sword, but as the kernel of the Universal Church ruling by the power of the Spirit. His Kingdom was not of this world; it was the inner Kingdom of Grace.

The question was: would the Jews accept Him as the Messiah, as the true King of Israel, embodying the spiritual, not the nationalist image of Messiahship and kingship? On this would depend both their individual salvation and the salvation of their State... Tragically, in their great majority the Jews failed this test. They both crucified their True Messiah and King, God Himself, and said to Pilate: "We have no other king but Caesar" (John 19.15). At that moment they became no different spiritually from the other pagan peoples; for, like the pagans, they had come to recognize a mere man, the Roman emperor, as higher than God Himself. As St. John Chrysostom writes: "Here they declined the Kingdom of Christ and called to themselves that of Caesar."²¹⁹

What made this apostasy worse was the fact that they were not compelled to it by any despotic decree. Pilate not only did not demand this recognition of Caesar from them, but had said of *Christ* - "Behold your king" (John 19.14), and had then ordered the sign, "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews", to be nailed above the cross. The Jews had in effect carried out both a *democratic revolution* against their True King, and, at the same time, a *despotic obeisance* to a false god-king.

Thus did the City of God on earth become the City of Man - and the stronghold of Satan: "How has the faithful city become a harlot! It was full of justice, righteousness lodged in it, but now murderers" (Isaiah 1.21). Thus did the original sin committed under Saul, when the people of God sought a king who would rule them "like all the nations", reap its final wages in their submission to "the god of this world". But the positive result was that the Kingdom, with all its ineffable and inestimable benefits, were passed to another people. As the Lord Himself had prophesied: "The Kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits thereof" (Matthew 21.43). Or as St. Paul put it: "What then? Israel has not obtained what it seeks; but the elect [from the Gentiles] have obtained it, and the rest were blinded" (Romans 11.7).

By His Resurrection from the dead, Christ proved the truth of all His claims. He was truly "the Son of God, the King of Israel" (John 1.49). And as God He had "all authority in heaven and on earth" (Matthew 28.18).

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²¹⁹ St. John Chrysostom, *Homily 85 on John*, P.G. 59:505, col. 461. See also Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky), "Christ the Savior and the Jewish Revolution", *Orthodox Life*, vol. 35, N 4, July-August, 1988, pp. 11-31.

After the Jews' killing of Christ – which was not only regicide, but also *deicide*, an act unparalleled in evil in the history of the world – came the punishment – “great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be” (Matthew 24.21). “That on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. Assuredly I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation...” (Matthew 23.35-36).

In 66-70 AD the Jews, incited by the Zealots, rose up in armed rebellion against Rome. The Roman Emperors Titus and Vespasian crushed the rebellion, destroyed the Temple and killed very many of the Jews. The extent of the slaughter is a matter of controversy²²⁰, but the depth of the horror and suffering is beyond dispute.²²¹

The message of the revolutionaries was strikingly similar to that of another Jewish-inspired revolution – Russia in 1917. As Neil Faulkner writes, it was a message “of sectarian radicals and messiahs... addressed, above all, to the poor. Josephus was explicit about the class basis of the conflict: it was, for him, a struggle between dunatoi – men of rank and power, the property-owning upper classes – and stasiastai – subversives, revolutionaries, popular leaders whose appeal was to ‘the scum of the districts’. The Dead Sea Scrolls were equally explicit, though from the other side of the barricades: whereas ‘the princes of Judah... wallowed in the ways of whoredom and wicked wealth’ and ‘acted arrogantly for the sake of riches and gain’, the Lord would in due time deliver them ‘into the hands of the poor’, so as to ‘humble the mighty of the peoples by the hand of those bent to the dust’, and bring them ‘the reward of the wicked’...

“The popular movement of 66 CE amounted to a fusion of Apocalypse and Jubilee, the radical minority’s vision of a revolutionary war to destroy corruption having become inextricably linked with the peasant majority’s traditional aspiration for land redistribution and the removal of burdens...”²²²

But these earthly motives were secondary to the primary cause and crime: the rejection and murder by God’s people of their only King and God.

²²⁰ The revisionist case has been presented by the Israeli historian Shlomo Sand. Josephus, our only source for these events, writes Sand “estimated that 1.1 million people died in the siege of Jerusalem and the great massacre that followed, that 97,000 were taken captive, and that a few thousand more were killed in other cities”. However, Sand argues that these figures were grossly exaggerated, and that “a cautious estimate suggests that Jerusalem at that time could have had a population of sixty thousand or seventy thousand inhabitants” (*The Invention of the Jewish People*, London: Verso, 2009, p. 131).

²²¹ For a moving and instructive discussion of this war, see Fr. Timothy Alferov, “Katastrofa”, http://www.catacomb.org.ua/modules.php?name=Pages&go=print_page&pid=659.

²²² Faulkner, “The great Jewish revolt against Rome, 66-73 CE”, *History Today*, vol. 52 (10), October, 2002, pp. 50, 51.

In 135 there was another rebellion under Bar Kokhba. It was crushed by the Emperor Hadrian with the deaths, according to Dio Cassius, of 580,000 Jewish soldiers.²²³ The city was renamed Aelia Capitolina, Judaea was renamed Syria Palaestina and Jews were barred from entering it. Finally, the city and ruins were ploughed over and a completely Hellenic city built in its place; a temple to Jupiter was planned for the site of the Temple, while Golgotha was covered by a temple to Venus...

Paradoxically, the Jews' last stand in both their rebellions took place in the hilltop fortresses built at Herodium and Masada by that arch-Hellenist and Romanist, Herod the Great.²²⁴ Equally paradoxically, their submission to pagan rulers was the result of their rejection of their mission to the pagans. Instead of serving as God's priests to the pagan world, enlightening them with the knowledge of the One True God, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, they were puffed up with dreams of national glory and dominion over the nations. And so God subjected them to those same nations whom they despised, entrusting the mission to the New Israel, the Church.

"On coming into the world," writes Lev Tikhomirov, "the Saviour Jesus Christ as a man loved his fatherland, Judaea, no less than the Pharisees. He was thinking of the great role of his fatherland in the destinies of the world and mankind no less than the Pharisees, the zealots and the other nationalists. On approaching Jerusalem (during His triumphal entry) He wept and said: 'Oh, if only thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace!' ..., and recalling the coming destruction of the city, He added: 'because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation' (Luke 19.41, 44). 'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem... which killest... them that are sent to thee!' He said a little earlier, 'how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and yet would not!' (Luke 13.34). What would have happened if the Jews at that decisive moment had accepted the true Messiah? Israel would have become the spiritual head of the whole world, the beloved guide of mankind. At that very time Philo of Alexandria wrote that 'the Israelites have received the mission to serve as priests and prophets for the whole world, to instruct it in the truth, and in particular the pure knowledge of God'. If they had recognized this truth in full measure, then the coming of the Saviour would have confirmed forever that great mission. But 'the spirit of the prophets' turned out to be by no means so strong in Jewry, and its leaders repeated the role of Esau: they gave away the right of the firstborn for a mess of pottage.

²²³ Again, Sand disputes these figures. He claims that the population of Palestine "in the second century DE remained predominantly Judeans and Samaritans, and it started to flourish again for one or two generations after the end of the revolt" (op. cit., p. 133). He also denies that there was any significant exile from the land after the destruction of the Second Temple, arguing that it was only the conquest of Palestine by the Arabs early in the seventh century that "put an end to the presence of the Jewish people in its land" (p. 141).

²²⁴ Tom Mueller, "Herod: The Holy Land's Visionary Builder", *National Geographic Magazine*, December, 2008, pp. 58-59.

“Nevertheless we must not forget that if the nationalist hatred for the Kingdom of God, manifested outside tribal conditions, was expressed in the murder of the Saviour of the world, all His disciples who brought the good news of the Kingdom, all His first followers and a multitude of the first members of the Church to all the ends of the Roman empire were Jews by nationality. The greatest interpreter of the spiritual meaning of the idea of ‘the children of Abraham’ was the pure-blooded Jew and Pharisee, the Apostle Paul. He was a Jew by blood, but through the prophetic spirit turned out to be the ideological director of the world to that place where ‘there is neither Jew nor Greek’.”²²⁵

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The history of Israel culminating in the Coming of her true King and God, the Lord Jesus Christ, provides us with the answer to a question which neither the despots of the east nor the democrats of the west could answer - the question, namely: what is the end of the State? This question can be divided into two further questions: what is the end, that is, *purpose* of the State? And what is the end, that is, *destroyer* of the State, that which brings the State to an end? The two questions are logically related. For that which brings the State to an end is its failure to carry out the end or purpose for which it was created by God.

Now the origin of the State lies in its ability to save men from death - in other words, its *survival value*. Man as an individual, and even in small groups or families, cannot survive for long; he has to combine into larger groups that are self-sufficient in order to provide for his basic needs and protect himself against external enemies. That is why Aristotle defined the State as a large community that is “nearly or completely self-sufficient”.²²⁶

However, for Aristotle, the State had a positive as well as a negative purpose. It was not distinguished from the smaller units of the family or the village simply because it was better able to guarantee survival: it was *qualitatively* as well as *quantitatively* distinct from them insofar as *it enabled man to fulfill his potential as a human being*.

Hence Aristotle’s famous definition of man as “a political animal”, that is, an animal who reaches his full potential only by living in “polities”, “cities” (for city states were the dominant form of political organization in the Greece of Aristotle’s time). For it is only in such states that man is able to develop that free spirit of rational inquiry that enables him to know the True, the Beautiful and the Good. It is only in states that he has the leisure and the education to pursue such uniquely human activities as art, science, organized religion and philosophy, which constitute his true happiness, eudaemonia.

The problem was that Greek democracy did not attain its positive end, that is, eudaemonia, and even failed to attain its negative end, survival. First, Athenian

²²⁵ Tikhomirov, *Religiozno-Filosofskie Osnovy Istorii*, Moscow, 1997, p. 142.

²²⁶ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1252 b 28.

democracy was defeated by the Spartan dual kingship and aristocracy, a kind of political organization that theoretically should have been much inferior to democracy. And then the Greek city-states as a whole were defeated by, and absorbed into, Alexander the Great's despotic empire, a kind of political organization which the Greek philosophers agreed was the worst and most irrational of all – although the multi-racialism of the empire, and the spread of Greek philosophical ideas, prepared the way for something new and better.

Israel was a completely different kind of state: the first and only autocracy of the ancient world. The distinguishing mark of this kind of state is that its origin is not the need to survive *physically* but *spiritually*, obeying *the call of God to leave the existing states and their settled way of life and enter the desert on the way to the Promised Land*. Here *physical* survival may actually be more difficult than before: but the prize is *spiritual* survival, life with God. Thus we may say that the negative end of Israelite autocracy is the avoidance of spiritual death (Babylon, Egypt, the kingdom of sin and death), and its positive end is the attainment of spiritual life (the Promised Land, Israel, the Kingdom of righteousness and life).

It follows that since neither spiritual life nor spiritual death are political categories attainable by purely political means, the end of the autocratic state is not in fact political at all as the word "political" is usually understood, but religious. Its aim is not happiness in this life, the peace and prosperity of its citizens in this world, but the blessedness of its citizens in the world to come, in which there will be no politics and no states, but only *Christ and the Church*. Thus the end of the state is beyond itself, to serve the Church, which alone can lead the people into the Promised Land.

The Israelite state survived so long as it placed spiritual ends above purely political ones and was faithful to the Lord God of Israel. When it faltered in this faithfulness it was punished by God with exile and suffering. When it faltered to such a degree that it killed its true King, the Lord Jesus Christ, it was finally destroyed...

But since the purpose of God remains unchanging, the salvation of men for the Kingdom of heaven, autocracy was re-established on a still firmer and wider base. And in the very state that had destroyed the old Israel – *Rome*...

April 6/19, 2016.

15. THE EYES OF THE CHURCH

In today's service to the Holy Apostle Herodion and others we read: "In that ye are the eyes of the Church, open the eyes of many to see unimagined beauty, O godly disciples of the Divine Word".²²⁷

The people of God is called "Israel", which means "he who sees God". But a people without eyes is blind, and will soon fall into a pit. The eyes of the people of God are the holy Apostles and their lawful, Orthodox successors, the bishops; without them the people will fall into heresy or schism.

The Lord Himself spoke of this. "The lamp of the body," He said, "is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!" (Matthew 6.22-23).

St. Gregory the Theologian interpreted this passage to mean that the body is the Church, and the eye of the body is the bishop. If therefore the bishop is good, the whole of the Church will be full of light. If, on the other hand, he is bad, then the whole body is plunged into darkness.

No Protestantism here, no theory that we can somehow see God and be in communion with Him while remaining under a bad bishop! The whole of World Orthodoxy is now in profound darkness, alienated from God, because the people follow false bishops. "They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch" (Matthew 15.14). Let us note well: it is not only the leaders who will fall, but also those who follow them...

But many people in World Orthodoxy today say to themselves: "I am against ecumenism, I don't approve of the heretics. And if my patriarch does, that's his business!" But it is not only his business: it is the business of every single member of the Church. In the early Church, Christians of all ranks appear to have been much less inhibited about criticizing their hierarchs than they are today. The argument so often employed today to suppress dissent - "This is the hierarchs' business, not yours" - was rejected by the Early Church. Thus we read in *The Institutions of the Apostles*: "These sheep are not irrational but rational creatures - and we say this lest at any time a lay person should say, 'I am a sheep and not a shepherd, and I have no concern for myself: let the shepherd look to that, for he alone will be required to give account for me.' For even as the sheep that will not follow its good shepherd is exposed to the wolves, that is, to its destruction, to also the sheep that follows a bad shepherd is likewise exposed to unavoidable death, since the shepherd will devour him. Therefore, take care to flee from the ravening shepherd."²²⁸

²²⁷ *Menaion*, April 8, Mattins, Ode 3, troparion.

²²⁸ *Apostolic Constitutions*, 10:19, PG 1:633.

Again, St. Athanasius the Great said: "As we walk the unerring and life-bringing path, let us pluck out the eye that scandalizes us - not the physical eye, but the noetic one. For example, if a bishop or presbyter - who are the eyes of the Church - conduct themselves in an evil manner and scandalize the people, they must be plucked out. For it is more profitable to gather without them in a house of prayer, than to be cast together with them into the gehenna of fire together with Annas and Caiaphas."

However, the objection will arise: "How are we to cast out our bishop? Surely that is the business of other bishops. There are canonical procedures that have to be followed. Let us not act hastily. Breaking with our bishop just like that would indeed be Protestant!"

We reply: "How long are you prepared to wait? Are you prepared to wait until you die, and then go into the next world knowing that you are still in communion with a heretical bishop? The heresy of ecumenism was first officially proclaimed by the Patriarchate of Constantinople in 1920 - that's 96 years ago! Generations of heretical bishops have already died and gone to hell in that period without their fellow bishops doing anything about it. How much longer are you going to wait?"

Then there is another objection: "But we cannot break with our bishop just because he scandalizes us. He may be a sinner in his personal conduct, but as long as he confesses the Orthodox Faith we have to stay with him. We, too, are sinners after all! In any case, it is better to be under a bad bishop than no bishop at all. To be without a bishop is Protestantism!"

It is true - the Holy Fathers make this clear - that we cannot break with our bishop for his personal sins. But it is not true that it is better to be under a bad bishop - that is, a heretical one - than no bishop at all. Thus St. John Chrysostom writes in his commentary on Hebrews: "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...'

“‘But so-and-so,’ you say, ‘is a decent man, is a Priest, lives in great self-control, and does this and that.’ Do not talk to me about this decent person, this self-controlled, pious man who is a Priest; but if you like, suppose that this man is Peter, or Paul, or even an Angel come down from heaven. For not even in such a case do I regard the dignity of their persons... For our reckoning is not with our fellow-servants, but with our Master, and to Him we shall give an account for all that we have done in our life.

“When there is no one to support the cause of true religion, we ought alone and all unaided to do our duty...”

April 8/21, 2016.

*Holy Apostles of the Seventy Herodion, Agabus, Asyncritus, Rufus, Phlegon,
Hermes and those who suffered with them.*

16. IN SEASON, OUT OF SEASON

“Preach the word!” says the holy Apostle Paul. “Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching” (II Timothy 4.2).

St. Paul’s words are addressed to all teachers of the faith. There is no time that is inappropriate for teaching the truths of the faith and morality. And the reason is clear: he who thinks wrongly about any aspect of the faith is in danger of losing his soul, and therefore it is the duty of the leaders of the Church to attempt to save his soul by teaching him the truth – however inconvenient or supposedly untimely such a teaching may be.

And yet how often do we hear – usually from those who are on the wrong side of the argument: “How dare you speak about such things at this time, when it is a great feast, or when we are about to start the Great Fast! This is a time for quiet prayer and meditation. You are destroying the peace of the Church!”

Such an accusation has appeared again just recently. On March 7, a week before the beginning of Great Lent, the Holy Synod of the Russian True Orthodox Church (RTOC) issued a “Reply of the Holy Synod” to various questions troubling some clergy of the Omsk-Siberian diocese, but all revolving around the question whether the Moscow Patriarchate is a true church with valid sacraments or not. Now this is an old question that has been troubling the Russian Church (as analogous questions have been troubling the Greek Church) for nearly 90 years – ever since the Moscow Patriarchate fell into the heresy of sergianism in 1927. As far as the Russian Church Abroad is concerned it was settled once and for all in 1983, when all the Churches of World Orthodoxy, including the Moscow Patriarchate, were anathematized. As far as RTOC is concerned, it was settled once again, - and with an impressive appearance of unity, - at the Odessa Sobor of 2008. However, doubts began to arise in the minds of some of the Omsk-Siberian clergy, and since at least 2011 they have been troubling the hierarchs of the Church with their doubts, forcing them to devote more than one Synodal session to these questions that were settled years ago. At the beginning of this year the Omsk clergy, still dissatisfied with the answers they had received, were complaining that they had not received written replies to their questions, as they had been promised. When they finally received these replies, on March 7, they rejected them in indignation and left the Church two weeks later...

Now it may, perhaps, be regrettable that all this took place at the beginning of Great Lent, when Orthodox Christians like to retreat into themselves and meditate and repent of their personal sins. But it is wrong to think that there is any time of the year when the struggle for the faith can be abandoned for the sake of personal meditation. In fact, to draw such a clear line between the realm of the faith and the realm of the personal spiritual life is to make a serious error concerning the nature of that spiritual life – for several reasons.

First it must be remembered that attacks on the Faith are stirred up by Satan, who is not noted for his kindness and consideration for the spiritual needs of the Orthodox flock. These attacks must be countered immediately, and if they continue, the resistance must continue – doggedly and persistently – until the victory has been won. Since Satan does not sleep, and never tires in his attacks, so the defenders of the faith – in the first place, the hierarchs – have no choice but to continue fending off his attacks without pausing for rest-breaks that the enemy will only use to his advantage.

Secondly, the Church herself in her calendar of feasts and fasts does not cease to remind us of struggles for the faith both past and present. In fact, this is particularly the case at the beginning of the Great Fast, when the first two Sundays – those of the Triumph of Orthodoxy and of St. Gregory Palamas – are devoted to the commemoration of great struggles for the faith in the past, and in which all heresies are publicly anathematized. Evidently the Church does not consider that struggling for the faith, celebrating the major feasts and praying for the forgiveness of our sins are activities that should be carried out at strictly segregated times of the year.

Thirdly, and most fundamentally, the Prophets of the Old Testament say repeatedly that the Lord is not pleased with the fasts and the sacrifices of believers when basic injustices and untruths remain uncorrected. In fact, the continuation of these uncorrected scandals defiles their church life and makes it abominable in the sight of the Lord (Isaiah 1.11-15; Zechariah 8.16-18). Just as we will not be forgiven our sins if we do not forgive the sins of others against us, so God will not hear our public prayers if we continue to harbor heresies within the sacred enclosure of the Church, “the pillar and foundation of the truth” (I Timothy 3.15). If those who disturb the peace of the Church refuse to be convinced by the teaching of the hierarchs, then they must leave voluntarily or be expelled involuntarily. For the cancer of heresy spreads and can poison the thoughts of a whole Local Church quickly and disastrously.

The catastrophic fall of most of ROCOR in 2007 should serve as a sufficient confirmation of this truth. It was not for lack of prayers and fasting that ROCOR fell. It was because her archpastors did not deal, either in season or out of season, with the spiritual cancer of heresy in their midst – until the Lord, disgusted by their unrepentant faithlessness to the struggle of the Holy New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia, allowed them to fall into the abyss of the heretical and graceless Soviet church, upon whom the anathema of the Holy Church remains forever...

*April 11/24, 2016.
The Entrance of the Lord into Jerusalem.*

17. ANGLO-RUSSIAN RELATIONS, 1907-1918

Since the beginning of the century, Britain had been gradually coming out of her “splendid isolation”. The fact that Germany and America were catching up with her industrially, that her imperial commitments were creating a huge strain on the exchequer, and that her role in the Boer War was almost universally despised, led her to seek out allies. At first France and Russia were considered, but rejected. There was a brief flirtation with Germany; but the Germans did not respond. Finally, Japan was chosen...²²⁹ Britain’s alliance with Japan set her even more at odds with her traditional enemy, Russia, who in February, 1904 found herself at war with Japan. In that month there was a dangerous incident in the North Sea when the Russian fleet steaming to the Far East got entangled with a British trawler fleet and killed two men, bringing the two countries to the brink of war.

However, the Japanese, while useful allies in the Far East, were no use to the British in Europe, and especially in countering the rising power of the Germans, who had begun a naval building programme that was quite clearly directed against Britain. So in 1904 the British concluded the Entente Cordiale with France. Since the French were already in alliance with the Russians, it was natural to speculate on the possibility of a rapprochement between Britain and Russia in spite of their recent – and not so recent – enmity.

Russia’s defeat in the Russo-Japanese War, and the Tsar’s concession of some elements of a parliamentary system after the abortive revolution of 1905, combined to soften the image of Russia in British minds: the bear no longer looked quite so powerful or threatening. Moreover, there were powerful geopolitical reasons why the two empires, both over-stretched in their different ways, should seek some kind of accommodation with each other. Talks on Tibet and Afghanistan had started already in 1903, and resumed with much greater hope of success after the crisis years of 1904-05.

Finally, in 1907, the two empires, supported eagerly by France, signed an agreement on their respective spheres of influence in Tibet, Afghanistan and Persia, which was divided into northern (Russian) and southern (British) spheres of influence. From the British point of view, the key advantage gained was unhindered access to the recently discovered oil reserves in Southern Persia. This would prove very important in the world war, because the decision had been taken to run the British fleet, not on coal, but on oil... But from the Russian point of view, “the core of the Convention”, as Foreign Minister Izvolsky put it, was the prospect of British support for improved Russian access to the Straits.²³⁰ For Russian foreign policy, having suffered a major defeat in the Far East, was now reorienting itself back towards the Balkans...

²²⁹ Margaret Macmillan, *The War that Ended Peace*, London: Profile, 2014, chapter 2. See also Niall Ferguson, *The Pity of War. 1914-1918*, London: Penguin, 1999, pp. 45-55.

²³⁰ Christopher Clark, *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914*, London: Penguin, 2013, p. 158.

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. This latter visit was accompanied by huge security. Frances Welch explains why: "During the preceding months, there had been outcries in the Commons, where the visit of the Tsar was described as 'repulsive to multitudes of our people'. The Tsar was repeatedly lambasted for his poor record on civil liberties and for state censorship. Radicals called for his assassination. On the day of his arrival, seventy MPs and two bishops made formal complaints.

"The *Standart* arrived at Cowes [on the Isle of Wight] on schedule, on 2nd August. The *Isle of Wight County Press* reported a fond greeting. 'The two monarchs embraced with great affection.' But in private Edward VII had been complaining that the Tsar was 'deplorably unsophisticated, immature and reactionary'. Meanwhile, the Tsar was visiting under duress, his ministers having warned him that it might antagonize other European leaders. One minister had even insisted that Britain would never be a loyal ally.

"At their last meeting Edward VII had been rather critical of the young Romanovs, tut-tutting that they spoke English with a 'déclassé accent'. The mortified Tsarina had sacked their tutor, the unfortunate Mr. Epps, forthwith. But the *Isle of Wight County Press* preferred to take a sunnier view: 'The five beautiful Romanov children formed an interesting portion of a happy domestic picture.'

"Of the royal party the future George V entered best into the spirit of the occasion, writing in his diary. 'Dear Nicky, Alicky [the Tsarina] and their children received us. Dear Nicky looking so well and Alicky too. I had not seen him for twelve years...' George's famously acquisitive wife, the future Queen Mary, was equally enthusiastic, the Tsarina had given her a trinket, 'which for years I had wanted to have!!!!'

"The Tsar's review of the British fleet was hailed as a triumph, the King paid tribute to the biggest gathering of warships he had ever seen, and George wrote in his diary that 'each ship cheered as we passed her'. In fact, the review had suffered a narrow squeak. At the end of the inspection of the first row of ships, the leading Russian cruiser had almost smashed into a British dreadnought. Lord Suffield, who was on board the King's ship, wrote of 'unprecedented turmoil'..."²³¹

In fact, the whole visit, while deemed a success, served to underline the fact that the new agreement was still felt to be unnatural by many people on both sides...

²³¹ Welch, "A Last Fraught Encounter", *The Oldie*, N 325, August, 2015, pp. 24-25.

Although the Russo-British agreement was a “convention” and 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 effect was especially important in Germany, whose fear of encirclement was strengthened...

Tsar Nicholas was still trying to patch up relations with Germany and “Cousin Willie”. But he could not afford to go too far now for fear of disrupting the important alliances with France and Britain. “For Russia to move towards Germany,” writes Margaret Macmillan, “would mean abandoning the French alliance and, almost certainly, access to French financial markets. It was also certain to be opposed by the liberals who saw the alliance with France, and perhaps in the longer run with Britain, as encouraging progressive forces for change within Russia. And not all conservatives were pro-German; landowners were hurt by Germany’s protective tariffs on agricultural produces and foodstuffs...

“As soon as the Anglo-Russian Convention had been signed, Izvolsky reached out to the Triple Alliance, signing an agreement with Germany on the Baltic and proposing to Austria-Hungary that they work together in the Balkans. Britain, likewise, continued to hope for a winding down of the naval race with Germany. In the end, however, it proved to be beyond the capacity of Russia’s leaders to bridge the growing chasm between Britain and France on the one hand and Germany and Austria-Hungary on the other, or to keep Russia out of the mounting arms race. By 1914, in spite of periodic struggles to escape, Russia was firmly on one side. Bismarck had warned of this many years earlier: in 1885 he had written to Wilhelm’s grandfather that an alliance of Russia, Britain and France would provide the basis for a coalition against us more dangerous for Germany than any other she might have to face’ ...”²³²

Meanwhile, writes Miranda Carter, “British attitudes to Russia had shifted. By 1912 the country had become fascinated by its would-be ally. In January 1912 *The Times* published a ‘Russian number’, and a group of liberal MPs visited Russia, a trip which Sir Charles Hardinge described as ‘the pilgrimage of love’. Russian literature was everywhere – not just Tolstoy but Dostoevsky, Chekhov and Turgenev had all been recently translated into English. Beef Stroganov had insinuated itself on to fashionable British menus. The Ballets Russes had brought a fantasy of Russian exoticism, wildness and modernity to London; [King] George went to see them on the eve of his coronation in 1911. But cultural fascination was not matched by political sympathy...”²³³

“Russian high life,” writes Max Hastings, “exercised a fascination for Western Europeans. That genteel British magazine *The Lady* portrayed Nicholas II’s empire in romantic and even gushing terms: ‘this vast country

²³² Macmillan, *op. cit.*, pp. 185, 196.

²³³ Carter, *The Three Emperors*, London: Penguin, 2010, p. 401.

with its great cities and arid steppes and extremes of riches and poverty, captures the imagination. Not a few Englishmen and Englishwomen have succumbed to the fascinations and made it their home, and English people, generally speaking, are liked and welcomed by the Russians. One learns that the girls of the richer classes are brought up very carefully. They are kept under strict control in the nursery and the schoolroom, live a simple, healthy life, are well taught several languages including English and French... with the result that they are well-educated, interesting, graceful, and have a pleasing, reposeful manner."²³⁴

Personal sympathies at the highest level helped: the Tsar and Tsarina got on much better with their English relatives than with their German ones. "Nicky" and "Georgie" not only looked alike: they seemed genuinely to like each other. And they both detested "Cousin Willie", the German Kaiser.

Moreover, the English ambassador in St. Petersburg, Sir George Buchanan, was "wonderfully devoted" to the tsar, declaring that "His Majesty had such a wonderful charm of manner that when he received me in audience he almost made me feel that it was as a friend, and not the Emperor, with whom I was talking. There was, if I may say so without presumption, what amounted to a feeling of mutual sympathy between us."²³⁵ And yet it was precisely Sir George's embassy that would turn out to be the nest of the February revolution; for cultural fascination and personal sympathies were swept away by the most powerful and enduring force in world politics – differences in faith, the fundamental collision between Orthodox Christianity and the democratic-socialist revolution.

The reason for the lack of political, as opposed to cultural sympathy was twofold: first, the increasing democratization of British society, as witnessed by the huge struggle for Lords reform, and secondly, the wildly inaccurate reporting of Russian affairs by the Jewish press inside Russia and their western followers. The fact was – which very few recognized – that Russia was far from being a despotic country.²³⁶ Moreover, while some restrictions on the Jews remained, it was by no means true that the State was foully and unjustly persecuting them. The vast wave of *anti-Russian* pogroms, with thousands of Jewish political murders, was not reported objectively...

²³⁴ Hastings, *Catastrophe: Europe goes to War 1914*, London: William Collins, 2014, p. 13.

²³⁵ Carter, *op. cit.*, p. 402.

²³⁶ As regards freedom, it is a paradoxical but true fact that Russia in the last decades before the revolution was one of the freest countries in the world. Thus Duma deputy Baron A.D. Meyendorff admitted: "The Russian Empire was the most democratic monarchy in the world" (Lebedev, *Velikorossia*, St. Petersburg, 1999, p. 405). This view was echoed by foreign observers, such as Sir Maurice Baring: "There is no country in the world, where the individual enjoys so great a measure of personal liberty, where the '*liberté de moeurs*' is so great, as in Russia; where the individual man can do as he pleases with so little interference or criticism on the part of his neighbours, where there is so little moral censorship, where liberty of abstract thought or aesthetic production is so great." (in Eugene Lyons, *Our Secret Allies*, 1953).

In retrospect, the new European alliances created in 1904-07 - the Anglo-French Entente of 1904 and the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907 - seemed to some commentators (for example, the French diplomat Maurice Paleologue) to foreshadow and even cause the subsequent aggressiveness of the Triple Alliance and hence the cataclysm of 1914. However, as Clark writes: "It was still far from clear in 1907 that the new alliances would take Europe to war. The weakness of Russia after the disaster of 1904 obliged the policy-makers in St. Petersburg in the first instance to seek good relations with Germany, and it was widely accepted in St. Petersburg, for the time being at least, that Russia's domestic frailty ruled out any focus of international adventurism. It was hard to imagine the circumstances in which France might be willing to chance its arm for the Russians in the Balkans and even harder to imagine Russians marching to Berlin for the sake of Alsace and Lorraine. In 1909, Paris underscored its independence by signing an accord in Morocco with Germany, a 'striking instance of the crossing of lines' between the Alliance blocs. Then, in November 1910, Russian and German leaders met in Potsdam and Berlin to reconcile German and Russian interests in Turkey and Persia. There was no question of loosening the Franco-Russian bond, to be sure, but this was a significant gesture in the direction of détente. As for the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907, it may have muted the tensions between Russia and Britain but it did not remove their cause, and right through until 1914 there were voices in the Foreign Office warning of the Russian threat to Britain's far-flung empire..."²³⁷

In spite of these fears and tensions, the Convention held, and in 1914 Britain and Russia entered the First World War on the same side. By the beginning of 1917, although Russia had suffered great losses in men and territory, the chances looked good, as the British military attaché admitted. for a successful counter-offensive in the spring. At that moment, however, the British government - now led by the liberal Lloyd George - allowed its leftist tendencies to get the better of military logic and, still more, of simple loyalty to a valuable and faithful ally.

In January, there arrived in Petrograd an Allied Commission composed of representatives of England, France and Italy whose purpose was to plan combined Allied strategy for the coming year. After meeting with A.I. Guchkov, who was president of the Military-Industrial Committee, Prince G.E. Lvov, president of the State Duma Rodzyanko, General Polivanov, Sazonov, the English ambassador Buchanan, Milyukov and others, the mission presented the following demands to the Tsar:

- (i) The introduction into the Staff of the Supreme Commander of allied representatives with the right of a deciding vote.
- (ii) The renewal of the command staff of all the armies on the indications of the heads of the Entente.
- (iii) The introduction of a constitution with a responsible ministry.

²³⁷ Clark, *op. cit.*, pp. 166-167.

The Tsar replied to these demands, which amounted to a demand that he renounce both his autocratic powers and his powers as Commander-in-Chief of the Russian armies, as follows:

- (i) "The introduction of allied representatives is unnecessary, for I am not suggesting the introduction of my representatives into the allied armies with the right of a deciding vote."
- (ii) "Also unnecessary. My armies are fighting with greater success than the armies of my allies."
- (iii) "The act of internal administration belongs to the discretion of the Monarch and does not require the indications of the allies."

When this truthful and courageous reply was made known to the plotters, they assembled in the English Embassy and decided: "To abandon the lawful path and step out on the path of revolution" ...²³⁸ For, as Princess Paley writes, "the English Embassy, on the orders of Lloyd George, became a nest of propaganda. The liberals, and Prince Lvov, Milyukov, Rodzyanko, Maklakov, etc., used to meet there constantly. It was in the English embassy that the decision was taken to abandon legal paths and step out on the path of revolution."²³⁹

When Tsar Nicholas abdicated in February, 1917, Kerensky suggested that he take refuge with Cousin Georgie in England, a suggestion that the Royal Family did not reject - at first...

But Cousin Georgie betrayed Cousin Nicky; in August, 1917 he withdrew his invitation for fear of a revolution in England. As Roy Hattersley writes, in view of the failure of rescue attempts from within Russia, "the future of the Tsar and his family grew ever more precarious. It was the [British] Prime Minister who initiated the meeting with George V's private secretary at which, for a second time, 'it was generally agreed that the proposal we should receive the Emperor in this country... could not be refused'. When Lloyd George proposed that the King should place a house at the Romanovs' disposal he was told that only Balmoral was available and that it was 'not a suitable residence at this time of year'. But it transpired that the King had more substantial objections to the offer of asylum. He 'begged' (a remarkably unregal verb) the Foreign Secretary 'to represent to the Prime Minister that, from all he hears and reads in the press, the residence in this country of the ex-Emperor and Empress would be strongly resented by the public and would undoubtedly compromise the position of the King and Queen'. It was the hereditary monarch, not the radical politician, who left the Russian royal family to the mercy of the Bolsheviks and execution in Ekaterinburg."²⁴⁰

²³⁸ Armis (a Duma delegate), "Skrytaia Byl'" (A Hidden Story), *Prizyv'* (Summons), N 50, Spring, 1920; in F. Vinberg, *Krestnij Put'* (The Way of the Cross), Munich, 1920, St. Petersburg, 1997, pp. 165-166.

²³⁹ Paley, *Souvenir de Russie, 1916-1919*, p. 33.

²⁴⁰ Roy Hattersley, *The Great Outsider: David Lloyd George*, London: Abacus, 2010, p. 472.

The result was that, as Frances Welch writes, “eleven months later, the Tsar, the Tsarina and their five children were all murdered. But when the Tsar’s sister finally reached London in 1919, King George V brazenly blamed his Prime Minister for refusing a refuge to the Romanovs. Over dinner, he would regularly castigate Lloyd George as ‘that murderer’...”²⁴¹

*May 22 / June 4, 2016.
Holy Martyr Basiliscus of Comana.*

²⁴¹ Welch, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

18. DOES CULTURE COUNT?

Many contemporary Russians take great pride in the culture of Soviet Russia, and see it as proof of their superiority to the West. A recent example is a speech given by Patriarch Cyril of Moscow at the 70th anniversary of the foundation of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department of Foreign Relations. As Alexei Nikolsky writes, "he noted that even the communist authorities of the Soviet Union did not dare 'to blow up the moral basis of the life of society', which, in his words, as a whole remained Christian. 'This is what saved us: our literature and figurative art were penetrated by Christian ideas, and the morals of the people remained Christian.'"²⁴²

Of course, there is no denying that there were great artists even in that most barbaric and uncultured period of Russian history. Nor can we deny that there were Christian themes in some of their works - we think of Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita*, Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago* and Akhmatova's *Requiem*. But to suppose that the Bolsheviks did not dare "to blow up the moral basis of society", or that these very few works of quality (usually circulated only in samizdat in view of the authorities' hostility) in any way justified Soviet society, or that because of them "the morals of the people remained Christian" is not simply mistaken - it is blasphemous.

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Before analyzing the patriarch's claim in more detail, let us first ask ourselves: what does Christianity have to say about culture?

Now the Lord says nothing directly about culture. Indirectly, however, He makes it clear that high culture does not constitute part of "the one thing necessary" for salvation. For He was incarnate in one of the least cultured regions of the Roman empire, and deliberately chose uneducated fishermen to be His apostles. Even the Jews looked down on uncultured Galilee: "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" (John 1.46). And yet it was from the fishermen of Galilee that true enlightenment came to the world...

The most educated of the apostles was St. Paul, who came from the Greek city of Tarsus and was trained in the law by great rabbinic teachers such as Gamaliel. And yet, while freely acknowledging his debt to Greek philosophy, he, too, says nothing directly about culture. Evidently, he felt that it was not essential for salvation, noting that not many highly cultured, educated or powerful people were being saved. "For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise,... that no flesh should glory in His presence" (I Corinthians 1.26-27, 29).

²⁴² "Patriarkh: Sovetskij Soiuz derzhalsa na khristianskoj npravstvennoj paradigme", *RIA Novosti*, May 25, 2016, <http://ria.ru/religion/20160525/1439347404.html#ixzz49jz5S9aQ>.

But of course, insofar as the roots of culture lie in religion, - the word "culture" comes from cultus, "religious worship", - and insofar as the religion of the Greco-Roman world was pagan, and linked with such immoral activities as temple prostitution, the preachers of the Christian faith could not be simply indifferent to the culture around them. And as Fr. Georges Florovsky writes, we find a definitely negative attitude towards the music, painting and especially the rhetorical art of their time in such early Christian writers as Tertullian and Origen. For "the whole of the culture of that time was built, defined and penetrated by a false faith. One has to recognize that some historical forms of culture are incompatible with the Christian attitude to life, and must be avoided or cast out."²⁴³ In accordance with this attitude, Tertullian said: "What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?", and the martyrs destroyed idols and pagan temples because they were not just what we would call cultural monuments but witnessed to false religion. The modern attitude of valuing them for their aesthetic beauty or "cultural value" was unknown to them.

Not that it is impossible, or always wrong, to dissociate a work of art's original religious meaning from its aesthetic value. Indeed, this is part of what was involved in the fusion of Christianity and Hellenism that began in the fourth century: the *forms* of ancient Hellenistic culture - its philosophical concepts, artistic conventions and architectural shapes - were dissociated from their original *content* and *context* in the worship of false gods and turned and transformed into the service of the true God. Thus ancient Egyptian portraiture was transformed into the iconography that we see today in St. Catherine's monastery in Sinai, while the architecture of the Pantheon in Old Rome was transfigured out of all recognition into the cathedral of Hagia Sophia in New Rome. The resulting synthesis was the glorious civilization of Byzantium, the core or cradle civilization and culture of the whole of Christendom, East and West, for the first millennium of Christian history, and of the Orthodox East until the eighteenth century.

This creation of a Christian culture to replace the pagan culture of the pre-Christian Greco-Roman world, was not only not a matter of indifference or little importance to the Church, but a task of the greatest importance for her. For whether we understand "culture" in the narrow sense of "a position or orientation of individual people or human groups whereby we distinguish 'civilized' from 'primitive' society", or in the broader sense of "a system of values"²⁴⁴, all men living in society - and even monks living in the desert - live in a culture of some kind, and this culture inescapably influences their thoughts and feelings for better or for worse. Culture counts because it influences faith - as faith influences culture. So the formation of the culture of Christian Byzantium was not, as Fr. George Florovsky writes, "what historians of the 19th century usually called 'the Hellenization of Christianity', but rather *the*

²⁴³ Florovsky, "Vera i Kul'tura" (Faith and Culture) in *Vera i Kul'tura*, St. Petersburg, 2002, p. 664.

²⁴⁴ Florovsky, *op. cit.*, p. 652.

conversion of Hellenism. And why should Hellenism not be converted? After all, the acceptance of Hellenism by Christians was not simply a servile perception of an undigested pagan heritage. It was the conversion of the Hellenistic mind and heart.

“In fact, this is what happened: Hellenism was cut through with the sword of the Christian Revelation and thereby completely polarized. We must call Origen and Augustine Hellenists. But it is completely obvious that this is another type of Hellenism than we find in Plotinus or Julian. Of all Julian’s directives the Christians hated most of all the one that forbade their preaching of the arts and sciences. This was in reality a belated attempt to exclude Christians from the building up of civilization, to separate ancient culture from Christian influence. In the eyes of the Cappadocian Fathers this was the main question. St. Gregory the Theologian lingered on it for a long time in his sermons against Julian. St. Basil the Great considered it necessary to write an address ‘to young people about how they could draw benefit from Hellenistic literature’. Two centuries later, Justinian excluded all non-Christians from scholarly and educational activity and closed the pagan schools. There was no hostility to ‘Hellenism’ in this measure. Nor was it an interruption of tradition. The traditions were preserved, and even with love, but they were being drawn into a process of Christian reinterpretation. This is the essence of Byzantine culture. It was the acceptance of the postulates of culture and their re-evaluation. The majestic church of the Holy Wisdom, the pre-eternal Word, the great church of the Constantinopolitan Sophia, remains forever a living symbol of this cultural achievement.”²⁴⁵

There is no obvious correlation between culture and sanctity. Most of the early Christians and martyrs were uneducated slaves, and there was very little specifically Christian art before the fourth century. Nevertheless, it is clear that the great culture of Byzantium was necessary for the survival of Christianity down the ages. In this sense Christian culture was necessary in the same way that Christian statehood was: as a bulwark defending the Church from the outside. We see this most clearly in theology: the theological achievements of the Ecumenical Councils, and the refutation of the heresies that arose at that time, would have been unthinkable outside the sophisticated philosophical language and culture that the Greeks inherited from Plato and Aristotle. But nobody suggested that mastery of Byzantine art and philosophy was necessary to salvation. In a general way, we can see that a decline in piety is accompanied by a decline in culture. This is particularly clear in Western culture, which declines sharply from the Carolingian period in the late eighth century. However, this is by no means a universal rule: some of the greatest products of Byzantine culture were produced in what Sir Steven Runciman called *The Last Byzantine Renaissance* - the period from 1261 to 1453 that was in general (and in spite of the hesychast saints) a period of religious decline.

²⁴⁵ Florovsky, “Khristianstvo i Tsvilizatsia” (Christianity and Civilization), in *Vera i Kul’tura*, op. cit., pp. 642-643.

Russia inherited the fullness of Byzantine culture, and until the eighteenth century essentially all Russian culture was religious and Orthodox Christian. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, however, a specifically *secular* culture arose, a Russian adaptation of contemporary western heterodox culture; Peter the Great consciously tried to reconstruct the whole of Russian culture on western – Catholic and Protestant – models. This transformation was symbolized especially by the building, at great cost in human lives, of a new capital at St. Petersburg. Situated at the extreme western end of the vast empire as Peter's “window to the West”, this extraordinary city was largely built by Italian architects on the model of Venice and Amsterdam, peopled by shaven and pomaded courtiers who spoke more French than Russian, and ruled by monarchs of mainly German origin. In building St. Petersburg, Peter was also trying to replace the traditional idea of Russia as the Third Rome by the western idea of the secular empire on the model of the *First Rome*, the Rome of the pagan Caesars and Augusti.

As Wil van den Bercken writes: “Rome remains an ideological point of reference in the notion of the Russian state. However, it is no longer the second Rome but the first Rome to which reference is made, or ancient Rome takes the place of Orthodox Constantinople. Peter takes over Latin symbols: he replaces the title tsar by the Latin imperator, designates his state imperia, calls his advisory council senate, and makes the Latin Rossija the official name of his land in place of the Slavic Rus’ ...

“Although the primary orientation is on imperial Rome, there are also all kinds of references to the Christian Rome. The name of the city, St. Petersburg, was not just chosen because Peter was the patron saint of the tsar, but also to associate the apostle Peter with the new Russian capital. That was both a diminution of the religious significance of Moscow and a religious claim over papal Rome. The adoption of the religious significance of Rome is also evident from the cult of the second apostle of Rome, Paul, which is expressed in the name for the cathedral of the new capital, the St. Peter and Paul Cathedral. This name was a break with the pious Russian tradition, which does not regard the two Roman apostles but Andrew as the patron of Russian Christianity. Thus St. Petersburg is meant to be the new Rome, directly following on the old Rome, and passing over the second and third Romes...”²⁴⁶

And yet the ideal of Russia as precisely the *Third Rome* was preserved; for “neither the people nor the Church renounced the very ideal of the Orthodox kingdom, and, as even V. Klyuchevsky noted, continued to consider as law that which corresponded to this ideal, and not Peter’s decrees.”²⁴⁷

²⁴⁶ Van den Brecken, *Holy Russia and Christian Europe*, London: SCM Press, 1999, pp. 168-169.

²⁴⁷ Priests Dionysius and Timothy Alferov, *O Tserkvi, Pravoslavnom Tsarstoe i Poslednem Vremeni*, Moscow, 1998, p. 66.

Throughout the nineteenth century a kind of “cultural war” took place as the two founding elements of post-Petrine Russian culture – Orthodoxy, on the one hand, and westernism, on the other – struggled for predominance. In some writers – Gogol, Tiutchev, Dostoyevsky – we see a Christian content shining through the western forms. In most others (the late Tolstoy especially), we see brilliant form allied to sometimes openly anti-Christian content (his novel *Resurrection*). We see the same in music, in the contrast between the Christian operas of Glinka (*A Life for the Tsar*) and Mussorgsky (*Boris Godunov*, *Khovanschina*), on the one hand, and the lushly western operas (even if they were based on texts by Pushkin) of Tchaikovsky (*Eugene Onegin*, *The Queen of Spades*), on the other. In one and the same composer, moreover, we see different spirits in different works – in, for example, Rachimaninov’s *Vespers*, on the one hand, and *Isle of the Dead*, on the other.

The last years before the Great War were a period of revolutionary change throughout Europe, not only in political ideas, but also in art, science and philosophy. In Russia, this revolutionary spirit took particular cultural forms, often religious and esoteric. On Mount Athos, Russian monks tried to identify the Divinity with the created name of Jesus – this was the so-called name-worshipping heresy. This heresy had a kind of cultural reflection inside Russia, as the decadent artists of the Symbolist movement tried to capture the Divinity in artistic symbols. For them, symbolism took the place of religion; it was a new kind of religion, the religion of symbol-worshipping. “In the Symbolist aesthetic,” as J.W. Burrow writes, “the intense focusing on the thing taken as a symbol, the perception of its numinous aura, gave access to another, as it were, parallel, invisible world of light and ecstasy.”²⁴⁸

This “parallel, invisible world of light and ecstasy” was demonic. Thus the Symbolist painter Michael Vrubel achieved fame with a large mosaic-like canvas called “Seated Demon” (1890), and went mad while working on the dynamic and sinister “Demon Downcast” (1902)...²⁴⁹ Symbolist ideas are most vividly expressed in the music and thought of the composer Alexander Scriabin, who in his *First Symphony* praised art as a kind of religion. *Le Divin Poem* (1902-1904) sought to express the evolution of the human spirit from pantheism to unity with the universe. *Poème de l'extase* (1908) was accompanied by the elaborately selected colour projections on a screen. In Scriabin's synthetic performances music, poetry, dancing, colours, and scents were used so as to bring about *supreme, final ecstasy*. In 1909, after a spell in Paris with Diaghilev, Scriabin returned to Russia permanently, where he continued to compose, working on increasingly grandiose projects. For some time before his death he had planned a multi-media work to be performed in the Himalayas, that would bring about Armageddon, “a grandiose religious synthesis of all arts which would herald the birth of a new world.”²⁵⁰ Similar ideas to Scriabin’s on the

²⁴⁸ Burrow, *The Crisis of Reason: European Thought, 1848-1914*, Yale University Press, 2000, p. 223.

²⁴⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russian_Symbolism.

²⁵⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander_Scriabin.

stage fusion of all arts were elaborated by the poet Andrej Bely and the painter Vassily Kandinsky.²⁵¹

Another of Diaghilev's composer-protégés, Sergei Prokofiev, was also influenced by Symbolism - and Mary Baker Eddy's Christian Science. Among the propositions of his theory of creative action were the pagan assertions: "1. I am the expression of Life, i.e. of divine activity. 2. I am the expression of spirit, which gives me power to resist what is unlike spirit... 9. I am the expression of perfection, and this leads me to the perfect use of my time..."²⁵²

These strivings for mangodhood - in defiance of the only God-Man - among Russia's creative intelligentsia were associated by them with a revolutionary future that rejected the past more or less totally. Hence the brief fashion for the European movement of Futurism with its radical rejection of the past and all past and present ideas of what is beautiful and tasteful²⁵³ - and its glorification of war. "War," said the Italian Futurist and future fascist Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, "is the sole hygiene of the world."²⁵⁴

The futurist obsession with the imagery of restless, continual movement was akin to Trotsky's idea of permanent revolution - early Soviet culture was similarly obsessed with machine imagery. As Nicholas Berdiaev wrote: "Just as pious mystics once strove to make themselves into an image of God, and finally to become absorbed in Him, so now the modern ecstasies of rationalism labour to become like the machine and finally to be absorbed into bliss in a structure of driving belts, pistons, valves and fly-wheels..."²⁵⁵ Fr. George Florovsky described this aesthetic-revolutionary experience as utopian and a kind of "cosmic possession": "The feelings of unqualified dependence, of complete determination from without and full immersion and inclusion into the universal order define utopianism's estimate of itself and the world. Man feels himself to be an 'organic pin', a link in some all-embracing chain - he feels unambiguously, irretrievably forged into one whole with the cosmos... From an actor and creator, consciously willing and choosing, and for that reason bearing the risk of responsibility for his self-definition, man is turned into a thing, into a needle, by which someone sews something. In the organic all-unity there is no place for action - here only movement is possible."²⁵⁶

However, the pagan essence of this Russian "silver age" is most evident in perhaps the most shocking of all the works of Russian art in the period: Igor

²⁵¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russian_Symbolism.

²⁵² Thomas Schipperges, *Prokofiev*, London: Haus Publishing, 2003, p. 8.

²⁵³ As Rosamund Bartlett writes, in 1913 "the Futurists declared in their manifesto *A Slap in the Face of Public Taste* that they wished to throw 'Pushkin, Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy etc. etc.' overboard from the ship of modernity" (*Tolstoy. A Russian Life*, Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2011, p. 374).

²⁵⁴ Marinetti, in Margaret Macmillan, *The War that Ended Peace*, London: Profile, 2014, p. 247.

²⁵⁵ Berdiaev, *The Russian Revolution*, Ann Arbor, 1966, p. 58; quoted in Michael Burleigh, *Sacred Causes*, London: Harper Perennial, 2007, p. 41.

²⁵⁶ Florovsky, "Metafizicheskie predposylki utopizma" (The Metaphysical Presuppositions of Utopianism), *Put' (The Way)*, June-July, 1926, p. 30.

Stravinsky's ballet, *The Rite of Spring*.²⁵⁷ As Oliver Figes writes, "the idea of the ballet was originally conceived by the painter Nikolai Roerich... a painter of the prehistoric Slavs and an accomplished archaeologist in his own right. He was absorbed in the rituals of neolithic Russia, which he idealized as a pantheistic realm of spiritual beauty where life and art were one, and man and nature lived in harmony. Stravinsky approach Roerich for a theme and he came to visit him at the artists' colony of Talashkino, where the two men worked together on the scenario of 'The Great Sacrifice', as *The Rite of Spring* was originally called. The ballet was conceived as a re-creation of the ancient pagan rite of human sacrifice. It was meant to *be* that rite – not to tell the story of the ritual but (short of actual murder) to re-create that ritual on the stage and thus communicate in the most immediate way the ecstasy and terror of the human sacrifice...

"Artistically, the ballet strived for ethnographic authenticity. Roerich's costumes were drawn from peasant clothes in Tenisheva's collection at Talashkino. His primitivist sets were based on archaeology. Then there was Nijinsky's shocking choreography – the real scandal of the ballet's infamous Paris première at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées on 29 May 1913. For the music was barely heard at all in the commotion, the shouting and the fighting, which broke out in the auditorium when the curtain first went up. Nijinsky had choreographed movements which were ugly and angular. Everything about the dancers' movements emphasized their weight instead of their lightness, as demanded by the principles of classical ballet. Rejecting all the basic positions, the ritual dancers had their feet turned inwards, elbows clutched to the sides of their body and their palms held flat, like the wooden dolls that were so prominent in Roerich's mythic paintings of Scythian Russia. They were orchestrated, not by steps and notes, as in conventional ballets, but rather moved as one collective mass to the violent off-beat rhythms of the orchestra. The dancers pounded their feet on the stage, building up a static energy which finally exploded, with electrifying force, in the sacrificial dance. This rhythmic violence was the vital innovation of Stravinsky's score. Like most of the ballet's themes, it was taken from the music of the peasantry. There was nothing like these rhythms in Western art music (Stravinsky said that he did not really know how to notate or bar them) – a convulsive pounding of irregular downbeats, requiring constant changes in the metric signature with almost every bar so that the conductor of the orchestra must throw himself about and wave his arms in jerky motions, as if performing a shamanic dance. In these explosive rhythms it is possible to hear the terrifying beat of the Great War and the Revolution of 1917..."²⁵⁸

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²⁵⁷ Exactly 100 years later, the Mariinsky Theatre Ballet under Valery Gergiev recreated Nijinsky's notorious production of 1913 in the same location, Paris. See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BryIQ9QpXwI>.

²⁵⁸ Figes, *Natasha's Dance*, op. cit., pp. 279, 280-282.

When the revolution eventually came, it incarnated all the violent, demonic essence of Russian culture in its last pre-war years. Bolshevnik Russia was an explicitly atheist society – the first in history – that killed and tortured believers – tens of millions of them, – and destroyed churches, books and cultural monuments of all kinds in a “cultural revolution” that exceeded in its ferocity even its imitations in Nazi Germany and Maoist China. Writers, philosophers and artists that showed the slightest resistance to, or criticism of, the prevailing barbarism were either imprisoned or exiled – to the great benefit of the West that received them, but to the great impoverishment of people that remained in the “Homeland”. New generations were educated to despise everything Christian and to adhere to a new “revolutionary morality” which was probably the most vicious and anti-Christian in the history of mankind. All Christians and “cultural workers” that remained in freedom were allowed to do so only at the price of paying lip-service to the new barbarism – and shamefully denouncing the very few true artists – or simply, decent people – in public life. In such a society only heroes who were prepared to give up everything for the truth could survive spiritually – but almost certainly not physically. If you did not join in the violence and lawlessness, you became desensitized and indifferent to it – which is already a kind of moral death.

For for the Bolshevniks, anyone who was not with them was against them. As the philosopher Ivan Alexandrovich Ilyin wrote: “It was necessary to help, serve, be useful, carry out all demands, even the most disgusting, dishonourable, humiliating and treacherous. One had either to go to one’s death as a hero-confessor, or become a evil-doer ready for anything: denounce one’s father and mother, destroy whole nests of innocent people, betray friends, openly demand the death penalty for honourable and courageous patriots (as did, for example, the artist Kachalov on the radio), carry out provocative acts, simulate views that one did not have and which one despised, propagandize atheism, teach the most idiotic theories from the lecture-stand, believe in intentional, shameless lies, and flatter unceasingly, shamelessly flatter small ‘dictators’ and big tyrants...

“In a word, the choice was and has remained to the present day simple and unambiguous: heroism and a martyric death, or enslavement and complicity.”²⁵⁹

Party members especially were not allowed to have a private life separate from their political life in which culture or religion could flourish. Thus Igor Shafarevich writes: “The German publicist V. Schlamm tells the story of how in 1919, at the age of 15, he was a fellow-traveller of the communists, but did not penetrate into the narrow circle of their functionaries. The reason was explained to him twenty years later by one of them, who by that time had broken with communism. It turns out that Schlamm, when invited to join the party, had said: ‘I am ready to give to the party everything except two evenings

²⁵⁹ Ilyin, “O Sovjetskoj Tserkvi” (On the Soviet Church), *Russkij Sigor*, 2010, N 2.

a week, when I listen to Mozart.' That reply turned out to be fatal: a man having interests that he did not want to submit to the party was not suitable for it..."²⁶⁰

So much for culture... Admittedly, permission for a minimal private life and the enjoyment of Mozart did creep back in later decades. Nor was culture *as such* ever banned: on the contrary, the authorities were very concerned to project an image of culturedness as if to compensate for their obvious barbarism.

Moreover, they had a great example in the Great Leader of the Peoples himself. Stalin wrote poetry, went very frequently to the theatre and concerts, and in general took a strong interest in culture. According to Richard Overy, "in the 1930s his library counted 40,000 volumes. He wrote extensively both before 1917 and in the 1920s, works and speeches that ran to thirteen volumes when they were published."²⁶¹

At the same time, this champion of culture was determined to destroy all real culture. "The instrument of his will," writes Martin Gilbert, "was A.A. Zhdanov, his lieutenant on the ideological front, who called a special conference of writers, artists and composers - including Shostakovich, Prokofiev, and Khachaturian - to warn them of the folly of independent thought, in music as much as in writing and art. The Soviet Writers' Union met with Stalin's particular anger for what he saw as repeated attempts at independent expression of opinion. The poet Anna Akhmatova was among those expelled from the Union in 1946. Such expulsion meant an end to the right to publish - a writer's means of livelihood."²⁶²

In 1948, "on February 10 the Central Committee of the Communist Party issued a decree on music, accusing Shostakovich, Prokofiev and Khachaturian of 'losing touch with the masses' and of falling victims to 'decadent bourgeois influences'. The three made an immediate confession of their 'errors' and promised to mend their ways - and amend their music - in future. Newspapers also fell under the displeasure of the most rigorous ideological scrutiny. The satirical magazine *Krokodil* was censured by the Central Committee for its 'lack of militancy' in portraying the evil ways of capitalism. The Academy of Social Sciences, which had been established after the war, was reorganized to provide a more rigorous ideological training for Party and State officials.

"With Stalin's personal sanction, a ferocious newspaper campaign was launched against two declared enemies of Soviet Communism, 'bourgeois nationalism' and the 'survival of religious prejudice'. Some indication of how deeply religious feeling must have survived after thirty-one years of

²⁶⁰ Shafarevich, *Sotsializm kak iavlenie mirovoj istorii* (Socialism as a phenomenon of world history), Paris: YMCA Press, 1977, pp. 284-286.

²⁶¹ Overy, *The Dictators*, London: Penguin Books, 2005, p. 9.

²⁶² Gilbert, *A History of the Twentieth Century*, vol. 2: 1933-1951, London: HarperCollins, 1998, pp. 769-770.

Communist rule was seen in the calls in *Pravda* for a more vigorous anti-religious propaganda..."²⁶³

"Several Soviet writers," writes Gilbert, "were singled out during 1957 for failing to fill their works with an understanding of 'Socialist realism'. Negative features of Soviet life could be criticized, but only from the point of view of *partiynost* - Party-mindedness. This involved making clear that all the defects described by the author were being 'successfully overcome' by the Party. Particular criticism was leveled at V. Dudintsev, whose novel *Not by Bread Alone* [a direct quotation from the Gospel] gave what the Party managers called the 'false impression' that the individual Soviet citizen was virtually powerless against the obstruction of Soviet bureaucracy. Dudintsev's error was considered especially grave as his novel had been translated into English..."²⁶⁴

Nevertheless, after Khrushchev's secret speech against Stalinism in 1956, some green shoots began to emerge "from under the rubble" (Solzhenitsyn's phrase) of the Soviet wasteland. Dudintsev's novel was an example of that; another was Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago*, and soon after that - Solzhenitsyn's *A Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*. However, these could hardly be called "Soviet" culture; the prevailing, truly Soviet culture remained overwhelmingly unchristian and anti-Christian; and the "Socialist Realism" of the great mass of books, films and art works was truly awful.

The only real culture most people were allowed to enjoy were massive print-runs of "safe" nineteenth-century authors such as Pushkin and Tolstoy.



But truly Christian writers such as Dostoyevsky remained banned until late into the Soviet period... And if, in the 1960s, there were good Soviet film

²⁶³ Gilbert, *op. cit.*, pp. 821-822.

²⁶⁴ Martin, *Challenge to Civilization: A History of the 20th Century 1952-1999*, London: HarperCollins, 1999, p. 157.

adaptations of Russian or foreign classics such as Kozintsev's *Hamlet*, Bondarchuk's *War and Peace* (the only Soviet film ever to win an Oscar) and Tarkovsky's *Andrei Rublev* (a daring and rare working of a specifically Christian theme), these were made *in spite of* and *in reaction to* the prevailing Soviet anti-culture rather than being typical examples of it.

For you cannot deprive an educated people of real culture forever. And so the authorities began cautiously to allow a very limited access to the cultural treasures of the West. Thus in 1957 the great Canadian pianist Glenn Gould came to the Soviet Union and entranced concert-goers with his extraordinary performances of Bach – a composer who, though not banned, had still been frowned on somewhat because of his association with Christian choral music.

A subtle change in Soviet cultural policy began to take place. Communist ideological purity became less important: the need to feel *culturally* superior to the Great Satan of the West became more important. But that meant a minimal contact with the West so that the best of Soviet culture could be displayed and comparisons made. So Shostakovich was no longer required to humbly ask forgiveness for supposedly bad work, and outstanding performers such as Oistrakh, Gilels, Richter and Rostropovich were allowed to travel to the West – under strict supervision, of course.

However, this policy had its dangers for the Soviet masters of culture. What if the comparison that could now be made between Soviet and western culture did not turn out in favour of Soviet culture? What if the stars of Soviet culture, in western eyes, turned out to be very un-Soviet or even anti-Soviet, such as Solzhenitsyn? What, even worse, if the stars of Soviet culture chose to defect to the West in order to develop their talent in the more favourable conditions pertaining there – as did the ballet dancer Rudolf Nureyev? What if some of the stars of western culture actually began to contaminate Soviet culture with their novelty – as did the music of the Beatles?

Since flexibility had never been a virtue of Soviet bureaucrats, the only possible response to such threats was repression. But this had its own dangers. Thus when Pasternak was not allowed to receive his Nobel Prize for literature, it only increased the fame of his novel. Again, when Rostropovich wrote to the Culture Minister Furtseva on behalf of his persecuted friend Solzhenitsyn, and was banished to his own kind of Gulag – obscurity in the provinces and work with second-rate orchestras, it became obvious that for such a highly sensitive artist this could result only in one of three possible outcomes: complete waste of his talent, suicide or exile. Fortunately for Rostropovich and the western musical world, he was exiled to the West...

As Soviet power weakened in the 70s and 80s, and censorship was relaxed, Soviet culture became more “normal”, less boorish, more genuinely artistic, while Christian themes appeared more often – without irony now. But these could hardly be called achievements of specifically *Soviet* culture, but rather the gradual and partial return of *Russianness* to Soviet life. Indeed, as Norman

Stone writes, "Without the men and women of the late-Tsarist educational system, science and for that matter cultural life of any but the most primitive sort would not have survived."²⁶⁵

Even more Tsarist and Russian, of course, was the revival, from approximately the commemoration of the Baptism of Rus' in 1988, of the specifically ecclesiastical arts – church architecture, iconography and music.

A constant feature of the Soviet cultural scene were performances of "Swan Lake". Stalin had seen the ballet thirty times – the last time on the eve of his death. It was the work that the Bolshoj Ballet chose to bring to London as the proudest achievement of Soviet culture. But, of course, it was an achievement of nineteenth-century *Russian bourgeois* culture... As the Soviet Union was falling towards the end of 1991, the Soviet media played "Swan Lake" continuously – as if to plead before the world that the black hole that had been the Soviet Union had not been so black after all... Unfortunately, many believed them, including the present "patriarch of Moscow and all Russia"...

*

So let us now return to the thesis of the patriarch: that even the communist authorities of the Soviet Union did not dare 'to blow up the moral basis of the life of society', which, in his words, as a whole remained Christian...

Oliver Figes writes: "The Bolsheviks envisaged the building of their Communist utopia as a constant battle against custom and habit. With the end of the Civil War they prepared for a new and longer struggle on the 'internal front', a revolutionary war for the liberation of the communistic personality through the eradication of individualistic ('bourgeois') behaviour and deviant habits (prostitution, alcoholism, hooliganism and religion) inherited from the old society. There was little dispute among the Bolsheviks that this battle to transform human nature would take decades. There was only disagreement about when the battle should begin. Marx had taught that the alteration of consciousness was dependent on changes to the material base, and Lenin, when he introduced the NEP, affirmed that until the material conditions of a Communist society had been created – a process that would take an entire historical epoch – there was no point trying to engineer a Communist system of morality in private life. But most Bolsheviks did not accept that the NEP required a retreat from the private sphere. On the contrary, as they were increasingly inclined to think, active engagement was essential at every moment and in every battlefield of everyday life – in the family, the home and the inner world of the individual, where the persistence of old mentalities was a major threat to the Party's basic ideological goals. And as they watched the individualistic instincts of the 'petty-bourgeois' masses become stronger in the culture of the NEP, they redoubled their efforts. As Anatoly Lunacharsky wrote

²⁶⁵ Stone, *The Atlantic and its Enemies*, London: Penguin, 2011, p. 120.

in 1927: 'The so-called sphere of private life cannot slip away from us, because it is precisely here that the final goal of the Revolution is to be reached.'

"The family was the first arena in which the Bolsheviks engaged the struggle. In the 1920s, they took it as an article of faith that the 'bourgeois family' was socially harmful: it was inward-looking and conservative, a stronghold of religion, superstition, ignorance and prejudice; it fostered egotism and material acquisitiveness, and oppressed women and children. The Bolsheviks expected that the family would disappear as Soviet Russia developed into a fully socialist system, in which the state took responsibility for all the basic household functions, providing nurseries, laundries and canteens in public centres and apartment blocks. Liberated from labour in the home, women would be free to enter the workforce on an equal footing with men. The patriarchal marriage, with its attendant sexual morals, would die out - to be replaced, the radicals believed, by 'free unions of love'.

"As the Bolsheviks saw it, the family was the biggest obstacle to the socialization of children. 'By loving a child, the family turns him into an egotistical being, encouraging him to see himself as the centre of the universe,' wrote the Soviet educational thinker Zlata Lilina. Bolshevik theorists agreed on the need to replace this 'egotistic love' with the 'rational love' of a broader 'social family'. *The ABC of Communism* (1919) envisaged a future society in which parents would no longer use the word 'my' to refer to their children, but would care for all the children in their community. Among the Bolsheviks there were different views about how long this change would take. Radicals argued that the Party should take direct action to undermine the family immediately, but most accepted the arguments of Bukharin and NEP theorists that in a peasant country such as Soviet Russia the family would remain for some time the primary unity of production and consumption and that it would weaken gradually as the country made the transition to an urban socialist society.

"Meanwhile the Bolsheviks adopted various strategies - such as the transformation of domestic space - intended to accelerate the disintegration of the family. To tackle the housing shortages in the overcrowded cities the Bolsheviks compelled wealthy families to share their apartments with the urban poor - a policy known as 'condensation' (*uplotnenie*). During the 1920s the most common type of communal apartment (*kommunalka*) was one in which the original owners occupied the main rooms on the 'parade side' while the back rooms were filled by other families. At that time it was still possible for the former owners to select their co-inhabitants, provided they fulfilled the 'sanitary norm' (a per capita allowance of living space which fell from 13.5 square metres in 1926 to just 9 square metres in 1931). Many families brought in servants or acquaintances to prevent strangers being moved in to fill up the surplus living space. The policy had a strong ideological appeal, not just as a war on privilege, which is how it was presented in the propaganda of the new regime ('War against the Palaces!'), but also as part of a crusade to engineer a more collective way of life. By forcing people to share communal apartments, the Bolsheviks believed that they could make them communistic in their basic

thinking and behaviour. Private space and property would disappear, the individual ('bourgeois') family would be replaced by communistic fraternity and organization, and the life of the individual would become immersed in the community. From the middle of the 1920s, new types of housing were designed with this transformation in mind. The most radical Soviet architects, like the Constructivists in the Union of Contemporary Architects, proposed the complete obliteration of the private sphere by building 'commune houses' (doma kommuna) where all the property, including even clothes and underwear, would be shared by the inhabitants, where domestic tasks like cooking and childcare would be assigned to teams on a rotating basis, and where everybody would sleep in one big dormitory, divided by gender, with private rooms for sexual liaisons. Few houses of this sort were ever built, although they loomed large in the utopian imagination and futuristic novels such as Yevgeny Zamiatin's *We* (1920). Most of the projects which did materialize, like the Narkomfin (Ministry of Finance) house in Moscow (1930) designed by the Constructivist Moisei Ginzburg, tended to stop short of the full communal form and included both private living spaces and communalized blocks for laundries, baths, dining rooms and kitchens, nurseries and schools. Yet the goal remained to marshal architecture in a way that would induce the individual to move away from private ('bourgeois') forms of domesticity to a more collective way of life.

"The Bolsheviks also intervened more directly in domestic life. The new *Code on Marriage and the Family* (1918) established a legislative framework that clearly aimed to facilitate the breakdown of the traditional family. It removed the influence of the Church from marriage and divorce, making both a process of simple registration with the state. It granted the same legal rights to de facto marriages (couples living together) as it gave to legal marriages. The Code turned divorce from a luxury for the rich to something that was easy and affordable for all. The result was a huge increase in casual marriages and the highest rate of divorce in the world - three times higher than in France or Germany and twenty-six times higher than in England by 1926 - as the collapse of the Christian-patriarchal order and the chaos of the revolutionary years loosened sexual morals along with family and communal ties."²⁶⁶

²⁶⁶ Figes, *The Whisperers*, London, 2007, pp. 7-10. Figes continues: "In the early years of Soviet power, family breakdown was so common among revolutionary activists that it almost constituted an occupational hazard. Casual relationships were practically the norm in Bolshevik circles during the Civil War, when any comrade could be sent at a moment's notice to some distant sector of the front. Such relaxed attitudes remained common through the 1920s, as Party activists and their young emulators in the Komsomol [Communist Youth League] were taught to put their commitment to the proletariat before romantic love or family. Sexual promiscuity was more pronounced in the Party's youthful ranks than among Soviet youth in general. Many Bolsheviks regarded sexual licence as a form of liberation from bourgeois moral conventions and as a sign of 'Soviet modernity'. Some even advocated promiscuity as a way to counteract the formation of coupling relationships that separated lovers from the collective and detracted from their loyalty to the Party.

"It was a commonplace that the Bolshevik made a bad husband a father because the demands of the Party took him away from the home. 'We Communists don't know our own families,' remarked one Moscow Bolshevik. 'You leave early and come home late. You seldom

In 1920 the Bolsheviks abortions were made freely available at the mother's request. For "in Soviet Russia," writes Richard Pipes, "as in the rest of Europe, World War I led to a loosening of sexual mores, which here was justified on moral grounds. The apostle of free love in Soviet Russia was Alexandra Kollontai, the most prominent woman Bolshevik. Whether she practiced what she preached or preached what she practiced, is not for the historian to determine; but the evidence suggests that she had an uncontrollable sex drive coupled with an inability to form enduring relationships. Born the daughter of a wealthy general, terribly spoiled in childhood, she reacted to the love lavished on her with rebellion. In 1906 she joined the Mensheviks, then, in 1915, switched to Lenin, whose antiwar stand she admired. Subsequently, she performed for him valuable services as agent and courier.

"In her writings, Kollontai argued that the modern family had lost its traditional economic function, which meant that women should be set free to choose their partners. In 1919 she published *The New Morality and the Working Class*, a work based on the writings of the German feminist Grete Meisel-Hess. In it she maintained that women had to be emancipated not only economically but also psychologically. The ideal of 'grand amour' was very difficult to realize, especially for men, because it clashed with their worldly ambitions. To be capable of it, individuals had to undergo an apprenticeship in the form of 'love games' or 'erotic friendships', which taught them to engage in sexual relations free of both emotional attachment and personal domination. Casual sex alone conditioned women to safeguard their individuality in a society dominated by men. Every form of sexual relationship was acceptable: Kollontai advocated what she called 'successive polygamy'. In the capacity of Commissar of Guardianship (Prizrenia) she promoted communal kitchens as a way of 'separating the kitchen from marriage'. She, too, wanted the care of children to be assumed by the community. She predicted that in time the family would disappear, and women should learn to treat all children as their own. She popularized her theories in a novel, *Free Love: The Love of Worker Bees (Svobodnaia liubov': liubov' pchel trudovykh)* (1924), one part of which was called, 'The Love of Three Generations'. Its heroine preached divorcing sex from morality as well as from politics. Generous with her body, she said she loved everybody, from Lenin down, and gave herself to any man who happened to attract her.

see your wife and almost never your children.' At Party congresses, where the issue was discussed throughout the 1920s, it was recognized that Bolsheviks were far more likely than non-Party husbands to abandon wives and families, and that this had much to do with the primacy of Party loyalties over sexual fidelity. But in fact the problem of absent wives and mothers was almost as acute in Party circles, as indeed it was in the broader circle of the Soviet intelligentsia, where most women were involved in the public sphere.

"Trotsky argued that the Bolsheviks were more affected than others by domestic breakdown because they were 'most exposed to the influence of new conditions'. As pioneers of a modern way of life, Trotsky wrote in 1923, the 'Communist vanguard merely passes sooner and more violently through what is inevitable' for the population as a whole. In many Party households there was certainly a sense of pioneering a new type of family - one that liberated both parents for public activities - albeit at the cost of intimate involvement with their children." (pp. 10-11)

“Although often regarded as the authoritarian theoretician of Communist sex morals, Kollontai was very much the exception who scandalized her colleagues. Lenin regarded ‘free love’ as a ‘bourgeois’ idea – by which he meant not so much extramarital affairs (with which he himself had had experience) as casual sex...

“Studies of the sexual mores of Soviet youth conducted in the 1920s revealed considerable discrepancy between what young people said they believed and what they actually practiced: unusually, in this instance behaviour was less promiscuous than theory. Russia’s young people stated they considered love and marriage ‘bourgeois’ relics and thought Communists should enjoy a sexual life unhampered by any inhibitions: the less affection and commitment entered into male-female relations, the more ‘communist’ they were. According to opinion surveys, students looked on marriage as confining and, for women, degrading: the largest number of respondents – 50.8 percent of the men and 67.3 of the women – expressed a preference for long-term relationships based on mutual affection but without the formality of marriage.

“Deeper probing of their attitudes, however, revealed that behind the façade of defiance of tradition, old attitudes survived intact. Relations based on love were the ideal of 82.6 percent of the men and 90.5 percent of the women: ‘This is what they secretly long for and dream about,’ according to the author of the survey. Few approved of the kind of casual sex advocated by Kollontai and widely associated with early Communism: a mere 13.3 percent of the men and 10.6 of the women. Strong emotional and moral factors continued to inhibit casual sex: one Soviet survey revealed that over half of the female student respondents were virgins...”²⁶⁷

In this continuing conservatism of Soviet youth in the early period we see the continuing influence of the Orthodox Church, into which most Russians had been baptized. The Church resisted all the Soviet innovations, including civil marriage, abortion and divorce on demand. And soon the State, too, reversed its teaching in some respects, outlawing abortion in 1936 and condemning free love. But this was not the result of some kind of revival of religion and morality. It was necessitated by the simple fact, emphasized by Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow in the nineteenth century, that the State is founded on the family, and the destruction of the family finally leads to the destruction of the State...

In any case, this slight tightening of sexual morality did not last. After the war, and especially after Stalin’s death, abortion numbers rocketed – and have not significantly declined in the present neo-Soviet period.²⁶⁸ So the patriarch’s

²⁶⁷ Pipes, *Russia under the Bolshevik Regime, 1919-1924*, London: Fontana, 1995, pp. 330-333.

²⁶⁸ V. Moss, “Patriarch Cyril, Abortion, Gays and the Goddess Aphrodite,” [https://www.academia.edu/25959469/PATRIARCH_CYRIL_ABORTION_GAYS_AND_T
HE_GODDESS_APHRODITE](https://www.academia.edu/25959469/PATRIARCH_CYRIL_ABORTION_GAYS_AND_THE_GODDESS_APHRODITE).

blithe assertion that in the Soviet period “the morals of the people remained Christian” is plainly the opposite of the truth. “By their fruits ye shall know them,” said the Lord...

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To conclude, there is no evidence that that the general level of public morality in the Soviet period was anything but very low; an atheist culture produced, as was only to be expected, an atheist and “revolutionary morality”. The first two decades of Soviet power were a glorious period of Christian martyrdom fully comparable with the earliest centuries of Christianity – but in the context of a brutal, anti-Christian culture, still more hostile to all true culture than the pagan culture of the times of Nero, Decius and Diocletian. The post-war period continued to manifest heroes of the faith in the camps and in the Catacomb (True Orthodox) Church; but in the general population drunkenness, sexual immorality, abortion, lying, conformism and denunciation of one’s neighbour were commonplace. Everything that was best in the Soviet period was produced in conscious resistance to and defiance of the prevailing faith, culture and morality; in this, and this alone, did the salvation of a tiny minority of the Russian people take place. The specifically *Soviet* – as opposed to the remnants of pre-revolutionary *Russian* – culture was penetrated, not by Christian ideas, but by satanic passions that waged war on everything Christian – passions that have now been unleashed again in the neo-Soviet regime of Vladimir Putin and Cyril Gundiaev...

*May 25 / June 7, 2016.
Third Finding of the Head of St. John the Baptist.*

19. WHEN WERE THE APOSTLES BAPTIZED?

When Christ was preparing to ascend into heaven, He told His Holy Apostles to wait in Jerusalem until they received the Gift of the Holy Spirit. For, He said, "John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now" (Acts 1.5). To which St. John Chrysostom poses the question: Why does Christ say, 'Ye shall be baptized', when in fact there was not water in the Upper Room [where the Holy Spirit descended at Pentecost]? Because the more essential part of Baptism is the Spirit through whom indeed the water has its operation; in the same manner our Lord is also said to be anointed, not that He had ever been anointed with oil, but because He had received the Spirit. Besides, we do in fact find them receiving a baptism with water, and these at different moments. In our case both take place under one act, but then they were divided. For in the beginning they were baptized by John, since if harlots and publicans went to that baptism, much rather would they who thereafter were to be baptized by the Holy Spirit. ²⁶⁹

In support of this interpretation is the fact that later, when Apollos was revealed to have received only the baptism of John, and not that of the Holy Spirit, the sacrament appears to have been completed, not by repeating the immersion of water, but by the laying of hands alone. Thus we read: "When they [Apollos and those with him] hear this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them" (Acts 19.5-6).

This separation of the water part of the baptism from the descent of the Holy Spirit incidentally provides a precedent for the common practice of "economy" in the Orthodox Church, whereby the graceless baptism of heretics and schismatics is not always repeated, but is supplemented, as it were, by grace-filled chrismation or laying of hands (cheirothesia) through a true bishop or priest.

This would appear to answer the question: when and how were the apostles baptized? However, it would be useful briefly to consider two alternative answers to the question.

The first, which is contained in the Synaxarion of Mattins at the Ascension of Christ, is essentially the same as the interpretation of St. John Chrysostom, and only adds some extra details. The Synaxarion says that the leading apostles were baptized first by St. John the Baptist in water alone. But then, according to St. Epiphanius, St. John the Theologian baptized the Most Holy Mother of God, while St. Peter baptized the other apostles.²⁷⁰

²⁶⁹ St. John Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles*, I.

²⁷⁰ The Slavonic Pentecostarion says that according to Epiphanius "only the holy apostle Peter was baptized by the hands of the Lord Himself, while Peter baptized Andrew, and Andrew - James and John. And James and John the other apostles. The Most Holy Mother of God was baptized by Peter and John: "Епифаний Кипрскій повествова, яко единого токмо святаго апостола Петра своима руками крестил Господь, и Петр Андрея, и Андрей Иякова и Иоанна.

And then they all received the completion of the sacrament with the Descent of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost.

A different, western tradition appears to come from the Church of Milan, and the liturgical practice of that Local Orthodox Church during the time of St. Ambrose of Milan (late fourth century). St. Ambrose writes, commenting on the Lord's washing of Peter's feet: "Peter was clean, but his feet must be washed, since he had the sin inherited from the first man, at the time when the serpent felled him and misled him into error. Thus Peter's feet were washed to remove the hereditary sin." He goes on: "Our personal sins are removed by baptism."²⁷¹

In the rite of baptism as practiced by the saint in Milan, there was a washing of the feet performed after the full immersion. The immersion was thought to remove personal sins, and the washing of the feet – original sin.

This practice presupposes an intriguing hypothesis, that a kind of baptism was administered by the Lord Himself just before the Mystical Supper in order to free the apostles from original sin and allow them to partake of the Mystery of Body and Blood of Christ in a pure state. It appears to be confirmed by the troparion for Holy Thursday, which says: "When the glorious disciples were enlightened at the washing of the feet..." For the sacrament of baptism is often called *illumination* or *enlightenment*. On the other hand, the consensus of the Fathers is that *both* original sin *and* personal sin are removed in the threefold immersion of baptism. Moreover, we must remember that Christ quite clearly says that the apostles had *not yet* received the Holy Spirit while He was on earth, and had to wait for the Descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

Without denying that something mystical, cleansing and enlightening took place at the washing of the feet, it seems safer to remain with the tradition of the Eastern Church, which locates the baptism of the apostles, and their cleansing from both original and personal sin, at two separate times and places: the first, water baptism at the hands of St. John the Baptist in the Jordan, and the second, the essential part - the descent of the Holy Spirit in Jerusalem at Pentecost.

May 26 / June 8, 2016.

Apodosis of Pashca.

St. Augustine, Archbishop of Canterbury.

Ияков же и Иоанн прочия апостолы. Святую же Богородицу Петр и Иоанн крестили суть». The same narrative can be found in Sophronius of Jerusalem: *Fragmentum. De baptisate apostolorum.* – Migne. P. G. 87/3, col. 3372.

²⁷¹ St. Ambrose, *De Mysteriis*, 32..

20. THE FOUNDATION OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL

The horrors of the Jewish Holocaust gave a great moral boost to the Zionist cause after the Second World War, and many thousands of survivors decided to emigrate to what was shortly to become the Zionist state of Israel. However, the British, who still controlled the Holy Land under a UN Mandate, had had extreme difficulties in preserving the peace between the Jews and the Arabs, and now were determined to stop this new exodus from Europe into the country. Illegal immigrants were prevented from landing, and were deported – usually to detention camps in Cyprus. The Zionists of course protested against this, and world opinion, appalled at the revelations of the Holocaust, was on the whole on their side.

But the problem went deeper than a simple refugee crisis. During the war, the British and Americans had agreed on a plan to give refuge to displaced Jews – some to their former countries of origin, and very many to prosperous countries around the globe. Thus America under Roosevelt offered to take 100,000 Jews – an offer that was upped to 400,000 in 1947 in a bill put forward by Congressman William G. Stratton. But the Zionists would have none of it. To put displaced Jews anywhere other than Palestine would have endangered the plan of a Jewish state, for it would have eradicated the necessity for such a state. It also meant that there would be less money going from America to Israel – and the Jews there would have to live on remittances for the foreseeable future. So the real interests of the Jewish survivors of the Holocaust were sacrificed by Jews for the sake of the dream of a Zionist state.²⁷²

The powerful American Zionist lobby worked together with Zionist terrorism inside Palestine to undermine British resolve. Three future leaders of the Israeli state – David Ben-Gurion, Menachem Begin and Yitzhak Shamir – at different times took up arms against the British in order to drive them out of their promised land and open the gates to unrestricted Jewish immigration. In July, 1946 Begin's Irgun blew up the King David hotel in Jerusalem, and Shamir's Stern Gang committed even worse atrocities against soldiers lying in their beds. The Zionist state of Israel would be brought into existence by Jewish terrorism against both British and Arabs...

Chaim Weitzmann and the Jewish Agency for Palestine, which represented the mass of Palestinian Jewry, denounced the violence. But it worked... For, as Martin Gilbert writes, "the British will to rule had gone: Jewish terror and heightened national aspirations, and Arab determination not to allow a Jewish State to emerge, created a situation where the British Army could no longer maintain control. A severe economic crisis in Britain added to the determination of the government in London not to be saddle with a growing burden, involving extra troops, mounting expenditure, and the anger of the British public that the terrorists and the agitators were not being crushed or even curbed. If India and Burma could be given up, where Britain had been

²⁷² Alfred M. Lilienthal, *The Zionist Connection*, New York: Dodd, Mead & co., 1987, p. 57.

responsible for far greater numbers of people over a much longer period of time, and had been faced with problems on a much larger scale, then so could Palestine be given up. Attlee and his Cabinet decided to hand the problem to the United Nations.

“The British government in London had reached the end of its tether. Throughout the year [1947] there had been killings everywhere in Palestine which shocked both British and Jews... No more than 12,000 of the half million Jews in Palestine were believed to be members of the two terrorist organizations. But 100,000 British soldiers were employed searching for them. The Jewish Agency’s own defence organization, the Hagana, also found itself in a series of confrontations with the British. For their part, British soldiers were frequently called upon to help Jews who were being attacked by Arabs...”²⁷³

Meanwhile, at the request of the British, the United Nations were working out a plan to partition the land between two states, one Jewish and one Arab, with an international zone in Jerusalem. The Zionists then put into motion “Operation Partition”. Enormous pressure – not excluding bribes and threats – were put on UN member nations to vote “the right way”. Thus “Bernard Baruch was prevailed upon to talk with the French who could not afford to lose interim Marshall Plan aid. Through former Ambassador William Bullitt, the adviser to Presidents passed a message in a similar vein to the Chinese ambassador in Washington.”²⁷⁴

On November 29, after many delegates had been “persuaded” to change their votes, thirty-three nations, including the United States and the Soviet Union and the entire Soviet bloc, voted in favour of the plan. Thirteen nations were against, including all the Arab states and Greece, while Britain was among ten states that abstained...

Stalin’s reason for accepting the plan, writes Paul Johnson, “seems to have been that the creation of Israel, which he was advised would be a socialist state, would accelerate the decline of British influence in the Middle East... Thereafter the Soviet and American delegations worked closely together on the timetable of British withdrawal. Nor was this all. When Israel declared its independence on 14 May 1948 and President Truman immediately accorded it de facto recognition, Stalin went one better and, less than three days later, gave it recognition de jure. Perhaps most significant of all was the decision of the Czech government, on Stalin’s instructions, to sell the new state arms. An entire airfield was assigned to the task of air-lifting weapons to Tel Aviv.”²⁷⁵

If this seems surprising in view of Stalin’s violent turn against supposed Jewish conspiracies in the Soviet Union only a short while later, and the Soviets’ consistent support of the Arabs against Israel in later decades, we should

²⁷³ Gilbert, *op. cit.*, pp. 788-789.

²⁷⁴ Lilienthal, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

²⁷⁵ Johnson, *History of the Jews*, London: Phoenix, 1987, pp. 525, 526.

remember the “dialectical” relationship between the two horns of the Jewish Antichrist, Israel and the Soviet Union, since their virtually simultaneous birth in November, 1917. The Bolshevik revolution was created mainly by atheist Jews who cared nothing for Jewish national aspirations. However, Zionist Jews came largely from the Soviet Union and shared its socialist ideals. Not that these East European Jews necessarily loved the Soviet Union – Begin was a survivor of the Gulag and the NKVD’s torture chambers.²⁷⁶ But the spirit of hatred and revenge, which can exist with equal virulence in a nationalist or internationalist culture, was passed from the Pale of Settlement in the west to the Soviet Union in the north to the State of Israel in the south...

Although the vote had been passed in the Zionists’ favour, the battle was not over. The Arabs indicated that they would invade the land immediately the Jewish state was proclaimed. Nor did Jewish terrorism stop. Thus in April, 1948 a joint Irgun-Stern operation massacred as many as 250 inhabitants of the Arab village of Deir Yassin. Begin crowed: “God, God, Thou hast chosen us for conquest.”

Realizing that partition was unworkable, and would lead to war, as well as having many other consequences incompatible with the interests of the United States (the hostility of the oil-rich sheikhs, the intervention of the Soviet Union in the region), President Truman changed tack and spoke in favour of a temporary UN trusteeship in Palestine, while insisting that he was in favour of partition in the longer term. However, extreme pressure from Chaim Weizmann and the Zionist lobby, combined with worries that he could lose the Jewish vote at the November election, persuaded Truman to change tack again and recognize the Jewish state already on May 14. There was consternation at the United Nations, which was still working out the conditions for the internationalization of Jerusalem, and in the American foreign-policy establishment...

The injustice perpetrated by the partition is made clear in a few statistics. At the time of the Balfour Declaration in 1917 there had been 600,000 Arabs living in Palestine next to 80,000 Jews.²⁷⁷ Thirty years later, the proportional gap had narrowed but was still large: 1.3 Arabs facing 650,000 Jews. “Under the partition plan,” writes Lilienthal, “56.4 percent of Palestine was given for a Zionist state to people who constituted 33 percent of the population and owned about 5.67 percent of the land... This is the ‘original sin’ which underlies the entire Palestinian conflict...”²⁷⁸

The Arabs invaded Israel immediately after her declaration of independence in May, 1948. Nine bloody months later, the Jews emerged victorious. “A truce, supervised by the United Nations, followed (during which a Zionist terrorist murdered the United Nations mediator). In 1949 the Israeli government moved

²⁷⁶ Johnson, *op. cit.*, p. 522.

²⁷⁷ J.M. Roberts, *History of the World*, Oxford: Helicon, 1992, p. 791.

²⁷⁸ Lilienthal, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

to Jerusalem, a Jewish national capital again for the first time since the days of imperial Rome. Half of the city [the old part] was still occupied by Jordanian forces, but this was almost the least of the problems left to the future. With American and Russian diplomatic support and American private money, Jewish energy and initiative had successfully established a new national state where no basis for one had existed twenty-five years before. Yet the cost was to prove enormous. The disappointment and humiliation of the Arab states assured their continuing hostility to it and therefore opportunities for great power intervention in the future. Moreover, the action of Zionist extremists and the far from conciliatory behavior of Israeli forces in 1948-9 led to an exodus of Arab refugees. Soon there were 750,000 of them in camps in Egypt and Jordan, a social and economic problem, a burden on the world's conscience, and a potential military and diplomatic weapon for Arab nationalists...."²⁷⁹

Many Jewish refugees were driven out from other Arab lands: between May, 1948 and the end of 1967 about 567,000 of them fled to Israel.²⁸⁰

"Between February and July 1949," writes Peter Mansfield, "the new UN mediator, the American Ralph Bunche, succeeded in securing separate armistice agreements between Israel and Egypt and the Arab states (except Iraq, which nevertheless withdrew its troops). It was broadly agreed to fix a temporary frontier where the lines had been at the start of the negotiations, while certain border areas were demilitarized. Jerusalem was divided between the Arab east and Jewish west. The Gaza Strip came under Egyptian administration.

"No peace treaty was signed. In December 1948 the UN General Assembly appointed a three-member conciliation commission to promote a final settlement and to arrange an international regime for Jerusalem, but all its efforts were frustrated. The Arab states refused to consider a peace treaty unless the Israeli government agreed to accept all Arab refugees wishing to return to Israel. Resolutions demanding that the refugees should be given the option of return or compensation for their property were constantly reaffirmed by the UN General Assembly, and it was on this basis that Israel was admitted to the UN on 11 May 1949. But Israel maintained that the future of the refugees could be discussed only as part of a general settlement. The impasse was complete. Half of the Palestinian Arabs had become refugees. Neither the new state of Israel nor its Arab neighbours could expect even a minimum of security and stability..."²⁸¹

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What kind of state was, and is, the new Zionist state of Israel? Formally speaking, it is a democracy, albeit with minimal rights for the Arabs. In essence,

²⁷⁹ Roberts, *op. cit.*, p. 793.

²⁸⁰ Lilienthal, *op. cit.*

²⁸¹ Mansfield, *A History of the Middle East*, London: Penguin, 2003, pp. 237-238.

however, it is an apartheid nationalist mini-empire with international tentacles and underpinned by the Talmudic Jewish faith...

Paul Johnson has distinguished between four kinds of Jews: observant, assimilationist, Zionist and Non-Jewish Jews (non-nationalist atheists, socialists and Bolsheviks like Trotsky).²⁸² We can leave aside the assimilationists and Non-Jewish Jews, for whom their Jewishness was a matter of indifference, or even sometimes shame. The real question was: in what way did observant, religious Jewry differ from Zionist Jewry?

As we have seen, the leaders of Zionism were almost without exception East European Jews who had imbibed the socialism of the Russian revolutionaries. However, they mostly came from religious families, and their Zionism required the familiar Biblical narrative of the chosenness, exile and return of the Jewish people as a justification for their violent acquisition of the land and refusal to share it on equal terms with its Arab inhabitants. Whether they really believed in the stories of Abraham, Moses and Joshua is irrelevant (their attitude to them was often imbued with modernist skepticism common to most contemporary Europeans): the fact is that they needed to proclaim them for purely political reasons, and were prepared to make considerable concessions to the rabbis, the leaders of religious Jewry, for that purpose.

We see this especially in the Law of Citizenship, in the determination, as Shlomo Sand writes, of “who would be included among the authorized proprietors of the Jewish state that was being ‘reestablished’ after two thousand years in ‘Israel’s exclusive land’? Would it be anyone who saw himself or herself as a Jew? Or any person who became a Jewish citizen? This complex issue would become one of the main pivots on which identity politics in Israel would revolve.

“To understand this development, we must go back to the eve of the Proclamation of Independence. In 1947 it had already been decided that Jews would not be able to marry non-Jews in the new state. The official reason for this civil segregation – in a society that was predominantly secular – was the unwillingness to create a secular-religious split. In the famous ‘status quo’ letter that David Ben-Gurion, as head of the Jewish Agency, co-signed with leaders of the religious bloc, he undertook, *inter alia*, to leave the laws of personal status in the new state in the hands of the rabbinate. For reasons of his own, he also supported the religious camp’s firm opposition to a written constitution. Ben-Gurion was an experienced politician, skilled at getting what he wanted.

“In 1953 the political promise to bar civil marriage in Israel was given a legal basis. The law defining the legal status of the rabbinical courts determined that they would have exclusive jurisdiction over marriage and divorce of Jews in Israel. By this means, the dominant socialist Zionism harnessed the principles of the

²⁸² Johnson, *op. cit.*, p. 455.

traditional rabbinate as an alibi for its fearful imaginary that was terrified of assimilation and 'mixed marriage'.

"This was the first demonstration of the state's cynical exploitation of the Jewish religion to accomplish the aims of Zionism. Many scholars who have studied the relations between religion and state in Israel have described them as Jewish nationalism submitting helplessly to the pressures applied by a powerful rabbinical camp and its burdensome theocratic tradition. It is true there were tensions, misunderstandings and clashes between secular and religious sectors in the Zionist movement and later in the State of Israel. But a close examination reveals that nationalism needed the religious pressure, and often invited it in order to carry out its agenda. The late Professor Yeshayahu Leibowitz was more perceptive than most when he described Israel as a secular state in religious cohabitation. Given the great difficulty of defining a secular Jewish identity, and the highly uncertain boundaries of this impossible entity, it had no choice but to submit to the rabbinical tradition...

"Just as Israel was unable to decide on its territorial borders, it did not manage to draw the boundaries of its national identity. From the start it hesitated to define the membership of the Jewish ethnos. To begin with, the state appeared to accept an open definition that a Jew was any person who saw himself or herself as a Jew. In the first census, held on November 8, 1948, residents were asked to fill out a questionnaire in which they stated their nationality and religion, and these were what served as the basis for civil registration. In this way the young state managed quietly to Judaize many spouses who were not Jews. In 1950, newborn children were registered on a separate page without reference to nationality and religion - but there were to such forms, one in Hebrew and one in Arabic, and whoever filled out a Hebrew form was assumed to be a Jew.

"Also in 1950, Israel's parliament - the Knesset - passed the Law of Return. This was the first basic law that gave legal force to what the Proclamation of Independence had declared. This law declared: 'Every Jew has the right to come to this country as an oleh (immigrant)' unless he '(1) is engaged in an activity directed against the Jewish people; or (2) is likely to endanger public health or the authority of the State.' Then in 1952 came the law that granted automatic citizenship on the basis of the Law of Return.

"Beginning in the late 1940s, the world rightly viewed Israel as a refuge for the persecuted and the displaced. The systematic massacre of the Jews of Europe and the total destruction of the Yiddish-speaking people drew widespread public sympathy for the creation of a state that would be a safe haven for the remnant. In the 1950s, provoked by the Israeli-Arab conflict but also by the rise of authoritarian Arab nationalism, semireligious and not especially tolerant, hundreds of thousands of Arab Jews were driven from their homelands. Not all were able to reach Europe or Canada; some went to Israel, whether or not they wished to go there. The state was gratified and even sought to attract them (though it viewed with unease and contempt the diverse Arab

cultures they brought with their scanty belongings). The law that granted the right of immigration to every Jewish refugee who was subject to persecution on account of faith or origin was quite legitimate in these circumstances. Even today such a law would not conflict with basic principles in any liberal democracy, when many of the citizens feel kinship and a common historical destiny with people close to them who suffer discrimination in other countries.

“Yet the Law of Return was not a statute designed to make Israel a safe have for those who were persecuted in the past, present or future because people hated them as Jews. Had the framers of this law wished to do so, they could have placed it on a platform of humanist principle, linking the privilege of asylum to the existence and threat of anti-Semitism. But the Law of Return and the associated Law of Citizenship were direct products of an ethnic nationalist worldview, designed to provide a legal basis for the concept that the State of Israel belongs to the Jews of the world. As Ben-Gurion declared at the start of the parliamentary debate on the Law of Return: ‘This is not a Jewish state only because most of its inhabitants are Jews. It is a state for the Jews wherever they be, and for any Jew who wishes to be here.

“Anyone who was included in ‘the Jewish people’ ... was a potential citizen of the Jewish state, and their right to settle there was guaranteed by the Law of Return. A members of the ‘Jewish nation’ might be a full citizen with equal rights in some liberal national democracy, might even be the holder of an elected position in it, but Zionist principle held that such a person was destined, or even obliged, to migrate to Israel and become its citizen. Moreover, immigrants could leave Israel immediately after arrival, yet keep their Israeli citizenship for the rest of their lives...”²⁸³

This extraordinary inclusivity in definition was combined with an extraordinary exclusivity that excluded any Jew who embraced any other faith than Talmudism. Thus “in 1970, under pressure from the religious camp, the Law of Return was amended to include, finally, a full and exact definition of who is an authentic member of the people of Israel: ‘A Jew is one who was born to a Jewish mother, or converted to Judaism and does not belong to another religion.’ After twenty-two years of hesitation and questioning, the instrumental link between the rabbinical religion and the essentialist nationalism was now well and truly welded...”²⁸⁴

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The State of Israel does not appear to fit into any usual categorization of statehood. It is neither autocratic, nor despotic nor democratic in the ordinary senses of these words. It is both secular and religious at the same time, both globally inclusive of all “Jews” throughout the world yet perversely exclusive of those who have the greatest right to live on its territory. It is nationalist, and

²⁸³ Sand, *The Invention of the Jewish People*, London: Verso, 2010, pp. 283-284, 286-287, 288.

²⁸⁴ Sand, *op. cit.*, pp. 289-90.

yet its nationalism is not defined by territory or blood (much as many Jews would like to define it thus), but by religion. The only remotely similar states, paradoxically, are its fiercest enemies, Wahhabist Saudi Arabia and Shiite Iran. And yet neither the Arab nor the Iranian states have any Law of Return, any truly comparable myth of exile and return and redemption...

For fuller understanding, therefore, it will be worth examining what this single apparent exception to the main development of human history can mean, from the only point of view that would seem capable of comprehending it - the religious-eschatological.

A clue to our search may be found in *the Abrahamic Covenant*, in the relationship revealed at the very beginning of Jewish history between God, on the one hand, the sons of Abraham, Isaac and Ishmael, on the other. Isaac was the ancestor of the spiritual Israel, the Church of Christ, and Ishmael the ancestor of the carnal Israel, the people that fights God. Although the spiritual Israel is blessed, while the carnal Israel is accursed, still an important promise is given to the carnal Israel: that it will *live* in accordance with Abraham's petition: "Let this Ishmael *live* before Thee" (Genesis 17.18). This life cannot be spiritual, because that is promised only to the spiritual Israel. So it must be carnal - physical survival and worldly power. At the same time, St. Ambrose admits the possibility that Abraham's powerful petition could win spiritual life for some of the Jews - but only, of course, if they cease to belong to the carnal Israel and join the spiritual Israel through faith in Christ. For "it is the attribute of the righteous man [Abraham] to intercede even for sinners; therefore, let the Jews believe this too, because Abraham stands surety even for them, provided they will believe..."²⁸⁵

The promise of physical life and prosperity has certainly been fulfilled in the extraordinary tenacity of the Jewish race, its survival in the face of huge obstacles, and - since its emancipation from the ghetto in the nineteenth century, - its domination of world politics and business in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Moreover, since the carnal Israel is promised physical life and power, it is no wonder that since the Balfour Declaration of 1917, and especially since the foundation of the State of Israel in 1948, it has regained power over the land of Israel, driving out most of the Christians in the process, and may well recapture all the land from the Nile to the Euphrates, as was promised in the Abrahamic Covenant. But it is important to understand that such a re-conquest, if it takes place, will not be by virtue of the Jews being the *chosen* people, as they and their Evangelical allies believe, but by virtue of the exact opposite: of their being the *accursed* people - Ishmael rather than Isaac.²⁸⁶

²⁸⁵ St. Ambrose, *On Abraham*, 88.

²⁸⁶ So great have been the worldly successes of the Jews that many Evangelical Protestants have been tempted to ascribe them, not to God's promise to *Ishmael*, but to his promise to *Isaac*. Reversing the interpretation of the Apostle Paul, they have made of the carnal Israel "the chosen people", "the blessed seed" - and this in spite of the fact that this "chosen people" has been the foremost enemy of those who believe in Christ for the last two thousand years! By elevating the carnal Israel into the spiritual Israel, the Protestants fill up a major spiritual and

For of the two covenant peoples the people that is carnal is given physical gifts that are appropriate to its carnal desires.

For the truth may be, as an anonymous Russian writer has suggested, “that the very preservation up until now of the Jewish people is a result not of their being ‘chosen’, but as a result of their apostasy”. For, having renounced their birth-right, the Kingdom of God, they have received a “mess of pottage” instead – the promise of physical survival and worldly power. “If the Jews, having repented of the crime committed on Golgotha, would have become Christian, then they would have made up the foundation of a new spiritual nation, the nation of Christians. Would they have begun to strive in this case to preserve their nationality and government? Would they not have dispersed among other nations as the missionaries of Christianity just as the Apostles? Would they not have been strangers in a foreign land, not having a fatherland, like unto Abraham, but in this case with a higher spiritual meaning? All this happened with the Jews, that is, they became wanderers, not in a positive spiritual sense, but due to a curse, that is, not of their own will, but due to the will of chastising Providence since they did not fulfil that which God intended for them. Would they not have been exterminated en masse during persecutions as the main preachers of Christianity? Would they not have been assimilated among other peoples, so that the very name ‘Jew’, ‘Hebrew’, as a national name, would have disappeared and would have only remained in the remembrance of grateful nations as the glorious name of their enlighteners? Yes, and the very Promised Land and Jerusalem were given to the Hebrews not as a worldly fatherland, for which they are now striving, but as a prefiguration of the Heavenly Kingdom and the Heavenly Jerusalem, as a token of which Abraham and through him all the Hebrew nation coming out of Haran, renounced their earthly fatherland. For this reason the very significance of Jerusalem and the idea as a prefigurement would have passed away for the Jews, as soon as the Kingdom of God and the Heavenly Jerusalem would have become obtainable for them and would have become for them, as they are now for us, Christian holy places.”²⁸⁷

Tragically, however, it was not to be: the Jews remain unconverted to this day. Even many Orthodox Jews believe that the foundation of the Zionist State of Israel was a grave sin. So must the foundation of the State of Israel be necessarily evil – and its crowning glory the enthronement of the Antichrist?...

emotional gap in their world-view; for, having rejected both the *concept* of the Church, and the *reality* of it in Orthodoxy, they have to find a substitute for it somewhere else. And so we have the paradoxical sight of the State of Israel, one of the main persecutors of Christianity in the contemporary world, which forbids conversions of Jews to Christianity and has driven out the majority of the Orthodox Christian population, being ardently supported by the Evangelical Protestants of the Anglo-Saxon countries. There have even been several attempts by Evangelicals to blow up the mosque of the Dome of the Rock, in order to make it possible for the Jews to build their Temple again – the Temple of the Antichrist!

²⁸⁷ “How to understand the Jews as being a chosen people”, *Orthodox Life*, vol. 41, no. 4, July-August, 1991, pp. 38-41.

Before jumping to this conclusion, let us recall Alain Dieckhoff's interpretation of the thought of the nineteenth-century "Forerunners of Zion": "In Jewish tradition there was only one true remedy for sin: repentance (teshuva), i.e. explicit renunciation of evil and adoption of behaviour in accordance with the Law. The idea of inner repentance was so essential that it was supposed to have coexisted with the Law before the proclamation on Mount Sinai, and even to have existed before the creation of the world. This was above all of an individual nature in Talmudic literature, but took on a collective dimension from the sixteenth century, under the impetus of the Kabbala of Isaac Luria. After that the return to a life of holiness ensured not only the salvation of the individual soul, but also restored the original fullness of the world. Teshuva was no longer limited solely to the existential level, within the narrow confines of the individual; it also concerned the historic level of the national group, and beyond that the cosmic level of mankind. Alkalai went so far as to consider, differing from the classical idea, that collective repentance must necessarily precede individual repentance. There remained the final question: what did this general teshuva involve?

"It involved physical re-establishment of the Jews in the Land of Israel to recreate the national community. Playing on the double meaning of the word teshuva, which strictly means return, Kalischer stated that collective repentance meant a geographical return to Zion and not, at least not directly, a spiritual return. So Jews who returned to Palestine were not breaking the religious Law, since in the first instance their return was a purely material one. It was only later, when they were gathered in Zion, that by the grace of God the truly supernatural redemption would start, bringing with it the individual repentance of every Jew and union with God..."²⁸⁸

In other words, perhaps the return of the carnal Jews to their carnal homeland is a preparation, in God's plan, a springboard, as it were, for their return to the spiritual Israel, the Church of God...

May 27 / June 9, 2016.

The Ascension of our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

²⁸⁸ Dieckhoff, *The Invention of a Nation*, London: Hurst and Company, 2003, pp. 16-19.

21. AUTOCRACY, DESPOTISM AND DEMOCRACY

Ideally, the people of God should be ruled only by God, or by a man directly appointed by God, that is, *the Orthodox Autocrat*. A true autocrat is a man who is appointed by God and who strives to rule in obedience to the Church and the commandments of God.²⁸⁹ Under these conditions God blesses one-man rule unfettered by oligarchical or democratic institutions.

Contrary to the generally held view, autocracy is not a form of absolutism or despotism. Indeed, as D.A. Khomiakov writes, “the tsar is ‘the denial of absolutism’ precisely because it is bound by the confines of the people’s understanding and world-view, which serve as that framework within which the power can and must consider itself to be free.”²⁹⁰ The true Autocrat is unfettered by oligarchical or democratic institutions, but is bound to fulfill the Law of God, and is an obedient son of God’s Kingdom on earth, the Church.

The questions arise: What if there is no autocrat appointed by God? How are we to relate to despotic or democratic regimes? Is it permissible to obey a ruler who does not worship the God of Israel?

In the Old Testament the loss of autocracy, and its replacement by foreign despotic rule, was a sign of the wrath of God. The classic example was the Babylonian captivity. However, God’s ultimate purpose in subjecting His people to foreign rule was always positive – to draw the people back to Him through repentance. The sign of the remission of God’s wrath and the manifestation of His mercy and forgiveness is His return of true, autocratic rule, as when the Jews returned from Babylon to Jerusalem under Zerubbabel.

It is possible for the people of God to serve a foreign despot with a good conscience – as Joseph served Pharaoh, and Daniel - Darius. Indeed, it may be sinful to rebel against such rule, as was the case with King Zedekiah’s rebellion against Nebuchadnezzar. In the first century there was a Jewish sect called the Essenes who did not use money that had the image of Caesar and did not recognize any ruler except God Himself.²⁹¹ Christ rejected this position in His famous words about giving to Caesar what is Caesar’s (money, military service) and to God what is God’s. And the Church affirmed that “all authority is of God” (Romans 13.1).

²⁸⁹ As such, he first of all *rules himself*, his spirit being the autocratic ruler of the rest of his nature. As Bishop Theophan the Recluse writes: “when determination and a readiness to live according to God is formed in the spirit, the grace of the Holy Spirit in the sacraments enters into the spirit, and from this time man’s inner life begins before God; his psychosomatic needs not only cease to rule him, on the contrary, he himself begins to rule them, following the indications of the Spirit. In this way our spirit, with the cooperation of the Holy Spirit, again becomes *autocratic*, both within and without.” (*Tolkovanie Poslanij sv. Apostola Pavla* (An Interpretation of the Epistles of the Holy Apostle Paul), St. Petersburg, 2002, pp. 446-447.

²⁹⁰ Khomiakov, *Pravoslavie, samoderzhavie, narodnost'* (Orthodoxy, Autocracy and Nationality), Minsk, 1997, p. 103.

²⁹¹ Josephus Flavius, *Jewish Antiquities*, 18, 23; St. Hippolytus of Rome, *Philosophoumen*, 18-28.

However, the word “authority” here does not apply to rulers who compel the people of God to worship false gods. If they do this, then resistance – at any rate of the passive kind - becomes obligatory, as when the Three Holy Children refused to worship Nebuchadnezzar’s golden idol. And in certain circumstances even armed rebellion may be blessed by God, as when the Maccabees rebelled against Antiochus Epiphanes. Even if the ruler was originally a true autocrat, if he later turns against the God of Israel, becoming a despot, he must be resisted, as when the Prophet Elijah rebelled against Ahab and Jezabel, and when the Prophet Elisha anointed Jehu as king in their stead. Similarly, in Christian times the Christian people rebelled against Julian the Apostate, the Spanish prince St. Hermenegild against his Arian father, and the English Orthodox rebelled against the Catholic King William I.

The Christian people can *survive* under other systems of government than autocracy, but not *prosper*. Thus Bishop Dionysius writes: “The Church can live for some time even in conditions of persecution, just as a dying man can remain among the living for a certain period of time. But just as the latter desires deliverance from his illness, so the Church has always wished for such a situation in which there will be flocks, not individuals, of those being saved – and this can be attained only if she is fenced around by the power of ‘him who restraineth’”²⁹² – that is, the Autocracy.

The autocrat is distinguished from the absolutist despot in two ways. First, having been appointed by God and being in obedience to Him, he will never ascribe divine honours to himself; whereas the despot either commands that he be worshipped as a god, or acts as if he were God by rejecting any criticism of his actions based on the law of God. Secondly, the autocrat will always respect the priesthood and will yield it authority in the sphere of Divine worship and the spiritual life, whereas the despot will attempt to subject the priesthood to himself, sometimes even by making himself high priest.

Although the relationship between the autocracy and the priesthood is not clearly defined in the Old Testament, the embryo of the Christian symphony of powers is already to be seen in the relationships between Moses and Aaron, David and Abiathar, and Zerubbabel and Joshua. And encroachment by the autocrat on the priestly prerogatives is already severely punished, as when King Saul was removed from the kingship for taking it upon himself to offer sacrifices, or when King Uzziah was afflicted with leprosy for daring to offer incense in the Temple as if he were a priest. It was the Hasmonaean combination of the roles of king and high-priest that finally ushered in the end of the Israelite autocracy.

The autocrat can sin in either of two directions: by becoming a despot on the Near Eastern pagan model, or by becoming a democrat on the Classical Greek

²⁹² Hieromonk Dionysius, Priest Timothy Alferov, *O Tserkvi, Pravoslavnom Tsarstve i Poslednem Vremeni* (On the Church, the Orthodox Kingdom and the Last Time), Moscow, 1998, pp. 61-62.

model. For, on the one hand, truly autocratic power is not arbitrary, but subject to a higher power, that of God – as Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow puts it, the king “freely limits his unlimited autocracy by the will of the Heavenly King”. And on the other hand, it neither derives from the people nor can it be abolished by the people.

In the period of the Byzantine Autocracy, the main temptation was despotism. This took two forms: “caesaropapism” in the East and “papocaesarism” in the West. “Caesaropapism” signifies the intrusion of State power into the realm of the Church, and “papocaesarism” – the intrusion of the Church power into the realm of the State, by the transformation of the Church’s first-hierarchy into a secular despot.

Orthodoxy stands for the Chalcedonian unity-in-diversity of Church and State, priesthood and kingship. The two powers are unconfused but undivided under the One King of kings and Chief High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ. The eventual fall of Byzantium was preceded by the gradual decay of this symphonic, Chalcedonian principle of Church-State relations, making its conquest by anti-Chalcedonian, absolutist principles easier.

The decay of the symphonic principle began already with the Arian emperors in the mid-fourth century, revived with the Monothelite and Iconoclast emperors in the seventh, eighth and ninth centuries, and became firmly entrenched with the Angeli emperors before the first Fall of Constantinople in 1204. If anything, the “Orthodox” absolutism of the Angeli, supported by canonists such as Balsamon, proved to be a more dangerous temptation than the heretical absolutism of the Arians and Iconoclasts. In any case, with its revival in a still stronger form under the later Palaeologi in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Byzantium was doomed.

The final Fall of Constantinople in 1453 was caused by three absolutisms: the internal absolutism of the last Palaeologi emperors, and the external absolutisms of the Latins and the Turks. Both Papism and Islam, in imitation of the absolutist pagan empires, tended to conflate Church and State, religion and politics, kingship and priesthood, into a single institution or activity, in contrast to the duality of the two spheres which is the norm in Orthodoxy. Both could therefore be called ecclesiological analogues of the Monophysite-Monothelite group of heresies in Christology; and, perhaps not coincidentally, the beginnings of the papist and Islamist heresies coincide with the beginnings of the Monophysite and Monothelite heresies.

In the West, the last Orthodox autocracies of England and Germany fell to the “papocaesarist” version of the absolutist heresy, Papism. But in the West, by contrast with the East, the ideal of the Orthodox autocracy did not survive in the hearts of the people. Here not only the flesh, Christian Statehood, died: the spirit, the Christian Faith and Church, was also radically corrupted. So in the West, in contrast to the East, there could be no transfer of the ideal to

another soil, no renovatio imperii, no Third Rome to succeed the First and Second Romes...

Not that there were no attempts to pretend that the old ideal was still alive and well. The "Holy Roman Empire" of the Hohenstaufens (and later, of the Habsburgs) claimed to be the continuation and revival of the Roman and Constantinian Empires. But where was the "symphony of powers" between the Roman Church and Empire when one of the powers, the Church, was itself a State that sometimes waged war - physical war - against the Empire?

Indeed, the continual wars between the Roman papacy and the "Holy Roman Empire" in the later Middle Ages cannot be compared to the conflicts between Church and State in Byzantium because they were not in fact wars between Church and State, but between State and State. For ever since Pope Leo IX rode on horseback into battle against the Normans in 1053, the very difference between Church and the State, between the other-worldly spirit of Christian society and its this-worldly flesh, had been obscured in the Western mind...

It is time to define more precisely the religio-political heresy of absolutism, which destroyed the flesh of New Rome in the East, and both the flesh and the spirit of Old Rome in the West.

L.A. Tikhomirov writes: "Absolutism... signifies a power that is not created by anything, that depends on nothing except itself and that is qualified by nothing except itself. As a tendency, absolutism can in fact appear under any principle of power, but only through a misunderstanding or abuse. But according to its spirit, its nature, absolutism is characteristic only of democracy, for the will of the people, qualified by nothing but itself, creates an absolute power, so that if the people merges with the State, the power of the latter becomes absolute."²⁹³

"Absolutism is characteristic of democracy"?! This is the height of paradox to the modern Western (and Classical Greek) mind, for which absolutism and democracy are polar opposites, and for which the ideal of Statehood (even Christian Statehood) must consist in the complete extermination of absolutism and the fullest possible installation of democracy. And yet the paradox is true, as we shall demonstrate.

The absolutist despot, be he emperor or king, pope or patriarch, believes that all power on earth, in all matters, is given to him alone - even if, as in pagan Rome, this power was supposedly transferred to him from the people. In pagan times, such a belief would be expressed in the idea that the ruler was also a god. In Christian times, such open self-deification was no longer expedient, so

²⁹³ Tikhomirov, *Monarkhicheskaia Gosudarstvennost'* (Monarchical Statehood), St. Petersburg, 1992, p. 92.

the phrase “vicar of God” or “deputy of God” was used instead. In theory, such a title is compatible with a certain self-limitation, insofar as the vicar or deputy of God is obliged to submit his will to the will of God; and some rulers have succeeded in doing just that, becoming saints and “equals-to-the-apostles” in the process. But if the ruler dispenses with an independent priesthood, and is seen as the highest interpreter of the will of God, the path is open to arbitrariness and tyranny on a vast scale, which is precisely what we see in absolutist rulers throughout history, whether pagan or Christian, religious, secular or atheist.

However, the arbitrariness and tyranny of the single unchecked will inevitably elicits, sooner or later, the appearance of other wills determined to check or completely subdue it. This, in its turn, is inevitably accompanied by the process of the debunking or desacralising of kingship: since the authority of the ruler is hedged around with an aura of divinity, the first task of the reformers or revolutionaries is to strip away this aura, to reveal the ruler to be an ordinary man. Then they will strive either to place one of themselves in the place of the former ruler, endowing him with the same aura of divinity as he had, or will put forward a general theory of the ordinariness – or kingliness – of all men. But this is a sign of God’s wrath. For “because of the transgression of a land, many are its princes” (Proverbs 28.2).

Medieval western history developed precisely in this direction: first in the struggle between the popes and the “Holy Roman Emperors” for absolute power, and then in the emergence of the doctrines of natural law, conciliarism and democratism. The second, democratic path would appear to be radically different from the first, absolutist one insofar as it abolishes the idea of sacred persons altogether. But in fact it simply endows all men with the same absolutism and sacredness as was formerly attributed to pope or emperor. Thus the old personal gods of pope or emperor make way for the new collective god of the people in accordance with the often-cited but completely erroneous saying: vox populi – vox Dei. And yet, as Deacon Alcuin of York said to the Emperor Charlemagne: “The people should be led, not followed, as God has ordained... Those who say, ‘The voice of the people is the voice of God,’ are not to be listened to, for the unruliness of the mob is always close to madness.”²⁹⁴

And so absolutism is characteristic of democracy insofar as the demos is an absolute power, free from any restraint in heaven or on earth. In a democracy the will of the people is the final arbiter. Before it neither the will of the (constitutional) monarch, nor the decrees of the Church, neither the age-old traditions of men, nor the eternal and unchanging law of God, can prevail. This arbiter is in the highest degree arbitrary: what is right in the eyes of the people on one day will be wrong in the next. But consistency is not required of the infallible people, just as it is not required of infallible popes. For democracy is

²⁹⁴ Alcuin of York, *Letter to Charlemagne*, M.G.H., 4, letter 132.

based on the Heraclitan principle that everything changes, even the demos itself. As such, it does not have to justify itself on the basis of any unchanging criteria of truth or falsehood, right or wrong: its will *is* truth and justice, and if its will changes, then truth and justice must change with it...

The famed tolerance or freedom of religion in democratic states is only apparent. Or rather, it can be real only for a time, until the State works out its own ruling ideology and applies it consistently. For, as Tikhomirov writes, "if a state, as law and power, removes itself from being linked with a determinate confession, that is, from the influence of a religious confession on its own religious politics, it becomes the common judge of all confessions and subjects religion to itself. All relations between the various confessions and the rights of them all must, evidently, be decided by the state that is set outside them, which is governed exclusively by its own ideas on justice and the good of the state and society. In this situation it evidently has the complete right and opportunity to carry out repressions whenever, in its opinion, the interests of a confession contradict civil and political interests."²⁹⁵

In many ways the collective absolutism of democracy is a more absolute and destructive absolutism than the personal absolutisms of popes and emperors. Although many absolutist rulers appeared in both East and West in the medieval period, fundamental changes in society were slow to appear. Whatever absolutist rulers may have thought or said about their own unfettered power, in practice they conformed to tradition in most spheres, for they knew that the masses of the people believed in a higher truth in defence of which many of them were prepared to die. Hence the failure of most absolutist rulers to establish a firm tradition of absolutism: Julian the Apostate was replaced by Jovian the Pious, Pope Nicolas I by Pope John VIII, Michael Palaeologus by Andronicus II. Even the more enduring absolutism of the post-schism popes was bitterly contested for centuries, and became weaker over time.

But the triumph of democracy in the modern period has been accompanied by the most radical and ever-accelerating change: the demos that overthrew the monarchy in the English revolution, even the demos that obtained universal suffrage in the early twentieth century, would not recognise, and most certainly would not approve of, what the demos has created in twenty-first-century England...

Democracy considers itself to be at the opposite pole from absolutism, and justifies itself on the grounds that its system of checks and balances, which provides frequent opportunities to remove the ruler at the ballot-box, precludes the possibility of absolutism. However, this is not true. As the old traditions grow weaker, the leaders that the democracy votes for become more radical and anti-traditional. And if democracy has always had the tendency to elect

²⁹⁵ Tikhomirov, *Religiozno-philosophskie osnovy istorii* (The Religio-Philosophical Foundations of History), Moscow, 1997, p. 269.

vainglorious and dishonest demagogues, in modern times these demagogues have often also turned out to be absolutist tyrants. For, as Plato noted, there is a persistent tendency for democracy to pave the way for absolutism. Thus the democracy of the English Long Parliament paved the way for Cromwell; the democracy of the French Estates General - for Robespierre and Napoleon; the democracy of the Russian Provisional Government - for Lenin and Stalin; the democracy of the German Weimar Government - for Hitler; the democracy of Chiang Kai Shek - for Mao; and the democracy of Yeltsin - for Putin.

It is possible to interpret the whole of world history as a struggle between God-pleasing autocracy and God-hating despotism and democracy, whose main feature is the gradual weakening of autocracy, and strengthening of despotism, in and through the triumph of democracy, leading finally to the enthronement of the Antichrist...

May 31 / June 13, 2016.

22. TRUTH AND CONCILIARITY

The Lord said: "I am the Truth" (John 14.6), and all Christians agree that the criterion of truth is agreement with the words of Christ. However, as we all know, agreement about what is in fact in agreement with Christ's words is something that is more easily talked about than attained in practice; almost from the very beginning, Christians have been bedeviled by disagreements over the truth of Christ. It helps only a little to assert, following St. Paul, that "the pillar and ground of the Truth" is the Church (I Timothy 3.15), which is founded on the rock of the true confession of the faith in Christ (Matthew 16.18); for there is almost as much disagreement about where the Church is and what it preaches.

Perhaps the most important difference between the Orthodox and the Roman Catholics is the Orthodox belief that the Church is conciliar and that Church truth is only to be found in conciliarity, in the convening of councils of bishops (especially – but lower ranks in the church are also admitted to many church councils), whereas the Roman Catholics believe that truth is to be found in the Pope alone – councils of bishops can help him in his deliberations but the final decision is his and his alone. Some would argue that this is an over-simplification of the Catholic position, and that in the last fifty years, since the Second Vatican Council, Roman Catholic theology has made definite moves towards a more conciliar understanding of the Church. Nevertheless, at the risk of over-simplification, we may say that if we want to know the truth according to the Catholics we should go to one man, the Pope, whereas if we want to know the truth according to the Orthodox we must go to the decisions of various Church councils down the centuries.

Let us look briefly at some of these councils and what they tell us about the nature of Church conciliarity.

After the Holy Spirit descended on the Church at Pentecost, the believers were "of one heart and one mind" and we do not read of any serious disagreements among them. The first major disagreement occurred over whether Gentile converts were obliged to follow the Mosaic law or not; and in order to resolve this question the first Church Council was convened in Jerusalem under the presidency of St. James, the Brother of the Lord and first Bishop of Jerusalem. Full consensus was achieved; and in its belief that this consensus reflected the truth of God, the Council declared that they had come to its decision because "it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us" (Acts 15.28).

In other words, the Holy Spirit inspired us to make this decision, which is why it can be trusted without question. If there had been any disagreement between us, there might have been grounds for doubt about which side of the argument the Holy Spirit – Who is the Spirit of truth – was on. But the consensus was complete; the Council has revealed it.

However, fallen human nature being what it is, future Councils of the Church did not always reveal a complete consensus. Even the First Ecumenical Council of 325, which has been taken as a model for all Church Councils because of the holiness of its participants and the importance of its decision on Arianism, did not achieve full consensus; two bishops refused to sign. Moreover, in the 56 years that followed until the Second Ecumenical Council of 381, the numbers of “dissidents”, of those bishops who disagreed with the First Council’s decision on Arianism, multiplied. These bishops gathered in other councils that achieved their own consensus or near-consensus; and this chaos of competing and contradictory synods continued well into the next century. Thus the “robber council” of Ephesus in 449 achieved its own, heterodox consensus, only to be overthrown two years later by the Fourth Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon, which achieved a still larger – but still not complete – consensus.

The question then arises: if complete consensus throughout the Church on the model of the first Council in Jerusalem is unattainable because of the sinfulness of men, how do we know what and where the truth is? Can we ever again say: “It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us” as opposed to simply: “It seemed good to us (and we hope also to the Holy Spirit)”? Is conciliarism enough to guarantee truth?

There are essentially two possible modes of response. One is to introduce a non-conciliar principle that will “correct” the supposed inadequacies of conciliarism, giving a guarantee of certainty that conciliarism on its own cannot give. This is essentially what we mean by papism. The second is to go deeper into the nature of conciliarism, and see how real conciliarism relates to other properties of the Church such as oneness and holiness. This is the path of Orthodoxy.

Papism restores a kind of quasi-certainty to hearts disturbed by the divisions between Christians by declaring: “Don’t worry. Just follow the Pope. He is always right. He is Peter, the Vicar of Christ, and cannot make mistakes insofar as he is acting *as* Peter. If a council is approved by the Pope, it is true. If it not, it is false.”

This papist dogma was never discussed at any Ecumenical Council because in that period it was not forward by anybody – including the Popes themselves. The proof of that is the acceptance by the papacy itself that certain of the Popes had made dogmatic errors, as when Pope Zosimas acquitted the heretic Pelagius, or had been heretics themselves – notably the Monothelite Honorius, who was condemned by the Sixth Ecumenical Council. The first truly “papist Pope” was Nicholas I, who was condemned – together with his innovation, the Filioque – by St. Photius the Great, Patriarch of Constantinople. This sentence was confirmed unanimously at a large Council of over 400 bishops, including the delegates of Pope John VIII, in 879-80.

Because of its importance, and its acceptance by both the Old and the New Romes, this Council is sometimes called the Eighth Ecumenical by Orthodox theologians. But it was rejected by later Popes after the fall of the Western Church in the eleventh century. And in the later Middle Ages, while the Orthodox East remained faithful to the conciliarist principle, the West departed further and further away from it.

A critical point – for both East and West – occurred in the decade 1430-1439. On the one hand, this was the period of the Western Council of Basle, at which Western churchmen insisted on the principle of conciliarism, and that general councils were higher authorities than popes. Predictably, Pope Eugenius IV refused to participate in this council, and condemned it in strong language. On the other hand, the Orthodox hierarchs bent the knee before Pope Eugenius at the Council of Florence in 1439, surrendering Orthodoxy to heretical papism and disdaining to go to the Council of Basle. In this way, the Orthodox repudiated conciliarism and accepted the authority of the anti-conciliar Pope above that of the Western conciliarists.

Fortunately, this was a temporary fall, the Greek Church rejected the Council of Florence in 1484, and the Orthodox Church remained faithful to her conciliarist nature in the centuries to come. There were no more Ecumenical Councils, but there were Pan-Orthodox Councils, like those of 1583, 1587 and 1593 which condemned papism and the new calendar, as well as several local Councils, such as the various seventeenth-century Councils that condemned Calvinism. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, however, conciliarism suffered heavy blows both in the Greek and Russian Churches, as secular rulers interfered more and more in Church life. Paradoxically, it was only after the coming to power of the most anti-Orthodox regime in history, Soviet power, in 1917 that the Russian Church was able to convene its first full-scale Local Council since 1666-67. But after that the God-hating authorities made it impossible for the Orthodox to convene any regular Council.

However, even in conditions of extreme persecution, the conciliar spirit of the Orthodox Church could not be suppressed. Thus in the late 1920s a “Nomadic Council” elicited the opinions of different bishops in different places, so that the Council was like a “nomad” travelling from one place to another. Again, since no conventional Council could be convened to elect a new Patriarch, signatures had to be obtained for this or that candidate by couriers travelling in secret from one bishop to another. Again, in 1937 a group of True Orthodox bishops who were being exiled to Eastern Siberia found themselves together “by chance” in a room at the remote railway junction of Ust-Kut, and decided to conduct a Council there and then; they issued a series of canons which were seen to be good “to the Holy Spirit and to us”. The historicity of some of these Catacomb Councils has been disputed by some, but the fact is that in those conditions of persecution the conciliar nature of the Church could be expressed only in such unconventional forms.

In 1984 a subtle, but highly damaging “heresy about Councils” appeared. It was called “Cyprianism” after its founder, Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos, and in essence it attempted to limit – essentially, to invalidate – the decision of a Local Council of the Russian Church Abroad in the previous year that anathematized all the Orthodox Churches that confessed the “pan-heresy” of ecumenism and took part in the World Council of Churches. Local Councils, according to Cyprian, did not have the authority to expel heretics from the Church, who remained “uncondemned” before they could be tried at an Ecumenical or Pan-Orthodox “unifying” Council.

Cyprian himself was defrocked, and his teaching condemned, by the True Orthodox Church of Greece under Archbishop Chrysostomos of Athens in 1986. But he was rehabilitated (for no good reason) by Chrysostomos’ successor, Archbishop Kallinikos of Athens, in 2014. It was therefore left to a series of Councils of True Orthodox Russian bishops – in 1999 in Suzdal, in 2001 in Canada, and in 2016 in Omsk – to spell out why Cyprianism was indeed a heresy, a heresy against the conciliar nature of the Church.

Thus in 2016 the Holy Synod of the Russian True Orthodox Church declared: “Cyprianism is a new theory of the relationship between the Church and heresy. The essence of this theory can be expressed in three points:

1. ***Local Councils are not competent to drive heretics out of the Church.*** This is an extreme innovation. It is false because many Local Councils drove heretics out of the Church. For example: (1) The Local Councils of the Early Church that drove out Sabellius and Marcian; (2) The Local Councils of the Greek Church that expelled the Roman Catholics in 1054 and in the fourteenth century; (3) The Local Councils of the Russian Church that anathematized the communists and their co-workers in 1918 and the renovationists in 1923.
2. ***Only so-called «Unifying Councils» - that is, Ecumenical or Pan-Orthodox Councils at which the heretics themselves are present - can expel heretics from the Church.*** However, even certain Ecumenical and Pan-Orthodox Councils – for example, the Councils that anathematized the new calendar in 1583, 1587 and 1593 – were not unifying, and the heretics that they condemned were not present at them.
3. ***He who confesses heresy openly remains a member of the Church - albeit a «sick» member, until he has been expelled by an Ecumenical or Pan-Orthodox Council.*** If this were true, however, then if there were no Eighth Ecumenical or Pan-Orthodox Council before the end of the world, the Church would be powerless to expel any heretics. Theoretically, then, if the Antichrist will be Orthodox and declares himself to be god, he will remain a member of the Church in spite of the fact that a countless number of Local Councils of the Orthodox Church are anathematizing him! And if he will be a priest or patriarch, he can still dispense true sacraments!”

At the time of writing, another “heresy about Councils” is being proclaimed by Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople. In Crete he has convened a “Holy and Great Pan-Orthodox Council” of all the Churches of World Orthodoxy (i.e. those anathematized by the Russian Church Abroad in 1983). By careful preparation, Bartholomew has tried to guarantee that there would be unanimity at this Council with all “dissidents” excluded beforehand. But in spite of his best efforts unanimity has been precluded by the refusal of certain Local Churches to attend at the last moment. Again, by calling the Council “Holy and Great” even before it is convened, he has tempted God, attempting to guarantee that its decisions will be true and holy, although no Council can be declared to be true and holy before it has actually been convened.

The “conciliar heresies” of Cyprian and Bartholomew have this in common: that they try to lay down false a priori rules that will enable us to determine whether a given Council is true and holy. Cyprian declares (negatively) that we cannot accept a Council’s decisions as God-inspired and therefore binding on all Christians unless it is Ecumenical or Pan-Orthodox, and Bartholomew adds (positively) that if the Ecumenical Patriarch convenes the Council in accordance with his criteria of timing, agenda and membership, then we can be sure that it is “holy and great”, God-inspired and binding on all. For he is the “first without equals”, the Pope of Eastern Orthodoxy...

In contradiction to both heresies, however, it must be remembered that the Holy Spirit of truth “blows where He wills” and “you cannot tell where He comes from or where He is going” (John 3.8). He may choose to stay away from a very large and representative gathering of bishops, but descend on a tiny group of exiled bishops sitting in a railway siding and surrounded by atheist guards and savage dogs in the depths of Siberia! There are no rules about how, where, by whom or in what numbers the bishops must be assembled in order to qualify as “valid” organs of the Holy Spirit of truth and faithful interpreters of the Apostolic Tradition, the criterion of Orthodoxy, that Christ has given to His Church.

The only indication of “rules” that we have – although they are not “rules” so much as spiritual conditions or exhortations – are contained in two passages in the Gospel. The first, from the Gospel of John, relates how Christ entered in among His disciples on the evening of the Resurrection, breathed on them and said: “Receive ye the Holy Spirit: Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them, and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained” (20.22-23). According to the interpretation of St. Gregory the Great, this first descent of the Holy Spirit on the disciples, differed from the later, fuller Descent in that it created the *unity in love* of the Apostles, without which they could not receive the further gifts of the Holy Spirit, including the full revelation of the Holy Trinity that they received at Pentecost. But although not the fullness of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, this gift still enabled them to discern who was worthy of forgiveness of his sins and who was not. And this gift of knowledge, made possible through the unity in love of the college of all true bishops, is essential to the government of the Church on earth.

The second passage, from the Gospel of Matthew (18.10-20), is appointed to be read on the Second Day of Holy Trinity, the Day of the Descent of the Holy Spirit. In it the Lord lays down the procedure to be followed in the event of disputes in the Church, which involves making every attempt at reconciliation before bringing the matter before the highest authorities in the Church. And then the Lord repeats the promise He first gave to Peter, but now gives to all the apostles: "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." So those apostles and their successors who have acted in love, and not out of ambition, revenge or any such evil passion, will be given the gift to know who is worthy to remain in the Church and who is to be cast out.

Finally, the Lord indicates that this unity in love, which alone guarantees truth, does not have to encompass vast numbers of people: "Again verily I say unto, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father Who is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them". These words are of great comfort to us who live in such terrible times, when "the love of many has grown cold", and consequently it is impossible to find any large, Ecumenical or Pan-Orthodox Synod of bishops that agree with each other and with the Holy Spirit. All that is required is "two or three" true bishops who come together to express the conciliar principle of the Church, its true Catholicity, in the spirit of love. For then if they ask the Holy Spirit of truth to reveal the truth to them, it is hereby promised that their request will unfailingly be answered.

*June 4/17, 2016.
Apodosis of the Ascension.*

23. STALIN'S WAR ON RUSSIA, 1928-1937

The winter of 1927-28 saw two events signifying a decisive turning-point in Soviet history: the descent of the True Church of Russia into the catacombs so as not to sign the pro-Soviet "Declaration of Metropolitan Sergius", and the abandonment of the New Economic Policy.

In July, 1927, Metropolitan Sergius, deputy leader of the Russian Church (the leader, Metropolitan Peter, was in prison) declared that the joys of the Soviet Union were the Church's joys and its sorrows – the Church's sorrows, and that it was necessary to thank the Bolsheviki for their services to the faithful. It was aimed at making the Bolsheviki more merciful to the faithful, but had the opposite effect, causing a full-scale rebellion from Metropolitan (later Patriarch) Sergius' leadership. For, as St. John of Shanghai and San Francisco wrote: "The Declaration of Metropolitan Sergius brought no benefit to the Church. The persecutions not only did not cease, but also sharply increased. To the number of other accusations brought by the Soviet regime against clergy and laymen, one more was added – non-recognition of the Declaration. At the same time, a wave of church closings rolled over all Russia... Concentration camps and places of forced labor held thousands of clergymen, a significant part of whom never saw freedom again, being executed there or dying from excessive labors and deprivations."²⁹⁶

The New Economic Policy, introduced by Lenin, had ended requisitioning, legalized private trade, and abandoned the semi-militarization of labor. However, the results had not satisfied Stalin. So in 1927, as Philip Bobbit writes, "the first Five-Year Plan was introduced. This Plan proposed massive state investment that, with increases in agricultural and industrial productivity, was to bring about a rise in living standards.

But gains in productivity were slight, and workers and peasants were now called upon to finance the state's investment in heavy industry. As it became clear that considerable coercion would be required, some in the Soviet leadership, led by Bukharin, urged a revision of industrial goals. Stalin led the majority that insisted on overcoming the resistance of the society and replacing the NEP. So requisitioning was reinstated. When this proved insufficient, the state imposed a system of forced collectivization...²⁹⁷

It began with a grain crisis in 1927-28. This threatened Stalin's industrial plans. It also showed that the private producers of grain, the peasants, still held

²⁹⁶ St. John Maximovich, *The Russian Orthodox Church Abroad. A Short History*, Jordanville, NY: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1997, pp. 28-29. Even a recent biography of Sergius by a sergianist author accepts this fact: "If Metropolitan Sergius, in agreeing in his name to publish the Declaration of 1927 composed by the authorities, hoping to buy some relief for the Church and the clergy, then his hopes not only were not fulfilled, but the persecutions after 1927 became still fiercer, reaching truly hurricane-force in 1937-38." (Sergius Fomin, *Strazh Doma Gospodnia* (Guardian of the House of the Lord), Moscow, 2003, p. 262)

²⁹⁷ Bobbitt, *The Shield of Achilles*, London: Penguin, 2002, p. 29.

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

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

“The eradication of the peasant family farm was the starting-point of this ‘revolution from above’. The Bolsheviki had a fundamental mistrust of the peasantry. In 1917, without influence in the countryside, they had been forced to tolerate the peasant revolution on the land, which they had exploited to undermine the old regime; but they had always made it clear that their long-term goal was to sweep away the peasant smallholding system, replacing it with large-scale mechanized collective farms in which the peasants would be transformed into a ‘rural proletariat’. Marxist ideology had taught the Bolsheviki to regard the peasantry as a ‘petty-bourgeois’ relic of the old society that was ultimately incompatible with the development of a Communist society. It was too closely tied to the patriarchal customs and traditions of Old Russia, too imbued in the principles and habits of free trade and private property and too given over to the ‘egotism’ of the family ever to be fully socialized.

“The Bolsheviki believed that the peasants were a potential threat to the Revolution, as long as they controlled the main supply of food. As the Civil War had shown, the peasantry could bring the Soviet regime to the verge of collapse by keeping grain from the market. The grain crisis of 1927-8 renewed fears of a ‘kulak strike’ in Stalinist circles. In response, Stalin reinstated requisitioning of food supplies and engineered an atmosphere of ‘civil war’ against the ‘kulak threat’ to justify the policy. In January 1928, Stalin travelled to Siberia, a key grain-producing area, and urged the local activists to show no mercy to ‘kulaks’ suspected of withholding grain. His battle-cry was backed up

by a series of Emergency Measures instructing local organs to use the Criminal Code to arrest any peasants and confiscate their property if they refused to give their grain to the requisitioning brigades (a wild interpretation of the Code that met with some resistance in the government). Hundreds of thousands of 'malicious kulaks'... were arrested and sent to labour camps, their property destroyed or confiscated, as the regime sought to break the 'kulak strike' and transform its overcrowded prisons into a network of labour camps (soon to become known as the Gulag).

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

"This enthusiasm for collective farms was relatively new. Previously, the Party had not placed much emphasis on collectivization. Under the NEP, the organization of collective farms was encouraged by the state through financial and agronomic aid, yet in Party circles it was generally agreed that collectivization was to be a gradual and voluntary process. During the NEP the peasants showed no sign of coming round to the collective principle, and the growth of the kolkhoz sector was pretty insignificant. After 1927, when the state exerted greater pressure through taxation policies – giving credits to collective farms and imposing heavy fees on 'kulak' farms – the kolkhoz sector grew more rapidly. But it was not the large kommuny (where all the land and property was pooled) but the smaller, more informal and 'peasant-like' associations called TOZy (where the land was farmed in common but the livestock and the tools were retained by the peasants as their private property) that attracted the most peasant interest. The Five Year Plan gave little indication that the Party was about to change its policies; it projected a moderate increase in the land sown by collective farms, and made no mention of departing from the voluntary principle.

"The sudden change in policy was forced through by Stalin in 1929. The volte face was a decisive blow against Bukharin, who was desperately trying to retain the market mechanism of the NEP within the structure of the Five Year Plan, which in its original version (adopted in the spring of 1929 but dated retroactively to 1928) had envisaged optimistic but reasonable targets of socialist industrialization. Stalin pushed for even higher rates of industrial growth and, but the autumn of 1929, the target figures of the Five Year Plan had been raised dramatically. Investment was to triple; coal output was to double; and the production of pig-iron (which had been set to rise by 250 per cent in the original version of the Plan) was now set to quadruple by 1932. In a

wave of frenzied optimism, which was widely shared by the Party rank and file, the Soviet press advanced the slogan 'The Five Year Plan in Four!' It was these utopian rates of growth that forced the Party to accept the Stalinist policy of mass collectivization as, it seemed, the only way to obtain a cheap and guaranteed supply of foodstuffs for the rapidly expanding industrial labour force (and for sale abroad to bring in capital).

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

"From the summer of 1929, thousands of Party activists were sent into the countryside to agitate for the collective farms... Most of the peasants were afraid to give up a centuries-old way of life to make a leap of faith into the unknown. There were precious few examples of good collective farms to persuade the peasantry. A German agricultural specialist working in Siberia in 1929 described the collective farms as 'candidates for death'. Very few had tractors or modern implements. They were badly run by people who knew little about agriculture and made 'crude mistakes', which 'discredited the whole process of collectivization'. According to OGPU, the perception of the peasants was that they would 'lose everything' - their land and cows, their horses and their tools, their homes and family - if they entered a kolkhoz. As one old peasant said: 'Lecturer after lecturer is coming and telling us that we ought to forget possessions and have everything in common. Why then is the desire for it in our blood?'

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

raises his head. It's war – it's them or us. The last decayed remnant of capitalist farming must be wiped out at any cost.'

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

"Peasants who spoke out against collectivization were beaten, tortured, threatened and harassed, until they agreed to join the collective farm. Many were expelled as 'kulaks' from their homes and driven out of the village. The herding of the peasants into the collective farms was accompanied by a violent assault against the Church, the focal point of the old way of life in the village, which was regarded by the Bolsheviks as a source of potential opposition to collectivization. Thousands of priests were arrested and churches were looted and destroyed, forcing millions of believers to maintain their faith in the secrecy of their own homes."²⁹⁸

The human cost of collectivization has been well described by Piers Brendon: "Stalin declared war on his own people – a class war to end class. In the first two months of 1930 perhaps a million kulaks, weakened by previous victimisation, were stripped of their possessions and uprooted from their farmsteads. They were among the earliest of 'over five million' souls deported during the next three years, most of whom perished. Brigades of workers conscripted from the towns, backed by contingents of the Red Army, and the OGPU (which had replaced the Cheka), swept through the countryside 'like raging beasts'. They rounded up the best farmers [as Zinoviev said, 'We are fond of describing any peasant who has enough to eat as a kulak'] and their families, banished them to the barren outskirts of their villages or drove them into the northern wastes. Often they shot the heads of households, cramming

²⁹⁸ Figes, *The Whisperers, The Whisperers*, London, 2007, pp. 81-86.

their dependents into 'death trains' – a prolonged process owing to a shortage of the blood-coloured cattle trucks known as 'red cows'. While they waited, women and children expired of cold, hunger and disease. Muscovites, at first shocked by glimpses of the terror being inflicted on the countryside, became inured to the sight of peasants being herded from one station to another at gunpoint. A witness wrote: 'Trainloads of deported peasants left for the icy North, the forests, the steppes, the deserts. There were whole populations, denuded of everything; the old folk starved to death in mid-journey, new-born babies were buried on the banks of the roadside, and each wilderness had its crop of little crosses of boughs or white wood.' The survivors of these ghastly odysseys were concentrated in primitive camps which they often had to scratch with their bare hands from taiga or tundra. They were then sent to work at digging canals, lumbering and other projects, Stalin having recently been dazzled by the prospect of 'constructing socialism through the use of prison labour'.

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

"Some kulaks fled from the holocaust, seeking refuge in the towns or the woods and selling as many of their possessions as they could. Braving the machine-guns of the blue-capped border guards, others crossed into Poland, Romania, China or Alaska, taking portable property with them, occasionally even driving their flocks and herds. Some tried to bribe their persecutors. Some committed suicide. Some appealed for mercy, of all Communist commodities the one in shortest supply. Like the troops, some Party members were indeed horrified at the vicious acts which they were called upon to perform. One exclaimed, 'We are no longer people, we are animals.' Many were brutes, official gangsters who revelled in licensed thuggery... Still others were idealists of a different stamp, convinced that they were doing their 'revolutionary duty'. They had no time for what Trotsky had once called the 'papist-Quaker babble about the sanctity of human life'. According to Marx's iron laws of history, they shed the blood of the kulaks to achieve the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Without this sacrifice the Soviet Union could not modernise and socialism could not survive. As one apparatchik expressed it: 'When you are attacking there is no place for mercy; don't think of the kulak's hunger children; in the class struggle philanthropy is evil.' This view, incidentally, was often shared by Western fellow-travellers. Upton Sinclair and A.J.P. Taylor both argued that to preserve the Workers' State the kulaks 'had to be destroyed'.

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

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

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

"In 1930, Year XIII of the Communist era, a new calendar was introduced. It began the year on November 1 and established a five-day week: Sundays were abolished and rest days rotated so that work could be continuous. The anti-God crusade became more vicious and the church was portrayed as the 'kulaks' agitprop [agitation and propaganda agency]'. Priests were persecuted. Icons were burned and replaced with portraits of Stalin. The bells of basilicas were silenced, many being melted down for the metal. Monasteries were demolished or turned into prison camps. Abbeys and convents were smashed to pieces and

factories rose on their ruins. Churches were destroyed, scores in Moscow itself. Chief among them was the gold-domed Cathedral of Christ the Redeemer, Russia's largest place of worship and (according to the League of Militant Atheists) 'the ideological fortress of the accused old world', which was dynamited to make way for the Palace of Soviets on 5 December 1931. Stalin was unprepared for the explosion and asked tremulously, 'Where's the bombardment?'

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

"Destroying the nation's best farmers, disrupting the agricultural system and extracting grain from a famished countryside in return for Western technology – all this had a fatal impact on the Soviet standard of living. By 1930 bread and other foodstuffs were rationed, as were staple goods such as soap. But even rations were hard to get: sugar, for example, had 'ceased to exist as a commodity'. The cooperative shops were generally empty, though gathering dust on their shelves were items that no one wanted, among them French horns and hockey sticks. There were also 'tantalisingly realistic and mouth-watering' wooden cheeses, dummy hams, enamelled cakes and other fake promises of future abundance. On the black market bread cost 43 roubles a kilo, while the average collective farmer earned 3 roubles a day. Some Muscovite workers shortened the slogan 'pobeda' (victory) to 'obed' (food), or even to 'beda' (misfortune).'"²⁹⁹

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²⁹⁹ Brendon, *The Dark Valley. A Panorama of the 1930s*, London: Pimlico, 2001, pp. 202-206.

Stalin's collectivization campaign recalled Lenin's campaign of War Communism in 1918-21. And, as in Lenin's time, it was "as much an attack on [the peasants'] traditional *religion* as on their individual holdings".³⁰⁰ For, as Vladimir Rusak writes, "Stalin could no longer 'leave the Church in the countryside'. In one interview he gave at that time he directly complained against 'the reactionary clergy' who were poisoning the souls of the masses. 'The only thing I can complain about is that the clergy were not liquidated root and branch,' he said. At the 15th Congress of the party he demanded that all weariness in the anti-religious struggle be overcome."³⁰¹

Then, "on 8 April 1929," as W. Husband writes, "the VtsIK and Sovnarkom declaration 'On Religious Associations' largely superseded the 1918 separation of church and state and redefined freedom of conscience. Though reiterating central aspects of the 1918 separation decree, the new law introduced important limitations. Religious associations of twenty or more adults were allowed, but only if registered and approved in advance by government authorities. They retained their previous right to the free use of buildings for worship but still could not exist as a judicial person. Most important, the new regulations rescinded the previously guaranteed [!] right to conduct religious propaganda, and it reaffirmed the ban on religious instructions in state educational institutions. In effect, proselytising and instruction outside the home were illegal except in officially sanctioned classes, and religious rights of assembly and property were now more circumscribed."³⁰²

"Henceforth," writes Nicholas Werth, "any activity 'going beyond the limits of the simple satisfaction of religious aspirations' fell under the law. Notably, section 10 of the much-feared Article 58 of the penal code stipulated that 'any use of the religious prejudices of the masses... for destabilizing the state' was punishable 'by anything from a minimum three-year sentence up to and including the death penalty'. On 26 August 1929 the government instituted the new five-day work week – five days of work, and one day of rest – which made it impossible to observe Sunday as a day of rest. This measure deliberately introduced 'to facilitate the struggle to eliminate religion'.

"These decrees were no more than a prelude to a second, much larger phase of the antireligious campaign. In October 1929 the seizure of all church bells was ordered because 'the sound of bells disturbs the right to peace of the vast majority of atheists in the towns and the countryside'. Anyone closely associated with the church was treated like a kulak and forced to pay special taxes. The taxes paid by religious leaders increased tenfold from 1928 to 1930, and the leaders were stripped of their civil rights, which meant that they lost their ration cards and their right to medical care. Many were arrested, exiled, or deported. According to the incomplete records, more than 13,000 priests

³⁰⁰ Alan Bullock, *Hitler and Stalin: Parallel Lives*, London: HarperCollins, 1991, p. 430.

³⁰¹ Rusak, *Svidetel'stvo Obvinenia*, Jordanville, N.Y.: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1983, part I, p. 176.

³⁰² Husband, "Godless Communists", Northern University of Illinois Press, 2000, p. 66.

were 'dekulakised' in 1930. In many villages and towns, collectivisation began symbolically with the closure of the church, and dekulakization began with the removal of the local religious leaders. Significantly, nearly 14 percent of riots and peasant uprisings in 1930 were sparked by the closure of a church or the removal of its bells. The antireligious campaign reached its height in the winter of 1929-30; by 1 March 1930, 6,715 churches had been closed or destroyed. In the aftermath of Stalin's famous article 'Dizzy with Success' on 2 March 1930, a resolution from the Central Committee cynically condemned 'inadmissible deviations in the struggle against religious prejudices, particularly the administrative closure of churches without the consent of the local inhabitants'. This formal condemnation had no effect on the fate of the people deported on religious grounds.

"Over the next few years these great offensives against the church were replaced by daily administrative harassment of priests and religious organizations. Freely interpreting the sixty-eight articles of the government decree of 8 April 1929, and going considerably beyond their mandate when it came to the closure of churches, local authorities continued their guerrilla war with a series of justifications: 'unsanitary condition or extreme age' of the buildings in question, 'unpaid insurance', and non-payment of taxes or other of the innumerable contributions imposed on the members of religious communities. Stripped of their civil rights and their right to teach, and without the possibility of taking up other paid employment - a status that left them arbitrarily classified as 'parasitic elements living on unearned wages' - a number of priests had no option but to become peripatetic and to lead a secret life on the edges of society."³⁰³

It was the True Orthodox Church which took the brunt of this offensive. Thus in 1929, the Bolsheviks began to imprison the True Orthodox on the basis of membership of a "church monarchist organization" called "True Orthodoxy". The numbers of True Orthodox Christians arrested between 1929 and 1933 exceeded by seven times the numbers of clergy repressed from 1924 to 1928.³⁰⁴ The main case against the True Orthodox was called the case of "The All-Union Counter-Revolutionary Church Monarchist Organization, 'the True Orthodox Church'". In 1929 5000 clergy were repressed, three times more than in 1928; in 1930 - 13,000; in 1931-32 - 19,000.³⁰⁵

³⁰³ Werth, "A State against its People", in Stéphane Courtois, Nicolas Werth, Jean-Louis Panné, Andrzej Packowski, Karel Bartošek, Jean-Louis Margolin, *The Black Book of Communism*, London: Harvard University Press, 1999, pp. 172-173.

³⁰⁴ I.I. Osipova, "Istoria Istinno Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi po Materialam Sledstvennago Dela" (The History of the True Orthodox Church according to Materials from the Interrogation Process), *Pravoslavnaia Rus'* (Orthodox Russia), N 14 (1587), July 15/28, 1997, p. 2.

³⁰⁵ I.I. Osipova, *O Premiloserdij... Budi s nami neotstupno... Vospominania veruiuschikh Istinno-Pravoslavnoj (Katakombnoj) Tserkvi. Konets 1920-kh - nachalo 1970-kh godov.* (O Most Merciful One... Remain with us without fail. Reminiscences of believers of the True-Orthodox (Catacomb) Church. End of the 1920s - beginning of the 1970s), Moscow, 2008.

It is hardly a coincidence that all this took place against the background of the collectivization of agriculture and a general attack on religion³⁰⁶ spearheaded by Yaroslavsky's League of Militant Godless, who numbered 17 million by 1933.

The war of the True Orthodox against collectivization was especially fierce in the Central Black Earth region, where resistance to collectivization and resistance to the Sovietized Moscow Patriarchate crystallized into a single powerful movement under the leadership of Bishop Alexis (Buy) of Voronezh.³⁰⁷ Meetings of the "Buyevtsy", as Bishop Alexis' followers were called, took place in the Alexeyev monastery in Voronezh. During one of these, in December, 1929, Archimandrite Tikhon said that collectivization was a way of removing the peasants from their churches, which were then closed. And Igumen Joseph (Yatsk) said: "Now the times of the Antichrist have arrived, so everything that Soviet power tried to impose upon the peasantry: collective farms, cooperatives, etc., should be rejected." At the beginning of 1930 the Voronezh peasantry rebelled against forcible collectivization in several places. Thus in Ostrog district alone between January 4 and February 5 there were demonstrations in twenty villages: Nizhny Ikorets, Peskovatka, Kopanishche, Podserednoye, Platava, Kazatskoye, Uryv, Dyevitsa, Godlayevka, Troitskoye, Drakonovo, Mashkino, Badyeyevo, Selyavnoye and others. At the same time there were demonstrations in the neighbouring areas of Usman district, from where they moved to the Kozlov, Yelets, Belgorod and other districts, encompassing more than forty districts in all. The OGPU considered that these demonstrations took place under the influence of the "Buyevtsy". On January 21-22, in Nizhny Ikorets, some hundreds of peasants, mainly women, destroyed the village soviet, tore down the red flag, tore up the portraits of the "leaders" and walked down the streets with a black flag, shouting: "Down with the collective farms! Down with the antichrist communists!" An active participant in this event was Nun Macrina (Maslovskaya), who said at her interrogation: "I preached Christ everywhere... [I urged] the citizens to struggle with the apostates from God, who are emissaries of the Antichrist, and [I urged] the peasants not to go into the collective farms because by going into the collectives they were giving their souls to the Antichrist, who would appear soon... "

In February-March, 1930, the OGPU investigated 492 people in connection with these disturbances. The anti-Soviet organization called "The Flock" which they uncovered was supposedly made up of 22 leaders and 470 followers, including 4 officers, 8 noblemen, 33 traders, 8 policemen, 13 members of the "Union of the Russian people", 81 priests, 75 monastics, 210 kulaks, 24 middle peasants, and 2 beggars. 134 people were arrested, of whom some were freed,

³⁰⁶ Although the Protestants had welcomed the revolution and thus escaped the earlier persecutions, they were now subjected to the same torments as the Orthodox (Pospielovsky, "Podvig very", *Grani*, pp. 233-34). Religious Jews also began to be persecuted.

³⁰⁷ M.V. Shkarovsky, "Iz Novyeishej Istorii Russkoj Tserkvi", *Pravoslavnaia Rus'*, N 15 (1540), August 15/28, 1995, pp. 6-10; *Russkaia Pravoslavnaia Tserkov' pri Staline i Khrushcheve*, Moscow, 2005, pp. 232, 233.

some had their cases referred to higher authorities and some died during the investigation because of the violent methods used to extort confessions.

There were several more trials of “Buyevites” in the 1930s, and Voronezh remains a citadel of the True Orthodox Church to this day...

This persecution began to arouse criticism in the West – specifically, from Pope Pius XI and the Archbishop of Canterbury. On February 14, 1930 the Politburo decided “to entrust to Comrades Yaroslavsky, Stalin and Molotov the decision of the question of an interview” to counter-act these criticisms. The result was two interviews, the first to Soviet correspondents on February 15 and published on February 16 in *Izvestia* and *Pravda* in the name of Sergius and those members of his Synod who were still in freedom, and a second to foreign correspondents three days later. In the first interview, which is now thought to have been composed entirely by the Bolsheviks with the active participation of Stalin, but whose authenticity was never denied by Sergius³⁰⁸, it was asserted that “in the Soviet Union there was not and is not now any religious persecution”, that “churches are closed not on the orders of the authorities, but at the wish of the population, and in many cases even at the request of the believers”, that “the priests themselves are to blame, because they do not use the opportunities presented to them by the freedom to preach” and that “the Church herself does not want to have any theological-educational institutions”.

Commenting on the interview, Archbishop Andrew of Ufa wrote: “Such is the opinion of the false-head of the false-patriarchal church of Metropolitan Sergius... But who is going to recognize this head after all this? For whom does this lying head remain a head, in spite of his betrayal of Christ?... All the followers of the lying Metropolitan Sergius... have fallen away from the Church of Christ. The Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church is somewhere else, not near Metropolitan Sergius and not near ‘his Synod’.”³⁰⁹

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With the True Church driven underground, and the peasantry destroyed, Stalin proceeded to industrialize the country at breakneck speed, herding millions of dispossessed peasants into the building of huge enterprises for which there existed as yet not even the most basic workers’ living conditions.

³⁰⁸ Igor Kurlyandsky, “Nash Otvet Rimskomu Pape: kak tt. Stalin, Yaroslavsky i Molotov v 1930 godu pisali ‘interview’ Mitropolita Sergia i ego Sinoda” (Our Reply to the Pope of Rome: how Comrades Stalin, Yaroslavsky and Molotov wrote the ‘interview’ of Metropolitan Sergius and his Synod in 1930), *Politicheskij Zhurnal* (The Political Journal), 183-184, N 21, April, 2008;

<http://www.politjournal.ru/index.php?action=Articles&dirid=50&tek=8111&issue=218>

³⁰⁹ Zelenogorsky, M. *Zhizn' i deiatel'nost' Arkhiepiskopa Andrea (Kniazia Ukhtomskogo)* (The Life and Activity of Archbishop Andrew (Prince Ukhtomsky)), Moscow, 1991, p. 216. According to Archbishop Bartholomew (Remov), who never joined the Catacomb Church, the whole activity of Metropolitan Sergius was carried out in accordance with the instructions of the Bolsheviks (*Za Khrista Postradavshie* (Suffered for Christ), Moscow: St. Tikhon’s Theological Institute, 1997, p. 220).

“Egalitarian ideals were scrapped,” writes Brendon, “to increase productivity. For example, skilled workers received extra incentives in the shape of higher pay, better food and improved accommodation – at the massive steel plant of Magnitogorsk in the Urals there was a whole hierarchy of canteens. But Stalin favoured the stick rather than the carrot and those infringing industrial discipline were harshly punished. Men were tied to their machines like helots. Those arriving late could be imprisoned. Dismissal might mean starvation – the loss of a work card resulted in the denial of a food card. Diligence was kept at fever pitch by the arrest and execution of large numbers of economic ‘wreckers’, plus well-publicised show trials of ‘spies’ and ‘saboteurs’. Morbidly suspicious, Stalin seems to have persuaded himself of their guilt; but even if they were innocent their punishment would encourage the others. His solution to the shortage of small coins, hoarded for their tiny silver content because the government had printed so much paper money to pay for its own incompetence, was to shoot ‘wreckers’ in the banking system, ‘including several dozen common cashiers’.

“In 1931 Stalin also tried to squeeze the last valuables, particularly gold, from Russian citizens in order to purchase more foreign equipment. Among the methods of torture used were the ‘conveyer’, whereby relays of interrogators deprived prisoners of sleep; the sweat- and ice-rooms, to which victims were confined in conditions of intolerable heat and cold; the tormenting of children in front of their parents. Alternatively the OGPU might just beat their prey to death with a felt boot full of bricks. These bestial practices were theoretically illegal but their employment was an open secret. When a defendant at one show trial protested over-indignantly that he had suffered no maltreatment in the Lubyanka it was too much even for a court which had solemnly swallowed stories of a conspiracy masterminded by the likes of President Poincaré and Lawrence of Arabia: everyone simply roared with laughter. The Lubyanka, the tall grey OGPU headquarters (formerly the office of the Rossiya Insurance Company) in Dzerzhinsky Square, was a place ‘fraught with horror’. Appropriately it was embellished with a sculpture representing the Greek Fates cutting short the threads of human life. Stalin saw himself as the avatar of destiny, the embodiment of the will of history, the personification of progress...

“The achievements of Stalin’s revolution were almost as staggering as the costs, even when propagandist fictions are discounted. Although its targets kept growing in the making, the first Five Year Plan was anything but ‘Utopian’. Initiated in 1928, its purpose was to transform the Russian economy at unprecedented speed. As the British Ambassador reported, it was ‘one of the most important and far reaching [experiments] that has ever been undertaken.’ Between 1928 and 1932 investment in industry increased from two billion to nine billion roubles and the labour force doubled to six million workers. Productivity too nearly doubled and huge new enterprises were established – factories making machine tools, automobiles, chemicals, turbines, synthetic rubber and so on. The number of tractors produced rose from just over 3,000 to

almost 50,000. Special emphasis was placed on armaments and factories were established out of the reach of invaders – by 1936 a plant at Sverdlovsk in the Urals was actually turning out submarines, which were transported in sections to the Pacific, the Baltic and the Black Sea. In just four years, by a mixture of heroic effort, ‘economic patriotism’ and implacable coercion, the foundations of Soviet industrial greatness were laid. Cities had grown by 44 per cent. Literacy was advancing dramatically. By the mid-1930s Russia was spending nearly twice as much as the United States on research and development; by the end of the decade its output was rivalling that of Germany.

“In this initial stage, of course, progress was patchy and the quality of manufactured goods was poor. There were many reasons for this, such as the unremitting pressure to increase quantity and the fact that (as Sukhanov had said) ‘one only had to scratch a worker to find a peasant’. The novelist Ilya Ehrenburg described new factory hands as looking ‘mistrustfully at the machines; when a lever would not work they grew angry and treated it like a baulking horse, often damaging the machine’. After visiting Russia David Low drew a cartoon of a dairymaid-turned-engineer absent-mindedly trying to milk a steam-hammer. Managers were little help. They were terrorised from above: an American specialist sharing a hotel bedroom with his mill boss was woken by ‘the most ghastly sounds imaginable’ as the man ground his teeth in his sleep, tormented by stark, primitive ‘fears that none but his subconscious mind could know’. Managers in their turn were encouraged to behave like ‘little Stalins’: as the Moscow Party chief Lazar Kaganovich said, ‘The earth should tremble when the director is entering the factory.’

“The atmosphere of intimidation was hardly conducive to enterprise even if management had been competent, which it generally was not. At the Gorky automobile plant, which had been designed by engineers from Detroit, several different types of vehicle were made simultaneously on one assembly line, thus making nonsense of Ford’s plan to standardise parts and performance. In the Urals asbestos ore was mined underground when it could have been dug from the surface by mechanical shovel far more safely and at a tenth of the cost. Everywhere so many older managers were purged that inexperienced young men had to be promoted – one found himself head of the State Institute of Metal Work Projects two days after he had graduated from Moscow’s Mining Academy. Vigour could compensate for callowness. Foreign experts, often Communists and others fleeing from unemployment in the West, were impressed by the frenetic enthusiasm and hysterical tempo with which their Russian colleagues tried to complete the Five Year plan in four years, a task expressed in Stalinist arithmetic as $2+2=5$. They were even more impressed by the suffering involved. In the words of an American technician who worked at Magnitogorsk: ‘I would wager that Russia’s battle of ferrous metallurgy alone involved more casualties than the battle of the Marne.’

“Magnitogorsk, situated on the mineral-rich boundary between Europe and Asia, was a monument to Stalin’s gigantomania. Built to American designs, it was to be a showpiece of ‘socialist construction’ and the largest steelworks in

the world. It was also the most important project in the Five Year Plan. So between 1928 and 1932 250,000 people were drawn willy-nilly to the remote 'magnetic heart' of the new complex. There were horny-handed peasants from the Ukraine, sparsely-bearded nomads from Mongolia, sheepskin-clad Tartars who had never before seen a locomotive, an electric light, even a staircase. There were Jews, Finns, Georgians and Russians, some of them products of three-month crash-courses in engineering and disparaged by the American and German experts as '90-day wonders'. There were 50,000 prisoners under OGPU supervision, including scientists, kulaks, criminals, prostitutes and child slave-labourers swept up from the gutters of Moscow. There was even a brigade of long-haired, bushy-bearded bishops and priests wearing ragged black robes and mitre-like hats.

"To accommodate this labour force a rash of tents, earthen huts and wooden barracks sprang up on the rolling steppe. These grossly overcrowded refuges were verminous and insanitary, especially during the spring thaw when Magnitogorsk became a sea of mud and there were outbreaks of bubonic plague. Moreover they afforded scant protection against the scorching summers and freezing winters. The same was true of the rows of porous, box-like structures for the privileged, set up with such haste that for years the streets lacked names and the buildings lacked numbers. These were the first houses of the socialist city which was to rise out of chaos during the 1930s, a city which would boast 50 schools, 17 libraries and 8 theatres but not a single church. There was, however, a Communist cathedral – the steel plant itself. No place of worship was built with more fervour or more labour. Its construction involved the excavation of 500 million cubic feet of earth, the pouring of 42 million cubic feet of reinforced concrete, the laying of 5 million cubic feet of fire bricks and the erection of 250,000 tons of structural steel.

"Ill-clad, half-starved and inadequately equipped, the workers were pitilessly sacrificed to the work. Driven by terror and zeal, they were also the victims of incompetence. They lacked the tools and the skill to weld metal on rickety scaffolding 100 feet high in temperatures of -50 Fahrenheit. Countless accidents occurred, many of which damaged the plant. Confusion was worse confounded by gross management failures. American experts were horrified to find that Party propagandists rather than engineers were determining priorities – tall, open-hearth stacks were erected earlier than they should have been because they 'made a nice picture'. But despite every setback the stately blast furnaces rose from their concrete beds, to the tune of 'incessant hammering, resembling machine-gun fire'. By 1 February 1932 the first pig-iron was produced. Although less than half built by 1937 (its target date for completion), Magnitogorsk was already one of the biggest metallurgical works on earth.

"To the faithful it was a huge crucible for the Promethean energies unleashed by Russia's man of steel. Enterprises such as Magnitogorsk symbolised Stalin's successful 'break' with the past (perelom) and Russia's great leap forward. It was a leap in the dark. But the shape of future terrors

could be discerned and even committed Communists feared that too much was being sacrificed to the industrial Moloch. In the final speech at his show trial Nikolai Bukharin likened 'our huge, gigantically growing factories' to 'monstrous gluttons which consumed everything'. What they certainly consumed was vast quantities of grain, both directly to feed the workers and indirectly to exchange [export] for the sinews of technology. In the 2 years after 1928 government grain requisitions had doubled and only a good harvest in 1930 enabled Stalin to commandeer 22 million tons (over a quarter of the total yield) from a countryside devastated by collectivisation and 'dekulakisation'. Yet in 1931 he took slightly more grain even though the harvest was poor. The result was massive rural famine. It was the largest organised famine in history until that of Mao Tse-tung in 1959-60..."³¹⁰

The historian Sergius Naumov writes: "One of the most horrific crimes of the God-hating communist regime was the artificially contrived famine in the Ukraine and the South of Russia in 1932-1933. As a result, in the Ukraine alone more than nine million people died within two years, while as a whole in the USSR more than thirteen million died. The blow was deliberately directed against the age-old strongholds of Orthodox culture and tradition in the people for the defence of the Faith and the Church. This sin, the responsibility for this inhuman crime lies like an ineradicable blot on all the heirs of communism without exception. In the Ukraine this campaign for the mass annihilation of the Orthodox peasantry was carried out from the centre by the apparatus of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukraine under the leadership of Lazarus Moiseyevich Kaganovich.

"Kaganovich personally headed the campaign for the forcible requisitioning of all reserves of bread from the Ukrainian peasantry, which elicited the artificial famine of the 1930s. Thus on December 29, 1932, on the initiative of Kaganovich, the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukraine adopted a directive in which the collective farms were required to give up 'all the grain they have, including the so-called seed funds'. It was ordered that all available funds be removed immediately, in the course of five to six days. Every delay was viewed as the sabotage of bread deliveries with all the consequences that ensued from that... (*Istoria SSSR*, №2/1989, p. 14). Or one more characteristic example, which helps us to understand much. At the January [1933] united Plenum of the Central Committee and the TsKK of the Communist Party one of its participants cried out during Kaganovich's speech: 'But you know, they have begun to eat people in our area!' To which Kaganovich cynically replied: 'If we give rein to our nerves, then they will be eating you and us... Will that be better?' Nothing needs to be added to this cannibalistic revelation. Although, it must be said, already at the dawn of the Bolshevik dictatorship, 'Trotsky, on receiving a delegation of church-parish councils from Moscow, in reply to Professor Kuznetsov's declaration that the city was literally dying from hunger, declared: "This is not hunger. When Titus conquered Jerusalem, the Jewish mothers ate their own children. Then you can

³¹⁰ Brendon, *op. cit.*, pp. 208-211.

come and say: 'We're hungry.'"" ("Tsinichnoe zaiavlenie", *Donskie Vedomosti* (Novocherkassk), N 268/1919).

"One should point out that the famine artificially organized by the Bolsheviks in 1932-1933 was a logical step in the long chain of genocide of the Slavic Orthodox population of the country. Long before the year 1937 that is so bewailed by *Memorial*, G.E. Zinoviev (Ovsej-Hershen Aaronovich Radomyshelsky) defined the task directly: 'We must keep ninety million out of the one hundred that populates Soviet Russia. We don't need to talk to the rest - they must be annihilated'... The control figure of those marked for annihilation by Zinoviev was reached with interest already before the forcible collectivization of the countryside began. Collectivization and 'dekulakization', in the carrying out of which the People's Commissar for Agriculture, Yakov Arkadyevich Yakovlev (Epstein) and the president of the collective farm centre, Gregory Nakhumovich Kaminsky particularly distinguished themselves, brought fresh millions of peasants to their deaths. To suppress the numerous peasant rebellions, on the orders of Over-Chekist Genrikh Girshevich Yagoda (Ieguda) 'individually selected GPU soldiers accustomed to civil war, the guardians of present order,' were thrown in. 'Machine guns were wheeled out, cannons were stations, balloons of poison gas were unscrewed... And often there was nobody you could ask: what was in this village? There was no village. None of those who lived in it were alive: neither the women nor the children nor the old men. Nobody was spared by the shells and the gas...' (Dmitrievsky S., *Stalin*, Berlin, 1931, p. 330).

"The famine of 1932-1933 was specially organized so as finally to crush the active and passive resistance of the Orthodox peasantry to collectivization. To break their resistance to their forcible regeneration from an Orthodox people into a faceless mass, the so-called 'collective farmers' and homo sovieticus. That explains what at first sight appears to be the paradoxical fact that the boundaries of the famine coincided with the boundaries of the bread baskets of the country, which were always regions of agricultural abundance and strongholds of Orthodoxy. As the member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukraine, Mendel Markovich Khatayevich, said: 'There had to be a famine, in order to show them who is boss here. That cost millions of lives, but we won.'..."³¹¹

About 14 million people died as a result of the artificial famine. "The fertile Ukraine," writes Brendon, "where Stalin was already persecuting anyone suspected of local nationalism, suffered worst. But other regions were also affected, notably Kazakhstan where about 40 per cent of the 4 million inhabitants died as a result of the attempt to turn them from nomadic herders into collective farmers. As early as December 1931 hordes of Ukrainian peasants were surging into towns and besieging railway stations with cries of 'Bread, bread, bread!' By the spring of 1932, when Stalin demanded nearly half

³¹¹ Naumov, "Golodomor, 1932-33 godov", *Na Kazachem Postu*, N 4 2004, http://catacomb.org.ua/modules.php?name=Pages&go=print_page&pid=1496.

of the Ukrainian harvest, the granary of Russia was in the grip of starvation. While peasants collapsed from hunger Communist shock brigades, supported by units of the OGPU in their brown tunics and red and blue caps, invaded their cabins and took their last ounces of food, including seed for the spring sowing. They used long steel rods to probe for buried grain, stationed armed guards in the fields and sent up spotter planes to prevent the pilfering of Soviet property. This was now an offence punishable by death or, to use the jargon of the time, 'the highest measure of social defence'. The OGPU suspected anyone who was not starving of hoarding. It also attempted to stop peasants from migrating in search of food; but by the summer of 1932 three million were on the move. Some Communist cadres tried to avoid carrying out their task. One rebellious Party man reported that he could fulfil his meat quota, but only with human corpses. He fled, while others like him were driven to madness and suicide. But most activists were so frightened for their own skins that they endorsed Stalin's ukase.

"So the Ukraine came to resemble 'one vast Belsen'. A population of 'walking corpses' struggled to survive on a diet of roots, weeds, grass, bark and furry catkins. They devoured dogs, cats, snails, mice, ants, earthworms. They boiled up old skins and ground down dry bones. They even ate horse-manure for the whole grains of seed it contained. Cannibalism became so commonplace that the OGPU received a special directive on the subject from Moscow and local authorities issued hundreds of posters announcing that 'EATING DEAD CHILDREN IS BARBARISM'. Some peasants braved machine-guns in desperate assaults on grain stockpiles. Others robbed graves for gold to sell in Torgsin shops. Parents unable to feed their offspring sent them away from home to beg. Cities such as Kiev, Kharkov, Dnepropetrovsk, Poltava, Odessa and Belgorod were overrun by pathetic waifs with huge heads, stunted limbs and swollen bellies. Arthur Koestler said that they 'looked like embryos out of alcohol bottles'. Periodically the OGPU rounded them up, sending some to brutal orphanages or juvenile labour colonies, training others to be informers or secret policemen. Still others became the victims of 'mass shootings'.

"Meanwhile adults, frantic to follow the slightest rumour of sustenance, continued to desert their villages. They staggered into towns and collapsed in the squares, at first objects of pity, later of indifference. Haunting the railway stations these 'swollen human shadows, full of rubbish, alive with lice', followed passengers with mute appeals and 'hungry eyes'. A few managed to get out of the region despite the guards (who confiscated the food of Ukrainians returning to help), but for the most part these 'miserable hulks of humanity dragged themselves along, begging for bread or searching for scraps in garbage heaps, frozen and filthy. Each morning wagons rolled along the streets picking up the remains of the dead.' Some were picked up before they died and buried in pits so extensive that they resembled sand dunes and so shallow that bodies were dug up and devoured by wolves. In the summer of 1932 Stalin increased his squeeze on the villages, ordering blockades of those which did not supply their grain quotas and blaming kulak sabotage for the shortfall. It may well have been over the famine that on 5 November 1932 his wife Nadezhda

Alliluyev committed suicide. Certainly she had lost any illusions she might have possessed about her husband. Some time before her death Nadezhda yelled at him: 'You are a tormentor, that's what you are! You torment your own son... you torment your wife... you torment the whole Russian people.'

"The better to control his victims Stalin reintroduced the internal passport.³¹² Communists had always denounced this as a prime instance of tsarist tyranny. Now it enabled them to hide the famine, or at any rate to render it less visible, by ensuring that most deaths occurred outside urban areas. This is not to suggest that Stalin was prepared to acknowledge the existence of the tragedy. When a courageous Ukrainian Communist gave details of what was happening Stalin replied that he had made up 'a fable about famine, thinking to frighten us, but it won't work'. It is clear, though, that Stalin was deliberately employing starvation as an instrument of policy. Early in 1933 he sent Pavel Postyshev to the Ukraine with orders to extract further deliveries from the barren countryside. Postyshev announced that the region had failed to provide the requisite grain because of the Party's 'leniency'. The consequence of his strictness was that, over the next few months, the famine reached its terrible climax. Entire families died in agony. Buildings decayed, schools closed, fields were choked with weeds, livestock perished and the countryside became a gigantic charnel-house. About a quarter of the rural population was wiped out and the mortality rate only began to decline in the summer of 1933, after it had become clear that no more grain could be procured and the State's demands were relaxed..."³¹³

The fact of this monstrous tragedy could not be concealed. And yet many western journalists and writers, pandering to western governments that were eager to do business with Stalin, or simply refusing to face facts that contradicted their own socialist convictions, tried to do just that. A notorious example was George Bernard Shaw, who wrote: "Stalin has delivered the goods to an extent that seemed impossible ten years ago. Jesus Christ has come down to earth. He is no longer an idol. People are gaining some kind of idea of what would happen if He lived now..."³¹⁴

No less egregious was the example of the Reverend Hewlett Johnson, the Dean of Canterbury. As Robert Service writes: "In a decade when Stalin was exterminating tens of thousands of Orthodox Church priests, this prominent English cleric declared: 'The communist puts the Christian to shame in the thoroughness of his quest for a harmonious society. Here he proves himself to be the heir of the Christian intention.' Johnson's visit to the Soviet Union in 1937 left him permanently transfixed by its achievements; and as Vice-

³¹² Many True Orthodox Christians refused to take passports, and from this time the "passportless" movement begins. See Mervyn Matthews, *The Passport Society*, Oxford: Westview Press, 1993, chapter 3; E.A. Petrova, "Perestroika Vavilonskoj Bashni (The Reconstruction of the Tower of Babylon)", Moscow, 1991, pp. 5-6 (samizdat MS). (V.M.)

³¹³ Brendon, *op. cit.*, pp. 211-213.

³¹⁴ Shaw, *The Rationalization of Russia*, 1931.

President of the Society for Cultural Relations with the USSR he spoke up for the communist spirit of the times more fervently than for the Holy Spirit..."³¹⁵

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In the summer of 1934, Stalin summoned Leningrad Party Boss Sergei Kirov to spend the summer at his dacha in Sochi, "to join him and Zhdanov in laying down the guidelines for the rewriting of history textbooks. Published in 1936, *Remarks Concerning the Conspectus of a Textbook on the History of the USSR* produced an abrupt reversal in Soviet historiography, establishing the Soviet regime as the custodian of national interests and traditions. The new history celebrated the great men of Russia's Tsarist past - Peter the Great, Suvorov, Kutuzov - whose state-building, military victories and territorial conquests had created modern Russia. It was the autocratic [in this context - "absolutist"] tradition... which was highlighted, so establishing a natural link between the new patriotism and the cult of Stalin."³¹⁶

It was ironic that Stalin, who had spent the last five years in an unprecedented assault on everything Russian, should now seek to celebrate the great tsars and military leaders of Russia's past. Of course, not all of them were celebrated - Nicholas II would remain "bloody Nicholas" to the end. But Stalin was proud to see himself as the successor of the more totalitarian and bloody tsars such as Ivan the Terrible (his favourite) and Peter the Great.

In this policy, as Alan Bullock writes, "sentiment and calculation coincided. To combine the Marxist vision with the deep-seated nationalist and patriotic feelings of the Russian people was to give it a wider and stronger emotional appeal than ideology by itself could generate. As early as June 1934 *Pravda* had sounded the new note, 'For the Fatherland', 'which alone kindles the flame of heroism, the flame of creative initiative in all fields, in all the realms of our rich, our many-sided life... The defence of the Fatherland is the supreme law... For the Fatherland, for its honour, glory, might and prosperity!'"³¹⁷

Other factors influencing Stalin's change of tactics probably included the failure of the revolution to catch fire in other countries - and the success of Hitler's nationalist socialism. Probably he came to realize that, as Mussolini had put it, "the nation has not disappeared. We used to believe that it was annihilated. Instead, we see it rise, living, palpitating before us!" Hence his adoption of the slogan: "Socialism in one country", which emphasized the national uniqueness of Russia.

Hence, too, his persecution of many ethnic minorities from the early 1930s, transporting them en masse from one end of the Union to the other, and the artificially-induced famine of 1932-33, whose aim appears to have been to wipe

³¹⁵ Service, *Comrades*, London: Pan Books, 2007, p. 205.

³¹⁶ Bullock, *Hitler and Stalin: Parallel Lives*, London, 1991, p. 702.

³¹⁷ Bullock, op. cit., p. 701.

out Ukrainian nationalism. After all, in spite of the fact that Stalin was Georgian, Lenin had called him “a real and true ‘nationalist-socialist’, and even a vulgar Great Russian bully”.

In the middle of the 1930s, perhaps as a result of his new national policy, Stalin began to ease up in his unprecedentedly savage war on the Russian people. The God-haters seemed to have triumphed, violence was no longer so necessary, and they were now building a new, godless civilization to replace the old one of Holy Russia. But the reign of fear continued, and was about to be ratcheted up yet again...

The West, to its shame, cooperated with the red beast. America now joined the European nations recognizing the Soviet Union, and helped its rapid industrial growth through trade. Moreover, comparing their own economic slump with the Soviet performance, westerners even began to applaud the achievements of Communism, as journalists closed their eyes to Stalin’s appalling assault on his own people. “The chief luminaries of the British Labour Party,” writes Norman Davies, “wrote a glowing survey of the ‘New Civilization’. The chief reporter of the *New York Times*, Walter Duranty, probably a victim of blackmail, was awarded a Pulitzer Prize for his enthusiastic descriptions, which have since been found to be completely and knowingly false.”³¹⁸

“Totalitarianism,” writes Piers Brendon, “won adherents across frontiers, for the failures of capitalism were palpable during the Depression and the democracies suffered a sharp crisis of confidence. Hearing that Stalin had achieved planned progress and social equality [!], that Hitler had abolished unemployment and built autobahns, that Mussolini had revived Italy and made the trains run on time, people in Britain, France and the United States were inclined to believe that Utopia was another country...”³¹⁹

“The trauma of the Great Slump,” writes Eric Hobsbawn, “was underlined by the fact that the one country that had clamorously broken with capitalism appeared to be immune to it: the Soviet Union. While the rest of the world, or at least liberal Western capitalism, stagnated, the USSR was engaged in massive ultra-rapid industrialization under its new Five Year plans. From 1929 to 1940 Soviet industrial production tripled, at the very least. It rose from 5 per cent of the world’s manufactured products in 1929 to 18 per cent in 1938, while during the same period the joint share of the USA, Britain and France, fell from 59 per cent to 52 per cent of the world’s total. What was more, there was [supposedly] no unemployment. These achievements impressed foreign observers of all ideologies, including a small but influential flow of socio-economic tourists to Moscow in 1930-35, more than the visible primitiveness and inefficiency of the Soviet economy, or the ruthlessness and brutality of Stalin’s collectivisation and mass repression. For what they were trying to come

³¹⁸ Davies, *Europe at War 1939-1945. No Simple Victory*, London: Pan Books, 2006, p. 49.

³¹⁹ Brendon, *op. cit.*, p. xvi.

to terms with was not the actual phenomenon of the USSR but the breakdown of their own economic system, the depth of the failure of Western capitalism. What was the secret of the Soviet system? Could anything be learned from it? Echoing Russia's Five Year Plans, 'Plan' and 'Planning' became buzz-words in politics... Even the very Nazis plagiarized the idea, as Hitler introduced a 'Four Year Plan' in 1933."³²⁰

So far, Stalin had simply continued the work of Lenin on a larger, more systematic scale. But in 1937 he began to do what Lenin had never done: destroy his own party. According to Hobsbawm: "Between 1934 and 1939 four or five million party members and officials were arrested on political grounds, four or five thousand of them were executed without trial, and the next (eighteenth) Party Congress which met in the spring of 1939, contained a bare thirty-seven survivors of the 1827 delegates who had been present at the seventeenth in 1934."³²¹

Norman Davies writes that Stalin "killed every single surviving member of Lenin's original Bolshevik government [Ordzhonikidze killed himself]. Through endless false accusations, he created a climate of collective paranoia which cast everyone and anyone into the role of suspected spy or traitor or 'enemy'. Through orchestrated show trials, he forced distinguished Communists to confess to absurd, indecent charges. Through the so-called 'purges', he would thin the ranks of the Communist Party, and then, having put the comrades into a mood of zombie-like deference, he would order the exercise to be repeated again and again. Everyone accused would be cajoled or tortured into naming ten or twenty supposed associates in crime. By 1938 he reached the point where he was ordering the shooting of citizens by random quota: 50,000 this month from this province, 30,000 next month from the next province. The OGPU (the latest incarnation of the Cheka) sweated overtime. (They too were regularly purged.) The death pits filled up. The GULag became the biggest employer of labour in the land. State officials, artists and writers, academics and soldiers were all put through the grinder. Then, in March 1939, it stopped, or at least slowed down. The Census Bureau had just enough time to put an announcement in *Izvestia* saying that 17 million people were missing, before the census-takers themselves were shot..."³²² Thus was fulfilled the prediction of Pierre Vergniaud in 1793 concerning the French revolution: "There is reason to fear that, like Saturn, the Revolution may devour each of its children in turn".³²³

One of the few Old Bolsheviks who refused to incriminate themselves was Nicholas Bukharin, whom Lenin had called "the party's favourite". In his "Letter to a Future Generation of Party Leaders", he wrote: "I feel my helplessness before a hellish machine, which has acquired gigantic power,

³²⁰ Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century 1914-1991*, London: Abacus, 1994, pp. 96, 97. Hobsbawm is a Marxist, but we cite him where he tells the truth.

³²¹ Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes*, London: Abacus, 1994, p. 391.

³²² Davies, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

³²³ Bullock, *op. cit.*, p. 511.

enough to fabricate organised slander... and which uses the Cheka's bygone authority to cater to Stalin's morbid suspiciousness... Any member of the Central Committee, any member of the Party can be rubbed out, turned into a traitor or terrorist."³²⁴

Bukharin wrote to the Politburo from prison that he was innocent of the crimes to which he had confessed under interrogation - and, probably, torture. But he said that "he would submit to the Party because he had concluded that there was some 'great and bold political idea behind the general purge' which overshadowed all else. 'It would be petty of me to put the fortunes of my own person on the same level as those tasks of world-historical importance, which rest upon all your shoulders'...

During his famous final speech from the dock [he] said that he had given in to the prison investigators after having completely reevaluated his past. 'For when you ask yourself: "If you must die, what are you dying for?" - an absolutely black vacuity suddenly rises before you with startling vividness. And, on the contrary, everything positive that glistens in the Soviet Union acquires new dimensions in a man's mind. This is the end disarmed me completely and led me to bend my knees before the Party and the country... For in reality the whole country stands behind Stalin; he is the hope of the future...' "³²⁵

But it was Trotsky whom Stalin hated and feared most, and around whom so many of the trials and executions revolved.

"By the mid-1930s," write Christopher Andrews and Vasily Mitrokhin, "Stalin had lost all sense of proportion in his pursuit of Trotskyism in all its forms, both real and imaginary. Trotsky had become an obsession who dominated many of Stalin's waking hours and probably interfered with his sleep at night. As Trotsky's biographer, Isaac Deutscher, concludes: 'The frenzy with which [Stalin] pursued the feud, making it the paramount preoccupation of international communism as well as of the Soviet Union and subordinating to it all political, tactical, intellectual and other interests, beggars description; there is in the whole of history hardly another case in which such immense resources of power and propaganda were employed against a single individual.' The British diplomat R.A. Sykes later wisely described Stalin's world view as 'a curious mixture of shrewdness and nonsense'. Stalin's shrewdness was apparent in the way that he outmanoeuvred his rivals after the death of Lenin, gradually acquired absolute power as general secretary, and later outnegotiated Churchill and Roosevelt during their wartime conferences. Historians have found it difficult to accept that so shrewd a man also believed in so much nonsense. But it is no more possible to understand Stalin without acknowledging his addiction to conspiracy theories about Trotsky (and others) than it is to comprehend Hitler without grasping the passion with which he

³²⁴ Bukharin, in Bullock, *op. cit.*, p. 541; Brendon, *op. cit.*, p. 568.

³²⁵ Brendon, *op. cit.*, p. 569.

pursued his even more terrible and absurd conspiracy theories about the Jews.”³²⁶

In September, 1936 Stalin appointed Nikolai Ivanovich Yezhov as head of the NKVD in succession to Yagoda. As he “supervised the spread of the Terror, arresting ever-larger circles of suspects to be tortured into confessing imaginary crimes, the Soviet press worked the population up into a frenzy of witch-hunting against Trotskyite spies and terrorists. Yezhov claimed that Yagoda had tried to kill him by spraying his curtains with cyanide. He then arrested most of Yagoda’s officers and had them shot. Then he arrested Yagoda himself. ‘Better that ten innocent men should suffer than one spy get away,’ Yezhov announced. ‘When you chop wood, chips fly!’”³²⁷

In November, 1938 Yezhov himself was arrested and killed. He was succeeded by Stalin’s fellow-Georgian, Lavrenty Beria, who survived Stalin’s death in 1953 by only a few months...

With the murder of Trotsky in Mexico in 1940 the last possible threat to Stalin’s absolute authority from the Old Guard was gone. For, as Bullock writes, “his suspicion never slept: it was precisely the Bolshevik Old Guard whom he distrusted most. Even men who had been closely associated with him in carrying out the Second Revolution were executed, committed suicide or died in the camps.”³²⁸

The manifest absurdity of the trials, and of the idea that so many of Lenin’s and Stalin’s closest and most loyal collaborators were in fact spies, did not stop the “useful idiots” of the West from justifying the charade. Thus, as Tony Judt writes, in 1936 the French Ligue des Droits de l’Homme established a commission to investigate the great Moscow trials of that year. The conclusion to its report state: “It would be a denial of the French Revolution... to refuse [the Russian] people the right to strike down the fomenters of civil war, or conspirators in liaison with foreigners.”³²⁹ Again, the US ambassador Joseph Davies wrote to Washington that “the indictments of the defendants in the Moscow show trials had been proved ‘beyond a reasonable doubt and that ‘the adjudication of the punishment’ had been entirely justified’”...³³⁰

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Two events portended the coming of this unprecedentedly bloody massacre. The first was the suicide of Stalin’s wife, which made him turn more in on himself. (There is a parallel here with his favourite Ivan the Terrible, who also began to get worse after the death of his first wife.) The second was the murder

³²⁶ Andrews and Mitrokhin, *The Mitrokhin Archive*, London: The Allen Press, 1999, pp. 93-94.

³²⁷ Montefiore, *op. cit.*, pp. 522-523.

³²⁸ Bullock, *op. cit.*, p. 425.

³²⁹ Judt, “Francois Furet (1927-1997)”, in *When the Facts Change*, London: Vintage, 2015, p. 352.

³³⁰ Service, *Comrades*, p. 208.

of Kirov on December 1, 1934. As Evgenia Ginzburg put it in *Into the Whirlwind*: "That year, 1937, really began on the 1st of December, 1934".³³¹ Although it is likely that Stalin himself ordered the killing, it - together with the continued opposition of Trotsky from abroad - became the excuse to root out supposed counter-revolutionary conspiracies and fascist spy-rings within the party.

The great purges of 1937-38 wiped out a large proportion of the leaders of Soviet society, and not only the Party. In fact, no section of society was exempt from Stalin's murderous cull of his own people. He used the term "enemy of the people" to wipe out anyone who represented the remotest prospect of opposition to the regime. In spite of these horrors, it was precisely in 1937 that Stalin said: "Life has become better, life has become happier"!

His assault on the army was if anything still more thorough than his assault on the party. Thus, according to figures given in the Soviet press, "the military purge accounted for:

- "3 of the 5 Soviet marshals
- "11 of the 15 army commanders
- "8 of the 9 fleet admirals and admirals Grade 1
- "50 of the 57 corps commanders
- "154 of the 186 divisional commanders

- "16 of the 16 army political commissars
- "25 of the 28 corps commissars
- "58 of the 64 divisional commanders

- "11 of the 11 vice-commissars of defence
- "98 of the 109 members of the Supreme Military Soviet

The effect was not confined to the upper echelons. Between May 1937 and September 1938, 36,761 army officers and over 3000 navy officers were dismissed. Allowing for 13,000 re-enrolled and adding the numbers 'repressed' after September 1938, this gives a total for 1937-41 of 43,000 officers at battalion and company-commander level arrested and either shot or sent to the camps (the great majority) or permanently dismissed. Roy Medvedev sums up an operation without parallel in the striking sentence: 'Never has the officer staff of any army suffered such great losses in any war as the Soviet Army suffered in this time of peace.'³³²

"However," writes Brendon, "as the liquidation of top managers took its toll on the economy and the armed forces suffered a further assault, few doubted that Russia's capacity to resist alien aggression was being seriously impaired. So on 24 January 1938 Stalin touched the brakes and changed direction, just as he had done in 1930 when he wrote his article 'Dizzy with Success',

³³¹ Ginzburg, in Bullock, *op. cit.*, p. 516.

³³² Bullock, *op. cit.*, pp. 547-548.

condemning the excesses of collectivisation. Now he launched a campaign against false informers, those who had denounced others in order to save their skins. He turned his withering gaze on the secret police, who had reckoned that their 'personal salvation lay in swimming' with the tide of terror. The purgers themselves should be purged, though no one knew who would accomplish this or how far they would go."³³³

We should also not forget the foreign victims of the Terror. Trotskyites, real and imaginary, were killed all around the world; even in Spain, the NKVD was as occupied in destroying the Trotskyite organization POUM as in fighting fascists.³³⁴ Christopher Andrew and Vasily Mitrokhin write: "Comintern representatives in Moscow from around the world lived in constant fear of denunciation and execution. Many were at even greater risk than their Soviet colleagues. By early 1937, following investigations by the NKVD (predecessor of the KGB), Stalin had convinced himself that Comintern was a hotbed of subversion and foreign espionage. He told Georgi Dmitrov, who had become its General Secretary three years earlier, 'All of you there in the Comintern are working in the hands of the enemy.' Nikolai Yezhov, the head of the NKVD whose sadism and diminutive stature combined to give him the nickname 'Poison Dwarf', echoed his master's voice. 'The biggest spies,' he told Dmitrov, 'were working in the Communist International'. Each night, unable to sleep, the foreign Communists and Comintern officials who had been given rooms at the Hotel Lux in the centre of Moscow waited for the sound of a car drawing up at the hotel entrance in the early hour, then heard the heavy footsteps of NKVD men echo along the corridors, praying that they would stop at someone else's door. Those who escaped arrest listened with a mixture of relief and horror as the night's victims were taken from their rooms and driven away, never to return. Some, for whom the nightly suspense became too much, shot themselves or jumped to their deaths in the inner courtyard. Only a minority of the hotel's foreign guests escaped the knock on the door. Many of their death warrants were signed personally by Stalin. Mao's ferocious security chief, Kang Sheng, who had been sent to Moscow to learn his trade, enthusiastically co-operated with the NKVD in the hunt for mostly imaginary traitors among Chinese émigrés..."³³⁵

But the greatest victims of the great purges – and this fact has been woefully neglected by secular historians – were neither the party, nor the army, but *the Orthodox clergy*. If Metropolitan Sergius thought that his betrayal would "save the Church", the next few years would prove him terribly wrong. From 1935 the Bolsheviks, having repressed most of the True Orthodox clergy, began to repress the sergianists. In fact, the sergianists often received longer sentences than their True Orthodox brothers whom they had betrayed. This only went to show how futile their Judas-like collaboration with the Antichrist, and betrayal of their brothers in Christ, had been.

³³³ Brendon, *op. cit.*, p. 565.

³³⁴ Andrew and Mitrokhin, *The Mitrokhin Archive*, p. 95.

³³⁵ Andrew and Mitrokhin, *The KGB and the World*, London: Penguin, 2006, pp. 3-4.

In the nineteen years *before* the Great Terror of 1937-38, Soviet power killed: 128 bishops; 26,777 clergy; 7,500 professors; about 9,000 doctors; 94,800 officers; 1,000,000 soldiers; 200,000 policemen; 45,000 teachers; 2,200,000 workers and peasants. Besides that, 16 million Orthodox Russians died from hunger and three million from forced labour in the camps.³³⁶ As for the years of the Great Terror, according to Russian government figures, in 1937 alone 136,900 clergy were arrested, of whom 106,800 were killed (there were 180,000 clergy in Russia before the revolution). Again, between 1917 and 1980, 200,000 clergy were executed and 500,000 others were imprisoned or sent to the camps.³³⁷ The numbers of functioning Orthodox churches declined from 54,692 in 1914 to 39,000 at the beginning of 1929 to 15, 835 on April 1, 1936.³³⁸ By the beginning of the Second World War, there were none at all in Belorussia (Kolarz), “less than a dozen” in Ukraine (Bociurkiw), and a total of 150-200 in the whole of Russia.³³⁹

However, the greatest persecution of Christianity in history did not wipe out the faith. The census of 1937 established that one-third of city-dwellers and two-thirds of country-dwellers still believed in God. Stalin’s plan that the Name of God should not be named in Russia by the year 1937 had failed...

Nevertheless, the immediate outlook for believers was bleak indeed. Thus E.L. writes about Hieromartyr Bishop Damascene: “He warmed the hearts of many, but the masses remained... passive and inert, moving in any direction in accordance with an external push, and not their inner convictions... The long isolation of Bishop Damascene from Soviet life, his remoteness from the gradual process of sovietization led him to an unrealistic assessment of the real relations of forces in the reality that surrounded him. Although he remained unshaken himself, he did not see... the desolation of the human soul in the masses. This soul had been diverted onto another path – a slippery, opportunistic path which led people where the leaders of Soviet power – bold men who stopped at nothing in their attacks on all moral and material values – wanted them to go... Between the hierarchs and priests who had languished

³³⁶ *Kharbinskoe Vremia*, February, 1937, N 28, in Protopriest John Stukach, “Vyskomerie kak prepona k uiedineniu” (Haughtiness as an obstacle to union), <http://catacomb.org.ua/modules.php?name=Pages&go=page&pid=1357>

³³⁷ A document of the Commission attached to the President of the Russian Federation on the Rehabilitation of the Victims of Political Repressions, January 5, 1996; *Service Orthodoxe de Presse* (Orthodox Press Service), N 204, January, 1996, p. 15. The rate of killing slowed down considerably in the following years. In 1939 900 clergy were killed, in 1940 – 1100, in 1941 – 1900, in 1943 – 500. In the period 1917 to 1940 205 Russian hierarchs “disappeared without trace”; 59 disappeared in 1937 alone. According to another source, from October, 1917 to June, 1941 inclusive, 134,000 clergy were killed, of whom the majority (80,000) were killed between 1928 and 1940 (Cyril Mikhailovich Alexandrov, in V. Lyulechnik, “Tserkov’ i KGB” (The Church and the KGB), in <http://elmager.livejournal.com/217784.html>).

³³⁸ Nicholas Werth, “A State against its People”, in Stéphane Courtois, Nicolas Werth, Jean-Louis Panné, Andrzej Packowski, Karel Bartošek, Jean-Louis Margolin, *The Black Book of Communism*, London: Harvard University Press, 1999, pp. 172, 173.

³³⁹ Nathanael Davis, *A Long Walk to Church: A Contemporary History of Russian Orthodoxy*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2003, p. 13.

in the concentration camps and prisons, and the mass of the believers, however firmly they tried to stand in the faith, there grew an abyss of mutual incomprehension. The confessors strove to raise the believers onto a higher plane and bring their spiritual level closer to their own. The mass of believers, weighed down by the cares of life and family, blinded by propaganda, involuntarily went in the opposite direction, downwards. Visions of a future golden age of satiety, of complete liberty from all external and internal restrictions, of the submission of the forces of nature to man, deceitful perspectives in which fantasy passed for science... were used by the Bolsheviks to draw the overwhelming majority of the people into their nets. Only a few individuals were able to preserve a loftiness of spirit. This situation was exploited very well by Metropolitan Sergius..."³⁴⁰

Sergius, the great Judas of Russian Church history, has had many apologists. Some claim that he "saved the Church" for the future, when the whirlwind of the persecution had passed. This claim cannot be justified, as we have seen. It was rather the Catacomb Church, which, as Alexeyev writes, "in a sense saved the official Church from complete destruction because the Soviet authorities were afraid to force the entire Russian Church underground through ruthless suppression and so to lose control over it."³⁴¹

Others have tried to justify Sergius by claiming that there are two paths to salvation, one through open confession of the faith or the descent into the catacombs, and the other through compromise. Sergius, according to this view, was no less a martyr than the Catacomb martyrs, only he suffered the "martyrdom" of losing his good name.³⁴² However, this view comes close to the "Rasputinite" heresy that there can be salvation through sin – in this case, lying, the sacrifice of the freedom and dignity of the Church, and the betrayal to torments and death of one's fellow Christians! Thus Hieromartyr Sergius Mechev was betrayed by "Bishop" Manuel Lemeshevsky.³⁴³ And more generally, Metropolitan Sergius' charge that all the catacomb bishops were "counter-revolutionaries" was sufficient to send them to their deaths.³⁴⁴

Meanwhile, deep in the underground, the True Orthodox Church delivered its verdict on the traitors. In July, 1937, four bishops, two priests and six laymen met in Ust-Kut, Siberia, convened a council, and declared:

³⁴⁰ E.L., *Episkopy-Ispovedniki* (Bishop Confessors), San Francisco, 1971, pp. 65-66.

³⁴¹ W. Alexeyev, "The Russian Orthodox Church 1927-1945: Repression and Revival", *Religion in Communist Lands*, vol. 7, N 1, Spring, 1979, p. 30.

³⁴² E.S. Polishchuk, "Patriarkh Sergei i ego deklaratsia: kapitulatsia ili kompromiss?" (Patriarch Sergius and his Declaration: Capitulation or Compromise?), *Vestnik Russkogo Khristianskogo Dvizhenia* (Herald of the Russian Christian Movement), N 161, 1991-I, pp. 233-250.

³⁴³ Alla D. "Svidetel'stvo" (Witness), in *Nadezhda* (Hope), vol. 16, Basel-Moscow, 1993, 228-230. See also N.V. Urusova, *Materinskij Plach Sviatoj Rusi* (The Maternal Lament of Holy Russia), Moscow, 2006, pp. 285-287.

³⁴⁴ I.M. Andreyev, *Is the Grace of God Present in the Soviet Church?*, Wildwood, Alberta: Monastery Press, 2000, p. 30.

“1. The Sacred Council forbids the faithful to receive communion from the clergy legalized by the anti-Christian State.

“2. It has been revealed to the Sacred Council by the Spirit that the anathema-curse hurled by his Holiness Patriarch Tikhon is valid, and all priests and Church-servers who have dared to consider it as an ecclesiastical mistake or political tactic are placed under its power and bound by it.

“3. To all those who discredit and separate themselves from the Sacred Council of 1917-18 – **Anathema!**

“4. All branches of the Church which are on the common trunk – the trunk is our pre-revolutionary Church – are living branches of the Church of Christ. We give our blessing to common prayer and the serving of the Divine Liturgy to all priests of these branches. The Sacred Council forbids all those who do not consider themselves to be branches, but independent from the tree of the Church, to serve the Divine Liturgy. The Sacred Council does not consider it necessary to have administrative unity of the branches of the Church, but unity of mind concerning the Church is binding on all.”³⁴⁵

This last measure completed the de-centralization of the Church, which Patriarch Tikhon had already begun through his famous ukaz number 362 of 1920. It was elicited by the fact that the organization of the Church was now destroyed, and all its leaders dead or in prison or so deep underground that they could not rule the Church. This process was sealed in the autumn of 1937, when the patriarchal locum tenens Metropolitan Peter of Krutitsa, and his only possible successors, Metropolitans Cyril of Kazan and Joseph of Petrograd, were shot. And so by the end of 1937, the Church’s descent into the catacombs, which had begun in the early 20s, was completed. From now on, with the external administrative machinery of the Church destroyed, it was up to each bishop – sometimes each believer – individually to preserve the fire of faith, being linked with his fellow Christians only through the inner, mystical bonds of the life in Christ. Thus was the premonition of Hieromartyr Bishop Damascene fulfilled: “Perhaps the time has come when the Lord does not wish that the Church should stand as an intermediary between Himself and the believers, but that everyone is called to stand directly before the Lord and himself answer for himself as it was with the forefathers!”³⁴⁶

Even sergianist sources have spoken about the falsity of Sergius’ declaration, the true confession of those who opposed him, and the invalidity of the

³⁴⁵ Schema-Monk Epiphanius (Chernov), personal communication; B. Zakharov, *Russkaia Mysl'* (Russian Thought), September 7, 1949; "Vazhnoe postanovlenie katakombnoj tserkvi" (An Important Decree of the Catacomb Church), *Pravoslavnaia Rus'* (Orthodox Russia), N 18, 1949. According to one version, there is a fifth canon: “To all those who support the renovationist and sergianist heresy – **Anathema**”. See Bishop Ambrose (von Sievers), “Katakombnaia Tserkov’: Ust’-Kutskij Sobor 1937g.” (The Catacomb Church: the Ust-Kut Council of 1937), *Russkoe Pravoslavie* (Russian Orthodoxy), N 4 (8), 1997, pp. 20-24.

³⁴⁶ E.L., *op. cit.*, p. 92.

measures he took to punish them. Thus: "Amidst the opponents of Metropolitan Sergius were a multitude of remarkable martyrs and confessors, bishops, monks, priests... The 'canonical' bans of Metropolitan Sergius (Stragorodsky) and his Synod were taken seriously by no one, neither at that time [the 1930s] nor later by dint of the uncanonicity of the situation of Metropolitan Sergius himself..."³⁴⁷

Sergius made the basic mistake of forgetting that it is God, not man, Who saves the Church. This mistake almost amounts to a loss of faith in the Providence and Omnipotence of God Himself. The faith that saves is the faith that "with God all things are possible" (Matthew 19.26). It is the faith that cries: "Some trust in chariots, and some in horses, but we will call upon the name of the Lord our God" (Psalms 19.7). This was and is the faith of the Catacomb Church, which, being founded on "the Rock, which is Christ" (I Corinthians 10.7), has prevailed against the gates of hell. But Sergius' "faith" was of a different, more "supple" kind, the kind of which the Prophet spoke: "Because you have said, 'We have made a covenant with death, and with hell we have an agreement; when the overwhelming scourge passes through it will not come to us; for we have made lies our refuge, and in falsehood we have taken shelter'; therefore thus says the Lord God,... hail will sweep away the refuge of lies, and waters will overwhelm the shelter. Then your covenant with death will be annulled, and your agreement with hell will not stand; when the overwhelming scourge passes through you will be beaten down by it..." (Isaiah 28.15, 17-19)

A Catacomb Appeal of the period wrote: "May this article drop a word that will be as a burning spark in the heart of every person who has Divinity in himself and faith in our One Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ. Beloved brethren! Orthodox Christians, peace-makers! Do not forget your brothers who are suffering in cells and prisons for the word of God and for the faith, the righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ, for they are in terrible dark bonds which have been built as tombs for all innocent people. Thousands and thousands of peace-loving brothers are languishing, buried alive in these tombs, these cemeteries; their bodies are wasting away and their souls are in pain every day and every hour, nor is there one minute of consolation, they are doomed to death and a hopeless life. These are the little brothers of Christ, they bear that cross which the Lord bore. Jesus Christ received suffering and death and was buried in the tomb, sealed by a stone and guarded by a watch. The hour came

³⁴⁷ M.E. Gubonin, *Akty Sviatejshago Patriarkha Tikhona*, Moscow, 1994, pp. 809, 810. And again: "The particular tragedy of the Declaration of Metropolitan Sergius consists in its principled rejection of the podvig of martyrdom and confession, without which witnessing to the truth is inconceivable. In this way Metropolitan Sergius took as his foundation, not hope on the Providence of God, but a purely human approach to the resolution of church problems... The courage of the 'catacombniks' and their firmness of faith cannot be doubted, and it is our duty to preserve the memory of those whose names we shall probably learn only in eternity..." (M.V. Danilushkin, *Istoria Russkoj Tserkvi ot Vosstanovlenia Patriarshestva do nashikh dnei* (A History of the Russian Church from the Reestablishment of the Patriarchate to our Days), vol. I, St. Petersburg, 1997, pp. 297, 520)

when death could not hold in its bonds the body of Christ that had suffered, for an Angel of the Lord coming down from the heavens rolled away the stone from the tomb and the soldiers who had been on guard fled in great fear. The Lord Jesus Christ rose from the dead. But the thunder will also strike these castles where the brothers languish for the word of God, and will smash the bolts where death threatens men...¹³⁴⁸

*June 14/27, 2016.
St. Methodius of Constantinople.*

³⁴⁸ M.V. Shkvarovsky, *Iosiflianstvo: techenie v Russkoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi* (Josephitism: a tendency in the Russian Orthodox Church), St. Petersburg: Memorial, 1999, p. 236.

24. THE CHRISTIAN CASE FOR BREXIT

Introduction

The Kingdom of Christ is not of this world (John 18.36), and it is in general not wise for a Christian to become involved in the dirtiest aspect of the modern world – politics. Nevertheless, there are moments when politics impinges on the faith and spiritual life, whether we like it or not (usually not). Such a moment was the Russian revolution of 1917, when the failure of the Christian people to defend their most Christian emperor against his anti-Christian political opponents led to a catastrophe of enormous proportions that has yet to play itself out to the end. Another such moment is today's crisis in Britain and Europe, when the British people's decision to leave the European Union is clearly going to have major political and economic consequences around the world. But what appears to have been overlooked is that it may well have major long-term spiritual consequences, too.

We sometimes forget that while Christ's Kingdom, the inner Kingdom of Grace, is not of this world, He most certainly has complete power also over the kingdoms of this world. As He said to Pilate before His crucifixion: "You would have no power at all against Me if it had not been given you from above" (John 19.11). And as He said after His Resurrection and just before His Ascension into heaven: "All power hath been given unto Me in heaven and on earth" (Matthew 28.18). *All* power means just that: power over both angels and men, both believers and unbelievers, both souls and bodies. Jesus Christ is the supreme King of kings and Lord of lords, "the prince of the kings of the earth" (Revelation 1.5): there is nothing created that is not ruled by Him.

What we also tend to forget is that today there are no rulers or nations today that can be called Christian even in the broadest sense of that word. Of course, there are individual politicians who call themselves Christian; there are even parties that call themselves Christian, like the Christian Democrats of Germany or Greece. But all governments – all without exception – are now anti-christian in their dominant tendencies; for all are engaged in implementing, to a greater or lesser degree, the anti-christian programme of what we loosely but conveniently call the New World Order. Some would argue that Russia, for example, is an exception to this rule, in that it openly condemns "Eurosodom" and the godlessness of the West. But anyone even slightly acquainted with the reality of contemporary Russia knows that this is a sham and the grossest hypocrisy: Russia has all the vices of the West, while proudly and impenitently claiming to be the successor of the most evil and anti-christian state in world history – the Soviet Union. Almost all other "Orthodox Christian" countries belong now to the EU – and make no attempt to modify or fight against its "Eurosodomite" tendencies and laws.

Does this mean that the Lord, while holding all power in His hands, has judged that the world is not worthy of salvation, and that the Antichrist is just round the corner? This would be a natural conclusion to draw from the present,

absolutely catastrophic spiritual condition of the world. However, it would be unwise to conclude that the Lord has abandoned His people. Apart from anything else, we must remember that there are still several prophecies to be fulfilled *before* the Coming of the Antichrist – including the small matter of World War Three. In any case, the Lord *is* acting in and through international politics – if only we had eyes to see it...

The purpose of this article is to show how the Lord may be accomplishing His own holy purpose through the political crisis created by Brexit...

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The distinguished journalist Simon Heffer writes: “A senior Ukip figure told me that it wasn’t Mr. Cameron’s pitiful and failed renegotiation [of the relationship between Britain and the EU] that drove Conservatives into the Farage camp, it was his determination to put same-sex marriage on the statute book.”³⁴⁹ Because of this determination to put same-sex marriage on the statute book, Cameron was facing a massive loss of support from ordinary Conservatives, especially those living in “the Shires”. So he offered them a quid pro quo: in partial compensation for his pushing through same-sex legislation, he offered them a referendum on Europe (many Conservatives who oppose same-sex marriage also oppose the European Union), over-confidently believing – and promising to his European colleagues – that the country as a whole would never vote to leave Europe.

But he miscalculated: not only most Conservatives, but also large numbers of Labour supporters voted to leave the EU, the Brexiteers won the vote – and Cameron resigned... This, as Jeremy Paxman notes, was probably the worst mistake of any British Prime Minister since the invasion of Suez in 1956³⁵⁰. But, as I shall try to demonstrate, it was a providential mistake, creating a causal link between Cameron’s shameful anti-Christian decision and not only Britain’s departure from the European Union but also something much more important – the possible collapse of the entire anti-christian civilization of the West.

And if this seems extreme, let us listen to the words of EU President Donald Tusk, who goes so far as to say that Brexit could spell the end of “western political civilization itself.” But how could that be? How could the friendly (or at any rate, non-violent) separation of one middle-sized country from the EU threaten the collapse of “western political civilization itself”?

In order to answer this question, we have to know a little about how the EU was formed. At the beginning, the European Project could hardly be described

³⁴⁹ Heffer, “We can unite Britain – but only if our politicians respect the people,” *The Sunday Telegraph*, June 26, 2016, p. 34.

³⁵⁰ Paxman, “Worst error a PM has made since Suez”, *The Sunday Telegraph*, June 26, 2016, p. 14.

as tyrannical. It began in 1950 with the foundation of the European Coal and Steel Community, which created a supra-national organization that controlled the coal and steel industries of France and Germany on a mutually beneficial basis. In itself, the organization was neither big, powerful, nor obviously sinister: on the contrary, the fact that two countries that had been at war with each other so recently were now creating such symbols of mutual trust was plausibly seen as a good sign. But “mighty oaks from acorns do grow”; and the European Coal and Steel Community, which constituted a mini-model of the future EU (it even contained its own Court of Justice), was destined to grow into something much bigger and definitely sinister.

In 1957 the Treaty of Rome creating the European Economic Community (EEC) was signed. Describing it as an “economic” community was accurate insofar as its main activity at this time was economic; essentially it was a cartel, facilitating trade among the member-states while making it more difficult for non-members to trade with the EEC. Nevertheless, the leading Eurocrats were unanimous that economic unity would be followed by political union. When Britain voted to join the EEC (later the EU) in 1973, this political aspect was carefully hidden from the voting public by the Prime Minister, Edward Heath; some figures on the Right, such as Enoch Powell, and on the Left, such as Tony Benn, protested and warned, but they were ignored. Soon their warnings were being fulfilled: the Single European Act of 1985, the Maastricht Treaty of 1992, the establishment of the single currency of the euro (to which Britain secured an opt-out) in 1999 and the Lisbon Treaty of 2007 progressively stripped the member-nations of their veto powers; the unelected Commission became progressively more powerful, while the European Court of Justice, and European legislation in general, took precedence over the laws of the individual states.

Soviet President Michael Gorbachev joked that the EU was “the old Soviet Union dressed in Western clothes” or “the new prison of the peoples”. But it was no joke to the British... For over half a century British politics has been racked by huge turmoil over this question. Thus in the early decades the Conservative Party was pro-EU and the Labour Party – anti-EU. Later the roles were reversed: the Conservative Party was anti-EU and the Labour Party – pro-EU. Finally, in the referendum campaign of 2016 both main parties proclaimed their loyalty to the EU. But the British people said: “a plague on both your houses!” and voted against *both* parties to leave the EU...

Let us now approach the question in a little more detail, and from three different directions: economic, political and spiritual.

*

The European Union is part of the New World Order, and the essential point about the economic aspect of the New World Order, which was made many years ago by Bishop Gregory Grabbe, is its *fragility*. In spite of its massive external appearance, and the astonishing growth in prosperity that has taken

place all round the world for several decades now, a downturn in one part of the system can threaten the downfall of the whole. This is owing to the extreme *interconnectedness* of its parts, and also to the fact that almost all countries are massively in *debt* – a debt so unprecedentedly vast and so difficult to reduce, let alone remit completely, that, in the opinion of many, a world slump on the scale of the 1930s Depression is only a matter of time. Already the banking crisis of 2007-08 very nearly brought the whole world economy to its knees. The Greek crisis of recent years has threatened something similar – the mainly French and German banks that have been over-exposed to Greece have survived (so far) only thanks to the enforced impoverishment and effective economic enslavement of the Greeks. Still more recently, the Italian banks have looked on the edge of crashing... In the opinion of most economists and bankers, another disturbance in trading relations such as Brexit represents could also bring disaster. Hence the extreme volatility of exchange rates and stock markets in the first few days after the Brexit referendum. Some distinguished economists (Patrick Minver, Roger Bootle) have been sanguine about Britain's prospects: after some initial turmoil, they think that Britain's economy, freed from the European cartel system, will be able to expand its trading links and prosper even more than before. But that, of course, is on the assumption that the world economic system *as a whole* does not collapse...

Now this might seem like a powerful argument against Brexit: "Don't rock the already unstable boat!" But this fails to take into account another important aspect of the world economic system – its *unpredictability*. Every purchase, or decision not to purchase, has consequences for the whole system and for the long-term. The problem is: we don't know what they will be... In meteorology, according to "chaos theory", even the fluttering of a butterfly's wings *could* cause a hurricane in some other part of the world – or drive it away. More likely it will have no discernible effect. But the point is that tiny causes *can* have huge effects. It is only recently that we have learned that large events such as volcanoes can have huge effects on the weather for many years. The problem is: we understand these effects only in hindsight; we are still a long way from predicting them in advance... Similarly, in the vastly more complex world of human economic actors, where economic decisions are determined by a vast variety of factors, only some of which are purely rational and economic, it is impossible to predict what the long-term consequences of something like Brexit – in itself, an enormously complex change – will be. Even short-term predictions are dicey, as the spectacular failures of most recent economic forecasting (for example, in relation to the disastrous effects of the introduction of the euro) has demonstrated. Of course, one has to do the best one can according to the knowledge one has. But the mind-boggling complexities mentioned above should fill decision-makers with a little more humility than they currently display. Brexit *may* destabilize the world economic system. On the other hand, it may do the opposite; it may begin the process of removing one of the main distorting and destabilizing factors in the world economy – the economic cartel that is the European Union.

Consider one small fact: Indonesia is inhibited from exporting cocoa beans to Europe because of the prohibitively high tariffs that the European cartel sets up. This is the flip-side of the free market inside Europe: an unfree, tariff-protected market for poor countries outside Europe. That is why several African countries, frustrated by European protectionism, have welcomed Brexit... Or consider another serious distorting factor: the fact that poor countries inside the Union cannot devalue their currencies in order to make themselves more competitive with the richer countries, because they are all tied in to the single currency of the euro. Hence the terrible economic devastation that we see in Greece today – with all the still more terrible consequences that may have for the survival of Orthodox Christian civilization. Nor can the Greeks pay off their enormous debts to the French and German banks because the Eurocrats are demanding that they sell off – at rock-bottom prices – those very economic assets that would enable them to pay off their debts. Even the IMF agrees that this is a crazy policy. (We are not denying that the Greeks' economic profligacy in earlier decades is partly to blame for their present plight, but the fact remains that the European economic system, dominated by Germany, has made that plight much worse.)

The European Union today is the worst-performing economic continent in the world – except Antarctica; it has 50,000 bureaucrats on huge salaries and gold-plated pensions, and is almost mythically corrupt (10% of its income disappears God only knows where, and auditors have refused to sign off on it for the last 19 years). For years, British eurosceptics and others have been warning, cajoling, pleading – with no effect. As Nigel Farage said in the European parliament this week, the Europeans are “in denial” – in denial of the failure of their utopian, neo-Marxian project.

How can the British be blamed for trying to free themselves from their economic chains – and thereby help other European countries to free themselves also? The jury is out on whether they will succeed; there is no question that it will be difficult, especially since the European elites, the health of whose bank balances depends on the present system, have already indicated that they are not going to make things easy for them. But nobody can say for certain that they will not succeed: only God knows the future...

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We have mentioned that EU President Donald Tusk has said that Brexit could spell the end of “western political civilization itself.” *Political*, not economic civilization. And he is right: the heart of the debate is not about economics, but about politics. As Ambrose Evans-Pritchard writes: “Stripped of distractions, [the referendum] comes down to an elemental choice: whether to restore the full self-government of this nation, or to continue living under a higher supranational regime, ruled by a European Council that we do not elect in any meaningful sense, and that the British people can never remove, even when it persists in error.

“... We are deciding whether to be guided by a Commission with quasi-executive powers that operates more like the priesthood of the 13th Century papacy than a modern civil service; and whether to submit to a European Court of Justice (ECJ) that claims sweeping supremacy, with no right of appeal.”³⁵¹

As Nigel Farage, leader of the United Kingdom Independence Party, put it, the referendum was about “getting our country back”.

This is a completely understandable motive – but one that the European elites completely fail to understand. The reason is clear: the New World Order, of which the European Union is a part, has placed the destruction of national sovereignty as one of its main goals. On the excuse that nationalism leads to war, the denationalized Euro elites shout: *Cartago delenda est* – the nation-state with all its local patriotisms and loyalties and attachments *must be destroyed*.

And they are very, very passionate about it – almost as passionate as to start a war over it. Thus the President of Goldman Sachs has declared that Brexit must be overturned “in one way or another” – a somewhat sinister threat. Again, Tony Blair has “demanded” a new referendum, and already 2-3 million signatures on a petition for a new referendum (including 77,000 forgeries) have been created. So much for democracy... But then the EU was never a democratic project...

The journalist Sarah Vine, the wife of Michael Gove, one of the leading Brexit politicians, has described her experience: “The referendum was always going to be a close call. One side was always going to be disappointed. What I had not anticipated, though, was quite how bitterly.

“The way Remain campaigners have reacted to being unexpectedly on the losing side has shocked even a Twitter-hardened old hack like me.

“I think it’s because many of the most passionate Remainers are well-educated, articulate people in positions of authority, used to getting their own way.

“Unlike your average troll, they don’t rely on blunt invective to wound their opponents. Their anger takes the form of keenly worded, rapier-sharp attacks that cut deep.

“Almost overnight, those of us on the winning side suddenly found ourselves re-cast as knuckle-dragging thugs, small-minded Little Englanders whose shortsighted bigotry had brought the nation to its knees, while making

³⁵¹ Evans-Pritchard, “The Brexit Vote is about the Supremacy of Parliament and Nothing Else”, *The Daily Telegraph*, June 12, 2016. See also James Corbett, “Banks Threaten Brits: Don’t Brexit... Or Else!”, *The Corbett Report*, June 15, 2016, <https://www.corbettreport.com/banksters-threaten-brits-dont-brex-it-or-else/#36227717>.

sweet Italian waitresses cry and stopping small Polish children from going to school..."³⁵²

We can go a little deeper into the cause of the anti-Brexiteers' violent passion. Paradoxically, it is a kind of nationalism. For the country of these people, even if they are English by birth and education, is in fact not England but the supra-nation of Europe. Like the socialists who place the unity of the workers of all nations above their own nation, they scorn their birthplace – "Little England" is decidedly not their country. They are true cosmopolitans, "citizens of the world"; but until a world government comes into being they have to be content with the smaller world of the European Union...

This illustrates an important principle of political psychology: that everyone needs a political home of some kind, a home nation with which they can identify. This need is as ineluctable as sex or food; it cannot be eradicated. And there is nothing wrong with it if two opposing perversions can be avoided. The first is the murderous nationalism of the last two centuries that pits nation against nation in a war to the death; in its most extreme form this is Fascism. The other is the desire to destroy all the local attachments, traditions and patriotisms that have been built up over centuries in favour of an atomized, deracinated conglomerate of all the peoples of the earth; in its most extreme form this is Communism.

Post-war European democracy was supposed to be a blessed "third way" avoiding both these extremes. And it must be admitted that it had some success for a few decades. But there was a worm in the apple: the socialism of the EU's real godfather, Jean Monnet, a protégé of American President Franklin D. Roosevelt – the real founder of the United Nations and admirer of "Uncle Joe" Stalin. And so the Treaty of Rome in 1957 prescribed "ever-closer union" between the member-states of the new Union. Since the EU is governed by an unelected bureaucracy that appoints itself and cannot be removed by the people, this is a recipe for despotism...

Indeed, as that distinguished veteran of the Soviet Gulag living in England, Vladimir Bukovsky, has pointed out, there are many remarkable similarities between the European Union and the Soviet Union; the former is a (so far) softer, more sophisticated, "up-market" version of the latter, but its despotic essence is the same. He sees only one major difference between the two: the Soviet Union was built up by force, while the European Union has grown peacefully. But, he warns, it has other methods of coercion, and its own kind of Gulag – the ever-growing mental Gulag of political correctness, which increasingly forces dissidents, patriots and traditionalists of all kinds to keep their mouths shut...³⁵³

³⁵² Vine, "Victory, vitriol and the craziest few days of my life", *Daily Mail*, June 29, 2016, p. 17.

³⁵³ Bukovsky, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bM2Ql3wOGcU>

Another important political issue, but one little discussed in the campaign, is a proposed European army of which all the national armies will be parts. This is, of course, a direct threat to the viability of NATO, since it will draw scarce resources away from it. Putin must like the idea enormously...

"America," writes Evans-Pritchard, "had second thoughts about the EU once the ideological fanatics gained ascendancy in the late 1980s, recasting the union as a rival superpower with ambitions to challenge and surpass the US.

"John Kornblum, the State Department's chief of European affairs in the 1990s, says it was a nightmare trying deal with Brussels. 'I ended up totally frustrated. In the areas of military, security and defence, it is totally dysfunctional.'

"Mr Kornblum argues that the EU 'left NATO psychologically' when it tried to set up its own military command structure, and did so with its usual posturing and incompetence. 'Both Britain and the West would be in much better shape if Britain was not in the EU,' he said."³⁵⁴

But the most important political issue, closely connected with that of sovereignty and independence, is immigration. Stephen Glover writes that large parts of working-class England voted for Brexit because "they feel let down by successive governments which have allowed mass immigration to run out of control, with consequent pressure on public services such as schools and hospitals, a downward effect on wages and, in some cases, the transformation of communities."³⁵⁵ Moreover, control of that flow was impossible as long as Britain was in the European Union and subscribed to its principle of free movement across the continent. Now a country that cannot control its own borders is not really an independent, sovereign state. Therefore recovery of control of Britain's borders is felt to be both a condition and a criterion of the recovery of British sovereignty.

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There was a quasi-religious motivation for the original decision under Tony Blair's Labour government to open the doors to mass immigration. "According to Andrew Neather, a former adviser to Tony Blair and Jack Straw, New Labour threw open Britain's borders to mass immigration to help socially engineer a 'truly multi-cultural country'."³⁵⁶ But "multiculturalism" is a code-word for the destruction of the old "mono-culture", i.e. Christianity; in religious language it is called "ecumenism", the new and enormously powerful religion of the contemporary West.

³⁵⁴ Evans-Pritchard, op. cit.

³⁵⁵ Glover, "Don't blame Corbyn for Labour voters backing Brexit. It was Blair and his cronies who betrayed them on immigration", *The Daily Mail*, June 29, 2016, p. 19.

³⁵⁶ Glover, op. cit.

It works in the following way: the Christians are outnumbered and – out of fear of being accused of “racism” or “hate-crimes”, which now go with prison sentences – *coerced* into a demoralizing acceptance of the immigrant cultures. The only problem with this plan is that if the new immigrants are mainly Muslim, they create a new “mono-culture”. And this is itself the enemy of all other cultures, including the multiculturalism of the European elites...

A few years ago Angela Merkel declared that “multiculturalism” had failed – which was true. But in 2015, on her own initiative tearing up the Dublin agreement, she reversed course, throwing the gates of Europe open to a Muslim invasion. Most commentators accept that this was a disastrous mistake; it may well destroy the EU – if Putin does not destroy it first...

It is above all through multiculturalism and ecumenism that the European Tower of Babel is being constructed... But God destroyed the original Tower of Babel – and through Brexit He may be withdrawing the first brick from the unholy building of the new, twenty-first century Babylon. For the European Union is a fundamentally atheist and anti-theist project that refused – in spite of the Pope’s pleading - to put the word “God” in its constitution.

Let us see how this is so by comparing the ancient and modern Babylons.

The State religion of Babylon under her first king, Nimrod, was a mixture of nature-worship and ancestor-worship. Thus, on the one hand, the Babylonians worshipped the stars and planets, and practised astrology as a means of discovering the will of the gods. "They believed," writes Ninian Smart, "that they could predict not merely by earthly methods of divination, but also by a study of the stars and of planets and the moon".³⁵⁷ One of the purposes of the temples or towers or ziggurats, whose remains can still be seen in the Iraqi desert, may have been as platforms from which to observe the signs of the zodiac. According to Herodotus, at the top of the Tower was a 23.5-ton statue to Marduk and representations of the signs of the Zodiac.

On the other hand, the chief god, Marduk or Merodach, “brightness of the day”, seems to have been identified with Nimrod himself. We know, moreover, that the later kings of Babylon were also identified with the god Marduk.³⁵⁸ This is ancestor-worship. It was probably Nimrod who invented both nature- and ancestor-worship. First he rose to power as a hunter or leader in war; he is described in the Holy Scriptures as “a mighty hunter before the Lord” (Genesis 10.9). Then he consolidated his power by giving himself divine honours.

By imposing false religion in this way he led men away from God, which earned him the title given him by the Jerusalem Targum of “hunter of the sons of men”. For he said: “Depart from the judgement of the Lord, and adhere to

³⁵⁷ Smart, *The Religious Experience of Mankind*, London: Fontana, 1971, p. 299.

³⁵⁸ I.R. Shafarevich, *Sotzializm kak Iavlenie Mirovoj Istorii (Socialism as a Phenomenon of World History)*, Paris: YMCA Press, 1977; Smart, *op. cit.*, p. 299.

the judgement of Nimrod!"³⁵⁹ According to Blessed Jerome, "Nimrod was the first to seize despotic rule over the people, which men were not yet accustomed to".³⁶⁰

"Nimrod" means "let us rebel", and "it was Nimrod," according to Josephus, "who excited them to... contempt of God; he was the grandson of Ham, the son of Noah, a bold man, and of great strength of hand. He persuaded them not to ascribe it to God, as if it were through his means that they were happy, but to believe that it was their own courage that procured their happiness. He also gradually changed the government into tyranny, seeing no other method of turning men from the fear of God, but to bring them into a constant dependence on his own power.

"Now the multitude were very ready to follow the determination of Nimrod, and to esteem it a piece of cowardice to submit to God; and they built a tower, neither sparing any pains, nor being in any degree negligent about the work: and, by reason of the multitude of hands employed in it, it grew very high, sooner than any one could expect; but the thickness of it was so great, and it was so strongly built, that thereby its great height seemed, upon the view, to be less than it really was. It was built of burnt brick, cemented together with mortar, made of bitumen, that it might not be liable to admit water. When God saw that they acted so madly, he did not resolve to destroy them utterly, since they were not grown wiser by the destruction of the former sinners [in the Flood]; but he caused a tumult among them, by producing in them diverse languages, and causing that, through the multitude of those languages, they should not be able to understand one another. The place wherein they built the tower is now called Babylon, because of the confusion of that language which they readily understood before; for the Hebrews mean by the word Babel, confusion..."³⁶¹

The modern Babylon of the New World Order shows a clear kinship with the old Babylon. Of course, the modern Babylonians do not practise astrology - at least, not officially; and officially they are very tolerant of all religions. But they do worship matter as the cause of all being, and they show an inordinate interest in outer space and cosmology (the modern equivalent of astrology, and hardly less deluded). There is even a popular theory that life came to earth from outer space; hence the exorbitant excitement when water was found on a comet. The existence of God is not denied, but they do not "do God", as the expression goes - and, much to the Pope's exasperation, there is no mention of God in the European constitution.

Nor do God's commandments have any part in the morality of the New World Order as expressed in the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the European Convention on Human Rights (1950).

³⁵⁹ Henry Morris, *The Genesis Record*, Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1976, p. 252.

³⁶⁰ St. Jerome, *Hebrew Questions on Genesis*, 10.9.

³⁶¹ Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, I, 4.

Liberal Christians have a tendency to view human rights as a kind of secular version of the New Testament commandments. Nothing could be further from the truth: the philosophy of human rights is designed to replace and utterly destroy Christian morality; it is a Nimrodian act of defiant rebellion against the living God.

This is most clearly seen in its sexual anti-morality. Under the rainbow-coloured banner of “the LGBT community”, every kind of sexual activity, even the most perverse, is not only permitted, but even “celebrated” as if it were something to be proud of. The only restriction is that the perverse sex should be undertaken between consenting adults. But who knows how long it will be before even paedophilia will be generally permitted?

The family, the foundation of every state, and the chief object of its care and protection, is being deliberately and ruthlessly destroyed on the grounds, as the cultural Marxists put it, that it is an out-of-date, patriarchal, repressive institution. And so, just as the Tower of Babel was followed, in the Biblical narrative, by Sodom and Gomorrah, so the modern Babylon, the New World Order, is proceeding to new heights – or depths – of universal licence...

Conclusion. We know what happened to the Tower of Babel, and we know what happened to Sodom and Gomorrah. Therefore the only rational response of the Christian who wishes to save his soul as well as his body is to flee – flee from the whore of Babylon, flee from the burning heat of Sodom. “Come out of her, My people, lest you share in her sins, and receive of her plagues” (Revelation 18.4).

But what relevance has Brexit to this? In what way could Brexit help us to flee the modern Babylon, seeing that even its most fervent supporters want it for economic and political, not spiritual, reasons? And how could Britain lead the way in exiting the universal Sodom when she was a founding member of the New World Order, and one of its most enthusiastic advocates?

For *spiritual* leadership, it must be admitted, we cannot look to Britain; that light can only come from the east, from the Orthodox Christian countries – especially from Russia after she has made her “Russexit” from the final phase of the Russian revolution that Putin’s regime represents. But any rebellion against the New World Order, even if it is inchoate, disorganized, not knowing where it is going or what the ultimate issues are – is to be welcomed. For one thing can lead to another: having asserted her independence in the political field, the British may be encouraged – and encourage others – to *think* more independently, and then to think more *deeply*.

Let us recall that Nimrod “gradually changed the government into tyranny, seeing no other method of turning men from the fear of God, but to bring them into a constant dependence on his own power”. This exactly reflects the reality of the modern European Babylon. As we have seen, the progression to the present 28-nation supranational Union has been gradual, and only a few saw

that the original economic free-trade area was turning into a tyranny. Now almost every aspect of political and economic and religious life in the member-states is dependent on the power of the European Commission, which constantly issues “directives” to them – some trivial (like the correct shape of cucumbers), but others very far from trivial (like enforcing the supposed rights of multiculturalists and sexual perverts).

Now one cannot see the good before one has departed, at any rate to a small degree, from the evil; as the prophet-king David says: “Depart from evil and do good” (Psalm 36.27). We must hope that the British, having departed from the smaller, political evil they can already see, will have their eyes opened to see the greater, religious evil that they do not yet see. The first step is to destroy their “constant dependence on his [the NWO’s] power”: this they have begun to do through the Brexit vote. Now they have to hold on to that sliver of independence against the ferocious backlash which will begin – indeed, it has already begun – from the NWO. If they win this defensive battle – and the British, as their history demonstrates, are well suited to defensive warfare by their individualistic, stubborn, rebellious nature – then, if God wills it, their hearts will be gradually opened to the fear of God and they will return in willing and conscious subjection to the one “Ruler over the princes of the earth,.. Who loved us and washed from our sins in His own blood” (Revelation 1.5), the Lord Jesus Christ...

June 22 / July 5, 2016.

St. Alban, Protomartyr of the British Isles.

25. THE SAROV DAYS

Far from the superficial glitter of Petersburg, and the bloody violence of Kishinev, a truly holy feast was celebrated in July, 1903 in the monastery of Sarov, deep in patriarchal Russia. The occasion was the glorification – on the initiative of the Tsar – of St. Seraphim of Sarov (+1832), perhaps the greatest saint of the Petersburg period of Russian history.

The Russian Church had undertaken few glorifications of saints during the St. Petersburg period of her history. However, early in his reign Tsar Nicholas II initiated no less than six. As Tikhon Sisoiev writes, the most important of these was that of St. Seraphim on July 19, 1903: “The question of the canonization of the Sarov ascetic was first raised in 1883. At that time the leader of the Moscow women gymnasia, Viktorov, wrote a letter to the over-procurator, Konstantin Pobedonostsev, suggesting that ‘the beginning of the reign of the emperor [Alexander III] should be marked by the uncovering of the relics of the pious God-pleaser who was honoured throughout Russia. However, there was no reply. Later other private suggestions were rejected.

“In 1894 on the initiative of Igumen Raphael (Trukhin), the superior of the Sarov monastery, a detailed life of Seraphim of Sarov was composed in which confirmed testimonies of 94 miracles from the life of the ascetic were documented. The Synod acted in an ambiguous way: they refused the canonization, but continued to gather information. Thus the just-started process of glorification hung in the air, and it is not known how long the silence of the Synod would have continued if it had not been for the ‘cunning’ of Archimandrite Seraphim (Chichagov)

“... Archimandrite Seraphim was an energetic man. Having obtained access to the archives of the Diveyevo monastery, he assembled a whole complex of various information about the life and miracles of Seraphim of Sarov, which he systematized in chronological order. As a result of this investigation, a book was published, *The Chronicle of the Seraphimo-Diveyevo Monastery*, which the archimandrite, bypassing the Synod, handed to Nicholas II after a personal audience with his Majesty. We find evidence of this in the diary entries of General Alexander Kireev, who points out that the procurator Pobedonostsev afterwards called Archimandrite Seraphim ‘a great scoundrel and rogue’. The question of the canonization began moving from stationary.

“In the spring of 1902 the over-procurator was invited by the emperor to a family breakfast at which Nicholas II suggested providing – already within a few days – a decree on the glorification of Seraphim of Sarov. Pobedonostsev objected that such haste seemed to him inappropriate when it was a matter of glorifying a man. The empress cut in: “His Majesty can do anything.” The suggestion became an order.

“Why did the Royal Family adopt such unbending determination? There were various reasons for this. The Sarov ascetic had already been venerated for

a long tie in the Romanov family. Thanks to the prayers of Seraphim of Sarov, it was thought, the seven-year-old daughter of Alexander II had been healed. Empress Alexandra Fyodorovna believed that it was precisely through his prayers that a boy – the future heir to the throne – would finally be born in the family. But apart from his personal veneration for the saint, Nicholas II was seeking in the canonization of Seraphim the resolution of profound internal political problems. In the opinion of many historians, his Majesty in the course of the first half of his reign was trying to come closer to the people. “‘Noble Russia’ since 1861 [the emancipation of the serfs] had been inexorably falling apart,’ writes G.P. Fedorov, the Russian historian and philosopher. ‘The Autocracy did not have the strength to tear itself away from its noble roots and would perish together with it. Russia, which had been frozen for twenty years by Pobedonostsev, was clearly rotting under the snow.’ It was precisely the widespread veneration of Seraphim of Sarov among the people that, in the eyes of the emperor himself, provided an opportunity to find a point of contact between the simple people, the intelligentsia and the nobility.

“One way or another, Pobedonostsev submitted, and the *Church Gazette* of July, 1902 announced the beginning of the preparation of the official canonization. In the same month the empress sent gifts to Sarov Desert: a lampada and church vestments. It seemed that the glorification of Seraphim of Sarov was an accomplished fact. But new hindrances arose...

“On January 11, 1903, a commission headed by Metropolitan Vladimir of Moscow arrived in Sarov to unearth and examine the relics of Seraphim of Sarov. Metropolitan Benjamin (Fedchenko) remembered: “The body of the saint had been subject to corruption, but the bones, which were in a perfect state of preservation, were laid out correctly. The hairs of the head and beard had also been preserved; they were of a grayish-ginger colour. The results of the commission were handed to the Most Holy Synod. ‘Why did they go off into some wood to find only some bones?’ said one of the members of the Synod. Everybody was disturbed – if the body had been corrupted, it meant that Seraphim was not a saint.

“The point was that during the Synodal period the idea had become embedded in the people’s and clergy’s consciousness that the holiness of a reposed man was witnessed not only by his life and miracles, but also by the incorruption of his relics. In order to refute this non-obligatory condition of canonization, a whole theological investigation was required. Its results were published in the declaration of Metropolitan Anthony (Vadkovsky): ‘Incorruption of relics is by no means considered to be a sign of the glorification of the holy God-pleasers. When there is incorruption of relics, this is a miracle, but only in addition to those miracles which are worked through their mediation.’ The doubts had been dispelled.

“After this the Synod declared themselves satisfied with the results of the inspection of the relics and prepared a report for the emperor in which they expressed their agreement with the canonization of Seraphim of Sarov. Having

read the report, Nicholas II placed the following resolution on it: 'I have read this with a feeling of true joy and deep emotion'.

"A colossal amount of work was carried out in connection with the organization of the coming festivity in the short period from the beginning of 1903: special 'missionary' trains were sent to Sarov, new hotels were built, medical care points were organized. By July 30 about 300,000 pilgrims and more than 500 clergy had arrived in the town. That evening his Majesty himself arrived. Prince Vladimir Volkonsky, who also came to Sarov, recalled: 'There was a real unity. Not seeming, but sincere and complete, involving the whole assembled people, every person, of whatever class he was. Such a tenderness and kindness reigned over the whole of Sarov and over all who had come under its shade.' We find the same impression in the diary of Nicholas II: 'A huge exaltation of spirit both from the triumphal event and from the amazing mood of the people.'"³⁶²

"The Royal Family," writes Archpriest Lev Lebedev, "had known about the great Wonderworker of the Russian Land for a long time. But a particular impression was made on the Tsar and Tsarina by the book *A Chronicle of the Seraphimo-Diveyevo Women's Monastery*, written and given personally to Nicholas II by Archimandrite Seraphim (Chichagov) – a scion of a noble family, one of the most educated and talented representatives of the nobility, who wanted to exchange a military career for monastic asceticism... In the *Chronicle* there were so many teachings, words of the holy elder of Sarov, prophecies, information about his miracles that the Royal Family was inspired with great faith in him! The triumphant glorification of Seraphim of Sarov, who had already been widely venerated in the people for a long time, was appointed from July 17-20, 1903. The Tsar came to Sarov with his whole family, his mother, the widowed Empress Maria Fyodorovna, his brothers, the Great Princes, other members of the Imperial House, and his suite. The Royal Family had never undertaken such a pilgrimage before. It was unlike any of the other journeys undertaken by the Tsar and Tsaritsa to holy places. Up to 300,000 worshippers from every corner of Russia assembled in Sarov for those days. Nicholas II tried to be present at all the long, almost unending services. The peak of the festivities was the transfer of the relics of St. Seraphim from the monastery's hospital church of SS. Zosimas and Sabbatius, where he had been buried, into the Dormition cathedral of the Sarov community on July 18. The coffin with the relics was borne on their shoulders by the Tsar, the Great Princes and the hierarchs, tightly surrounded by a sea of people."³⁶³

The festivities were truly an icon of Holy Russia: the Royal Family and the Great Princes mixed with thousands of peasants in a natural union that only the true worship of God and the veneration of His saints can produce. Many miracles of healing took place, and those who were present witnessed to the

³⁶² Sisoiev, "Trudnosti kanonizatsii" (Difficulties of canonization), Foma.ru, July 30, 2016, <http://www.pravoslavie.ru/95782.html>.

³⁶³ Lebedev, *Velikorossia* (Great Russia), St. Petersburg, 1999, pp. 388-389.

extraordinary spiritual peace and joy that was granted the worshippers. The Royal Family were praying for their own miracle – the birth of a male...

“Something unseen and unheard took place. The Russian Tsar and his Family were for several days in immediate prayerful union with hundreds of thousands (!) of Russian people, praying together with them, in their very heart. The secret police were as it were dissolved in this mass; in fact, there was essentially no need for its presence! It was truly ‘with one heart and one mouth’ that the Orthodox people glorified God, the God-pleaser Seraphim and God’s Anointed, Tsar Nicholas II!... *Such a meeting with Holy Russia, represented by such a multitude of the people and with the breathing of the special grace of God, bound up with the glorification of St. Seraphim of Sarov, turned out to be the first for the Royal Couple and... the last...*

“The Sarov days of 1903 became *a key event in the whole reign*. During the festivities the Tsar received from the widow of P.A. Motovilov a letter of St. Seraphim of Sarov addressed *precisely to him*, Nicholas II [‘to the Tsar in whose reign I shall be glorified’], ‘sealed (but never opened!) with the soft part of a piece of bread. The Tsar read the letter and his face changed, and after reading it... he wept... To this day nobody knows what was in the letter. We can guess that it contained some kind of prophecy about his destiny, or the destiny of Russia. In the same period Nicholas II visited the fool-for-Christ Pasha of Sarov... She symbolically (by means of a doll) foretold to the Tsar *the birth of a son*, and spoke much with him in figurative language. The Tsar left amazed and joyful: ‘I have travelled across the whole of Russia and have not met such a saint. Everyone has received me as Tsar, but she as a simple person,’ he said. Pasha placed the portrait of Nicholas II in her prayer corner and made many prostrations to the earth in front of it, which greatly exhausted her cell-attendants who used to lift and lower Pasha since she could not make prostrations herself because of illness. ‘Matushka, why are you praying to the Tsar?!’ they asked. ‘You know nothing,’ replied the blessed one. ‘He will be higher than all the Tsars.’ When war began in 1914 Pasha, covered in tears, began to kiss the feet of the Tsar on the portrait, saying: ‘Dear one, it is already near the end,’ and sent him the message: ‘*Your Majesty, come down from the Throne yourself*’...

“The visit to Sarov quickly produced results: On July 30 / August 12, 1904 the Heir to the Throne Alexis Nikolayevich was born! We can imagine the joy of the Crown-Bearing Parents! In the first months of the life of the new-born it was still not known what a terrible disease nestled in him He looked completely healthy, he was simply a beautiful child...

“Now we can understand how the thought of the Tsar about the return of Russia to the pre-Petrine foundations of life were linked into one with the impressions and feeling that arose in the Royal Couple in the Sarov days...”³⁶⁴

³⁶⁴ Lebedev, *op. cit.*, p. 390.

The Sarov days were like a last warm glow from the fading fire of Holy Rus'. They demonstrated that the ideal of a nation united by the Orthodox faith and in submission to a benevolent Tsar-Father was still a living reality. And indeed, there were many great saints still living in Russia at that time, such as the Optina Elders and St. John of Kronstadt, and many hundreds of thousands more who would suffer martyrdom during the Soviet period. These holy people were the fruit of Holy Russia, and its justification. And this holy fruit ripened under the protection of the tsarist regime and with its active support, the proof of which would be the holiness of the Tsar-Martyr himself and his martyred family...

It was at this time that the fool-for-Christ "Blessed Pasha of Sarov" told the Royal Couple that they would have a son. Dominic Lieven writes: "Between 1895 and 1901 the Empress had given birth to four daughters: Olga, Tatiana, Marie and Anastasia. The four little girls were beautiful, healthy and lively children who were greatly loved by their parents. Nicholas was a fine father and the family circle was full of love, warmth and trust. If the Emperor had a favourite it was probably Tatiana, whose personality came closest to that of her mother. Olga, his eldest daughter, was the most thoughtful, sensitive and intelligent of the four. Marie, the third, with huge grey eyes and a warm-hearted, simple, friendly manner, was always the easiest to get on with at first acquaintance. Anastasia, born in 1901, was notorious as the family's comedian. Under Russian law, however, no woman could inherit the crown. Had Nicholas died before 1904, the throne would have gone to his kind-hearted but weak-willed younger brother, the Grand Duke Michael. Since Michael was a bachelor in 1904 and subsequently contracted an illegal and morganatic marriage, the Romanov inheritance would then have passed to a younger brother of Alexander III, the Grand Duke Vladimir, and his descendants. Tension and mutual dislike between the 'Vladimir branch' and the imperial couple were never far below the surface in the twentieth century. Much therefore hung on the life of the little boy born in August, 1904. All the more horrifying was the discovery that the child had haemophilia.

"In the Edwardian era there was no treatment for haemophilia and little way of alleviating the terrible pain it periodically caused. The chances were against a haemophiliac living into middle age, let alone being able to pursue a normal life. For any parents who loved their children as intensely as the imperial couple did, the physical and emotional strain of a haemophiliac son was bound to be great. In the case of Nicholas and Alexandra, however, matters were made worse by the fact that it was considered unthinkable to admit that the future autocrat of all the Russias was incurably ill and quite possibly doomed to an early death. The natural sympathy and understanding which might have flowed to the parents had therefore to be foregone. Moreover, however harrowing one of Aleksei's periodic illnesses might be, a monarch - let alone a Russian autocrat - had always to keep up appearances. It says something for Nicholas's extraordinary self-control that, adoring Aleksei as he did, he nevertheless never let the mask slip. As Alexandra herself once wrote to him, 'you will always keep a cheery face and carry all hidden inside.'

"Inevitably, however, it was the mother who bore the greater burden during her son's illnesses, not to mention the incessant worry even when he was relatively healthy. Nor could she escape the guilt born of the knowledge that she was the cause of her son's suffering and of the extra burden of worry about his dynasty's future that had been placed on her husband's shoulders. Physically frail and always very highly strung, the Empress poured her last drop of energy into watching over her son and nursing him during his attacks... The effort cost the Empress dear. She was often too ill and exhausted to play the role of a monarch's consort, incurring great odium as a result. Moreover, the strain of Alexis' illness pushed his mother close to nervous collapse. As the Grand Duchess Olga commented, 'the birth of a son, which should have been the happiest event in the lives of Nicky and Alicky, became their heaviest cross...'"³⁶⁵

In spite of the joyous Sarov Days, which witnessed to the survival of true faith among the people, the fact was that *on the whole* the Russian people was falling away. And not only among the westernized educated classes. The peasants, too – that class which the tsars believed was most devoted to Altar and Throne – were losing their zeal. It was this fact that, more than any other, pointed to the fall of Holy Russia...

For the time being, however, this fact was hidden from the consciousness of the Tsar himself. He was not to know that the rapturous expressions of devotion he received from peasant delegations in many parts of the country, and most strikingly in Sarov in 1903, came from an ever-dwindling proportion of the common people. He was not to know that Sarov, 1903 marked the high point of his reign, after which there would be a steady descent into anarchy...

July 19 / August 1, 2016.

Translation of the Relics of St. Seraphim of Sarov.

³⁶⁵ Lieven, *Nicholas II*, London: Pimlico, 1993, pp. 34-35.

26. THE APOTHEOSIS OF PAPIISM

The century or so from Pope Innocent III to Pope Boniface VIII represents the medieval papacy at its classic megalomaniac peak. But already in this period we can see the seeds of its fall. This fallibility is revealed not only in its relations with secular rulers, but also in the new and subversive doctrine of natural law.

1. Innocent III and Secular Rulers

Pope Innocent III (1198-1216) was probably the most powerful and imperialist pope in history. Applying Jeremiah 1.10, "I have set thee over the nations and kingdoms" to himself, he declared that the Pope was "truly the vicar of Jesus Christ, anointed of the Lord... set between God and man, lower than God but higher than man, who judges all and is judged by no one".³⁶⁶ His ambitions had been apparent already at his enthronement: "Take this tiara," intoned the Archdeacon, "and know that thou art Father of princes and kings, ruler of the world, the vicar on earth of our Saviour Jesus Christ, whose honour and glory shall endure through all eternity."³⁶⁷

Nor did Innocent in private soften the force of these publicly proclaimed claims. For "we are the successor of the Prince of the Apostles," he said, "but we are not his vicar, nor the vicar of any man or Apostle, but the vicar of Jesus Christ Himself before whom every knee shall bow."³⁶⁸ But was it before Christ or before the Pope that the Scripture said every knee shall bow? It made little difference to the papists. For by now the Pope had taken the place, not just of Peter, but of Christ in the Roman Church.

Innocent invented an original doctrine, the "by reason of sin" (ratione peccati) theory, which enabled him to interfere in secular affairs, and make judgements in disputes between secular rulers, where he judged sin to be involved. Whether or not sin was involved was in a given case was up to the Pope to decide; he was the expert on sin, though he was not yet acknowledged to be sinless himself. And since, as is generally acknowledged, sin is everywhere, Innocent intervened vigorously in every part of Christendom.

Certainly, there was no question but that the Holy Roman Emperor was subject to him; for, as he put it in 1198, "just as the moon derives its light from the sun and is indeed lower than it in quantity and quality, in position and in power, so too the royal power derives the splendor of its dignity from the pontifical authority..."

On this basis Innocent intervened vigorously in the election of the German Emperors, choosing Otto IV because he promised to do whatever he ordered

³⁶⁶ Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Sovereignty: God, State, and Self*, New York: Bantam Books, 2008, p. 48.

³⁶⁷ Peter de Rosa, *Vicars of Christ*, London: Bantam Press, 1988, De Rosa, p. 67.

³⁶⁸ De Rosa, op. cit., p. 68.

him. So Otto was crowned “king of the Romans, elect by the grace of God and of the Pope” (the pope evidently had his own grace, to supplement that of God!). But within a year he had excommunicated him...

Innocent was no less high-handed in his relations with the other monarchs of the West. In England in 1172, King Henry II had murdered Thomas Becket, archbishop of Canterbury. The resultant canonization of the archbishop raised the prestige of the Church in its perennial struggle with the State, and the Popes were not slow to press home their advantage.

Thus when King John disagreed with Innocent over who should be archbishop and plundered the revenues of the Church, the pope placed the whole kingdom under interdict for six years. He excommunicated John³⁶⁹, deposed him from the throne and suggested to King Philip Augustus of France that he invade and conquer England! John appealed to papal mediation to save him from Philip. He received it, but at a price – full restitution of church funds and lands, perpetual infeudation of England and Ireland³⁷⁰ to the papacy, and the payment of an annual rent of a thousand marks. Only when all the money had been paid was the interdict lifted “and,” as De Rosa puts it acidly: “by kind permission of Pope Innocent III, Christ was able to enter England again”.³⁷¹

This enraged King Philip, however; for he was now ordered to abandon his preparations for war, in that England was now *papal* soil. Moreover, the abject surrender of John to the Pope, and the oath of fealty he made to him, aroused the fears of the English barons. These fears, combined with John’s despotic rule, led to the baron’s imposing upon the king the famous Magna Carta of 1215, which set out the rights of the “free man” as follows: “No free man is to be arrested, or imprisoned, or disseised, or outlawed, or exiled, or in any way destroyed... save by the lawful judgement of his peers or by the law of the land”. It “promised the protection of church rights, protection from illegal imprisonment, access to swift justice, and, most importantly, limitations on taxation and other feudal payments to the Crown, with certain forms of feudal

³⁶⁹ One has to admit that this sentence was justified. “King John lost most of his empire, broke every promise he ever made, dropped his royal seal in the sea, impoverished England, murdered his nephew, seduced the wives of his friends, betrayed his father, brothers and country, foamed at the mouth when angry, starved and tortured his enemies to death, lost virtually every battle he fought, fled any responsibility whenever possible and died of eating too many peaches” (Montefiore, *Titans of History*, p. 137).

³⁷⁰ In 1152 the English Pope Adrian IV by his bull *Laudabiliter* had reminded the English King Henry II that Ireland, like all islands, belonged to St. Peter and the Roman Church in accordance with the Donation of Constantine. He therefore blessed Henry to invade Ireland in order to extend the boundaries of the Church, extirpate vice and instill virtue. As John of Salisbury wrote in his *Metalogicus* of 1156 of Adrian: “At my solicitation he granted Ireland to Henry II, the illustrious King of England, to hold by hereditary right, as his letter to this day testifies. For all Ireland of ancient right, according to the *Donation of Constantine*, was said to belong to the Roman Church which he founded. Henry duly obliged in 1172 by invading Ireland and beginning the fateful “Irish question”. See Michael Richter, “The First Century of Anglo-Irish Relations”, *History*, 59, N 196, June, 1974, pp. 195-210.

³⁷¹ De Rosa, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

taxation requiring baronial consent. It focused on the rights of free men – in particular the barons – and not serfs and unfree labour.”³⁷²

According to David Starkey, Magna Carta “set out to do three things. Firstly, to bridle a king, John, who was dangerous and unpredictable and made his whim the law, and secondly, to make it impossible for any other king to rule in the same way. It was successful in both these things. The third thing was the great change, and something very different: it set out to create a machinery that absolutely bound any king in iron to its measures. The 1215 Magna Carta failed in that respect because it would have created a neo-republican government. It began as a thoroughly extremist programme before being edited and reaching common ground.

“It’s perfectly clear that it was highly controversial from the beginning: hence the denunciation of Magna Carta by the papacy...”³⁷³

Magna Carta is therefore commonly regarded as the beginning of modern western democracy. But it had the further, boomerang effect of undermining papal power. For although Magna Carta was a limitation of royal, not papal power, it set a dangerous, revolutionary precedent which might be used against the Pope himself. And indeed, it was so used: in 1366 the English parliament abolished the feudal subjection of England to the papacy...³⁷⁴

Foreseeing these consequences, Pope Innocent III “from the plenitude of his unlimited power” condemned the charter as “contrary to moral law”, “null and void of all validity forever”, absolved the king from having to observe it and excommunicated “anyone who should continue to maintain such treasonable and iniquitous pretensions”. But Archbishop Stephen Langton of Canterbury refused to publish this sentence. And the reason he gave was very significant: “Natural law is binding on popes and princes and bishops alike: there is no escape from it. It is beyond the reach of the pope himself.”³⁷⁵ We shall return to this concept of natural law, which presented a challenge to the papacy’s claims of the greatest significance...

[2. The Inquisition](#)

Also in 1215 Innocent convened the Fourth Lateran council, which assembled 400 bishops and 800 abbots from every country in Europe and the Mediterranean basin. It represents the high-water mark of the papist despotism. For in it every decree of the Pope was passed without the slightest

³⁷² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magna_Carta.

³⁷³ Starkey, “Magna Carta of 1215 was designed to create a revolutionary regime”, *History Today*, May, 2015, p. 64.

³⁷⁴ J.A. Watt, “Spiritual and Temporal Powers”, *The Cambridge History of Medieval Political Thought, c. 350 – c. 1450*, Cambridge University Press, 1991, p. 393.

³⁷⁵ De Rosa, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

debate in accordance with Innocent's word: "Every cleric must obey the Pope, even if he commands what is evil; for no one may judge the Pope..."³⁷⁶

Coming shortly after the crusade against the Albigensians, the council legalized their slaughter, declaring it right, even obligatory to kill heretics: "If a temporal Lord neglects to fulfil the demand of the Church that he shall purge his land of this contamination of heresy, he shall be excommunicated by the metropolitan and other bishops of the province. If he fails to make amends within a year, it shall be reported to the Supreme Pontiff, who shall pronounce his vassals absolved from fealty to him and offer his land to Catholics. The latter shall exterminate the heretics, possess the land without dispute and preserve it in the true faith... Catholics who assume the cross and devote themselves to the extermination of heretics shall enjoy the same indulgence and privilege as those who go to the Holy Land..."³⁷⁷

It was Thomas Aquinas who provided a theological justification for the killing of heretics: "There is a sin, whereby they deserve not only to be separated from the Church by excommunication, but also to be shut off from the world by death. For it is a much more serious matter to corrupt faith, through which comes the soul's life, than to forge money, through which temporal life is supported. Hence if forgers of money or other malefactors are straightway justly put to death by secular princes, with much more justice can heretics, immediately upon conviction, be not only excommunicated but also put to death."³⁷⁸

Compare these words with those of the Orthodox Bishop Wason of Liège written to the Bishop of Châlons in about 1045: "We have not received power to cut off from this life by the secular sword those whom our Creator and Redeemer wills to live so that they may extricate themselves from the snares of the devil... Those who today are our adversaries in the way of the Lord can, by the grace of God, become our betters in the heavenly country... We who are called bishops did not receive unction from the Lord to give death but to bring life."³⁷⁹

The Church in both East and West always considered heresy to be the most serious of sins. However, the execution of heretics had been extremely rare. That was now to change...

The Inquisition was officially founded by Pope Gregory IX in 1233. The Dominicans were entrusted with the task of eradicating heresy, calling in the secular authorities if necessary.³⁸⁰ Only one verdict was possible: guilty. For

³⁷⁶ De Rosa, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

³⁷⁷ Henry Bettenson and Chris Maunder, *Documents of the Christian Church*, London: SPCK, 1999, p. 147.

³⁷⁸ Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, ii. Q. xi; in Bettenson & Maunder, *op. cit.*, pp. 147-148.

³⁷⁹ Bishop Wason, in Jean Comby, *How to Read Church History*, London: SCM Press, 1985, vol. 1, p. 167.

³⁸⁰ Michael Baigent and Richard Leigh, *The Inquisition*, London: Penguin, 1999, pp. 20-21.

according to the Libro Negro of the inquisitors, “if, notwithstanding all the means [of torture] employed, the unfortunate wretch still denies his guilt, he is to be considered as a victim of the devil: and, as such, deserves no compassion...: he is a son of perdition. Let him perish among the damned.”³⁸¹

The Inquisition became especially notorious in Spain, where, as “Llorente, Secretary to the Inquisition in Madrid from 1790 to 1792, estimated in his *History of the Inquisition*... up to his time thirty thousand had been put to death.... During the reign of Philip II, Bloody Mary’s Spanish husband, it is reckoned that the victims of the Inquisition exceeded by many thousands all the Christians who had suffered under the Roman emperors.”³⁸²

It had not always been like that. Orthodox Spain before its conquest by the Moors in 717 had already replaced “the oath of compurgatores, or the judicial combat” by “the proof by witnesses, and a rational investigation of the matter in question, such as might be expected in a civilised society.”³⁸³ Truly, as de Rosa writes, “the Inquisition was not only evil compared with the twentieth century, it was evil compared with the tenth and eleventh century when torture was outlawed and men and women were guaranteed a fair trial. It was evil compared with the age of Diocletian, for no one was then tortured and killed *in the name of Jesus crucified*.”³⁸⁴

Five centuries later, Cardinal Bellarmine, in his book De Romano Pontifice, was preaching the same doctrine: “The Pope is the supreme judge in deciding questions of faith and morals.... If the Pope were to err by imposing sins and forbidding virtues, the Church would still have to consider sins as good and virtues as vices, or else she would sin against conscience.”³⁸⁵

Thus did the Roman Church consciously and completely openly declare that truth is not truth, or goodness goodness – if the Pope so decrees. Later, during the Reformation, the Pope would be replaced by the People as the ultimate arbiter of truth and goodness. Thus both Catholics and Protestants denied the only “pillar and ground of the truth”, which is “the Church of the living God” (I Timothy 3.15).

3. Emperor Frederick II

But the papacy’s enemies were not finished yet. The popes continued to be defied by that most avant-garde outpost of medieval kingship, the kings of Sicily, who continued to break the mould of medieval kingship. Their most famous and powerful representative was Frederick II Hofenstaufen (1194-1250), who was also Holy Roman Emperor and who wanted to extend his territories beyond Germany and Sicily into the Italian lands in between.

³⁸¹ De Rosa, op. cit., p. 164.

³⁸² De Rosa, op. cit., p. 171.

³⁸³ François Guizot, *The History of Civilization in Europe*, London: Penguin Books, 1997, p. 60.

³⁸⁴ De Rosa, op. cit., p. 177.

³⁸⁵ De Rosa, op. cit., p. 52.

Sebastian Sebag Montefiore writes: “He was raised in Sicily, a court that blended Christian and Islamic, Arab and Norman culture. If his upbringing – speaking Arabic, and at home with Jews and Muslims – made him seem exotic, his eccentricity was his own. He travelled with Arab bodyguards, a Scottish magician, Jewish and Arab scholars, fifty falconers, a zoo and a sultanic harem of odalisques. He was said to be an atheistic scientist who joked that Jesus, Muhammed and Moses were frauds and was portrayed as a proto-Dr Frankenstein who sealed a dying man in a barrel to see if his would escape.

“Yet he was actually an effective and ruthless politician with a clear vision of his own role as universal Christian emperor...”³⁸⁶

This inevitably brought him into conflict with that other universal Christian emperor, the Pope, who excommunicated him in 1227 for his supposed dilatoriness in going on crusade. In spite of that (perhaps because of it?), he succeeded where previous, papally-sponsored crusaders had failed, and occupied Jerusalem without bloodshed for ten years!

“At the heart of this bitter conflict lay the question of who would dominate Christendom: pope or emperor. With each side buoyed up by a messianic belief in his cause, Italy became the battleground of papal bulls and insults flew across Europe. Frederick was again excommunicated. If he was the Wonder of the World to his admirers, he was henceforth Beast of the Apocalypse to his enemies. Two different popes, Gregory IX and Innocent IV, fled Rome, the former dying in exile. In 1245 Innocent IV fired the papacy’s ultimate salvo: he announced the emperor was deposed. For the next five years it was all-out war. In the end it was death, not the papacy, that defeated Frederick. Fighting on against the almost insurmountable twin obstacles of excommunication and deposition, Frederick was regaining ground in both Italy and Germany when he died suddenly in 1250...”³⁸⁷

Empire and papacy were now about equally matched. But now there entered into the equation a philosophical idea that was to sap at the foundations of both – natural law.

[4. Thomas Aquinas on Natural Law](#)

Now the twelfth century had seen a revival in the study of certain Byzantine legal texts, especially Justinian’s *Digest*; and one of the ideas that the medieval jurists extracted from the *Digest* posed a serious threat to the papist world-view. This was the idea that *everyone* – even the pope and the emperor – is subject to the rule of law. Archbishop Stephen of Canterbury, as we have seen, used this idea to defend Magna Carta.

³⁸⁶ Montefiore, *Titans of History*, London: Quercus, 2012, p. 144.

³⁸⁷ Montefiore, *Titans of History*, pp. 145-146.

Thus the *Digest* declared that “law is... something which *all* men ought to obey for many reasons, and chiefly because every law is devised and given by God, but resolved on by intelligent men, a means of correcting offences both intentional and unintentional, a general agreement on the part of the community by which all those living therein ought to order their lives. We may add that Chrysippus [said]: ‘Law is the king of all things, both divine and human; it ought to be the controller, ruler and commander of both the good and the bad’.”³⁸⁸

But what kind of law was meant? There was scope for confusion and contradiction here. For it was another principle of Roman-Byzantine law that the prince was *above* the law, or freed from human laws (*legibus solutus*), insofar as “what pleases the prince has the power of law”. For if he broke his own laws, who was to judge him and who was to prevent him passing other laws to make his previous transgression of the law lawful? The pope was similarly considered to be above the law – that is, canon law. This was a consequence of his “absolute power” (*potestas absoluta*), for if he sinned against canon law, or became a heretic, who was to judge him if not the supreme expert on the subject, the pope himself? And who could judge him if he refused to judge himself? So a monarch might be freed from the laws of the State, and the pope might be freed from the canon law of the Church. But they were both theoretically subject to another kind of law. This higher law was called by medieval theorists *natural law*.

In the twelfth century the jurist Gratian had distinguished between natural law and customary law.³⁸⁹ Towards the end of the thirteenth century, the concept of natural law was formulated with greater precision by Thomas Aquinas, the most famous of the medieval Catholic theologians, who practiced that corruption of Christian theology by Greek pagan philosophy, especially Aristotelianism, known as *scholasticism*. However, in his general political theory Aquinas remained more Christian than Aristotelian, and closer to the Orthodox concept of the two powers than to the papist theory of the complete subordination of the State to the Church.

Thus, as the Jesuit Fr. Frederick Copleston interprets his thought: “The end of the Church, a supernatural end, is higher than that of the State, so that the Church is a society superior to the State, which must subordinate itself to the Church in matters bearing upon the supernatural life; but that does not alter the fact that the State is a ‘perfect society’, autonomous within its own sphere. In terms of later theology, then, St. Thomas must be reckoned as an upholder of the *indirect power* of the Church over the State... St. Thomas does not say that man has, as it were, two final ends, a temporal end which is catered for by the State and a supernatural, eternal end which is catered for by the State: he says that man has one final end, a supernatural end, and that the business of the

³⁸⁸ Quoted in R.H.C. Davis, *A History of Medieval Europe*, Harlow: Longman, p. 310.

³⁸⁹ In fact, according to Francis Fukuyama, he “established a hierarchy among divine, natural, positive, and customary law” (*The Origins of Political Order*, London: Profile, 2012, p. 269).

monarch, in his direction of earthly affairs, is to facilitate the attainment of that end. The power of the Church over the State is not a potesta directa, since it is the business of the State, not the Church, to care for economic concerns and the preservation of peace; but the State must care for these concerns with an eye on the supernatural end of man. In other words, the State may be a 'perfect society' [pace Aristotle], but the elevation of man to the supernatural order means that the State is very much a handmaid of the Church. This point of view is based not so much on medieval practice as on the Christian faith, and it is, needless to say, not the view of Aristotle who knew nothing of man's eternal and supernatural end."³⁹⁰

So far so good. However, the revolutionary concept of "natural law" goes back to the early Greek philosophers and is not equivalent to any Scriptural or patristic concept of law. Fr. Copleston defines it as "the totality of the universal dictates of right reason concerning that good of nature which is to be pursued and that evil of man's nature which is to be shunned."³⁹¹ But how do we know what is "right reason" and "the good of nature"?

Another interpreter of Aquinas, J.S. McClelland, explains: "For a maxim of morality or a maxim of good government to be part of natural law, it has to be consistent with scripture, with the writings of the Fathers of the Church, with papal pronouncement, with what the philosophers say, and it must also be consistent with the common practices of mankind, both Christian and non-Christian."³⁹² But "papal pronouncement" often contradicts "the writings of the Fathers of the Church", "what the philosophers say" takes us still further away from the Fathers, and "the common practices of mankind, both Christian and non-Christian" encourages complete license of interpretation.

Aquinas defined the relationship of natural law to man-made laws as follows: "Every law framed by man bears the character of a law exactly to that extent to which it is derived from the law of nature. But if on any point it is in conflict with the law of nature, it at once ceases to be a law; it is a mere perversion of the law."³⁹³

If this concept could be made precise, it could provide a basis on which to justify rebellion against the powers that be, whether in Church or State. However, Aquinas was not trying to find reasons for rebellion against either the ecclesiastical or the secular authorities. "Like Aristotle and Augustine," writes McClelland, "Thomas always makes a presumption in favour of obedience. Good government carries its own rationale with it, and this is definitely strengthened by the Aristotelian ends which Thomas embeds in secular authority. The effects of good government are certainly pleasing to

³⁹⁰ Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Press, vol. 2, part II, pp. 135-136.

³⁹¹ Copleston, *op. cit.*, p. 129.

³⁹² McClelland, *A History of Western Political Thought*, Routledge: London and New York, 1996, p. 123.

³⁹³ Bertrand Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy*, London: Allen Unwin, 1946, p. 648.

God. Thomas assumes that there will be a substantial natural law content in nearly all positive law (and even in the positive law of Muslim kingdoms ruling over Christian subjects). Obedience to positive law is therefore to an extent obedience to God's law...

"Thomas ends by claiming that most secular law is binding on Christian conscience, including most of what might appear at first sight to be the doubtful cases. No Christian had ever doubted that unjust law – that is, law which flies in the face of the direct commands of the Scriptures – is invalid; and law that is obviously in keeping with God's commands is good law by definition. But what about law that is somehow 'in between', law which is neither very good nor very bad? Aristotelianism enables him to establish a presumption in favour of obedience in conscience to this 'in between' kind of law. The question of obedience to a particular command of the positive law cannot be divorced from consideration of the ends for which positive law is in general established, and one of these ends is the secular peace on which the realisation of all other strictly human ends depends. A rational conscience is therefore obliged to consider the question of obedience to an 'in between' law very carefully. Disobedience is only justified if two criteria can be met. First, the law must be bad in itself, though not necessarily very wicked; and second, disobedience must not threaten the earthly peace to the extent that the ends for which earthly peace in general established become more difficult to realise. The second criterion is obviously more difficult to meet than the first. It is not a blanket cover for obedience in conscience to every nasty law, but it comes close. The implication is that law bad enough to satisfy both criteria is only going to appear very infrequently, because no case is easier to make out than the case which argues that disobedience in this case of bad law is unjustified because disobedience might either cause social disturbance or indirectly encourage other kinds of law-breaking."³⁹⁴

Copleston puts the matter as follows: "The function of the human legislator is primarily to apply the natural law and to support the law by sanctions. For example, murder is forbidden by the natural law, but reason shows the desirability of positive enactments whereby murder is clearly defined and whereby sanctions are added, since the natural law does not of itself clearly define murder in detail or provide immediate sanctions. The legislator's primary function is, therefore, that of defining or making explicit the natural law, of applying it to particular cases and of making it effective. It follows that... every human law is a true law only in so far as it is derived from the natural law. 'But if it disagrees with the natural law in something, it will not be a law, but the perversion of law.' The ruler is not entitled to promulgate laws which go counter to or are incompatible with the natural law (or, of course, the divine law): he has his legislative power ultimately from God, since all authority comes from God, and he is responsible for his use of that power: he is himself subject to the natural law and is not entitled to transgress it himself or to order his subjects to do anything incompatible with it. Just human laws

³⁹⁴ McClelland, *op. cit.*, pp. 118-119.

bind in conscience in virtue of the eternal law from which they are ultimately derived; but unjust laws do not bind in conscience. Now, a law may be unjust because it is contrary to the common good or because it is enacted simply for the selfish and private ends of the legislator, thus imposing an unjustifiable burden on the subjects, or because it imposes burdens on the subjects in an unjustifiably unequal manner, and such laws, being more acts of violence than laws, do not bind in conscience, unless perhaps on occasion their non-observance would produce a greater evil. As for laws which are contrary to the divine law, it is never licit to obey them, since we ought to obey God rather than men."³⁹⁵

"The ruler possesses his sovereignty only for the good of the whole people, not for his private good, and if he abuses his power, he becomes a tyrant. Assassination of a tyrant was condemned by St. Thomas and he speaks at some length of the evils which may attend rebellions against a tyrant. For example, the tyrant may become more tyrannical, if the rebellion fails, while if it is successful, it may simply result in the substitution of one tyranny for another. But deposition of a tyrant is legitimate, especially if the people have the right of providing for themselves with a king. (Presumably St. Thomas is referring to an elective monarchy.) In such a case the people do no wrong in deposing the tyrant, even if they had subjected themselves to him without any time limit, for he has deserved deposition by not keeping faith with his subjects. Nevertheless, in view of the evils which may attend rebellion, it is far preferable to make provision beforehand to prevent a monarchy turning into a tyranny than to have to put up with or to rebel against tyranny once established. If feasible, no one should be made ruler if he is likely to turn himself into a tyrant; but in any case the power of the monarch should be so tempered that his rule cannot easily be turned into a tyranny. The best constitution will in fact be a 'mixed' constitution, in which some place is given to aristocracy and also to democracy, in the sense that the election of certain magistrates should be in the hands of the people."³⁹⁶

Aquinas also, writes Joseph Canning, "accepted government by the people as a valid form for cities. This provision underlay his general theory of legislation: 'Making law belongs either to the whole multitude or to the public person who has care of the whole multitude', as also did the power of legal coercion. Indeed, 'if it is a free multitude, which could make law for itself, the multitude's consent, manifested by custom, has more weight in observing something than the authority of the prince, who only has the power to make law, in so far as he bears the person of the multitude.'"³⁹⁷

The revolutionary potential of this doctrine is obvious; and, having made every allowance for Aquinas' essential conservatism, it has to be said that he opened a chink in the wall of social stability that more determined people

³⁹⁵ Copleston, *op. cit.*, pp. 138-139.

³⁹⁶ Copleston, *op. cit.*, pp. 139-140.

³⁹⁷ Canning, *A History of Medieval Political Thought, 300-1450*, London: Routledge, 1996, p. 131.

would make wider. The problem was that the concept of natural law was so vague that it could be used to justify almost any act of disobedience provided it had mass support. Since natural law, in his understanding, was a kind of self-evident truth to which all men had access, it followed that it was the people as a whole – and “people” here could mean Muslims and pagans as well as Christians – who were the ultimate arbiters of justice and truth. True, Aquinas stipulated that natural law should be consistent, in McClelland’s words, “with scripture, with the writings of the Fathers of the Church, with papal pronouncement” as well as “with the common practices of mankind, both Christian and non-Christian”. But it was the latter part of the definition that was seized upon by political theorists and reformers, who knew little or nothing about the Scriptures or the Fathers, but claimed that their own beliefs coincided completely with the common practices and beliefs of mankind.

According to Aquinas, all men know naturally, without the need for grace, what is politically right and just. Here he shows the influence of Aristotle, for whom man was a political animal, and political life – the most natural thing in the world, having no relation to any supernatural or supra-political, religious goals. This was subtly different from the Orthodox view, which is that the truly natural is that which is grace-filled: without grace, nature degenerates into that which is unnatural, contrary to nature. According to the Holy Fathers, therefore, the will and law of God is not apprehended in a “natural” way, if by “natural” we mean the fallen human mind, but by grace. While there is “a light that enlightens every man that comes into the world” (John 1.9), this natural light of grace, this “eye of God in the soul of man”, has been so darkened by the fall that it is folly to entrust the most important decisions of political and social life to the people as a whole. According to Orthodoxy, there is no safety in numbers; the multitude can, and very often are, wrong. Only by personal purification of the mind, and the ascent of the whole person to God, can the will of God be known.

In the eighth century Deacon Alcuin of York had expressed this principle in its political application in a letter to Charlemagne: “The people should be led, not followed, as God has ordained... Those who say, ‘The voice of the people is the voice of God,’ are not to be listened to, for the unruliness of the mob is always close to madness.”³⁹⁸

The difference between Alcuin and Aquinas is the difference between Orthodoxy and Catholicism. Orthodoxy presents the apostolic teaching of obedience to secular authorities on the basis of a profound understanding of the fall of man, from which the intellect of man, whether as an individual or en masse, is not immune. Catholicism exempts the intellect from the fall, but thereby undermines the basis of obedience to all authorities, both secular and ecclesiastical.

³⁹⁸ Alcuin of York, *Letter to Charlemagne*, M.G.H., 4, letter 132.

Aquinas represents a point of transition between the eleventh- and twelfth-century doctrine of the absolute papal monarchy and the conciliarist teaching of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. On the one hand, he upheld the doctrine that the pope “occupies the summit of both powers, spiritual and secular”, and that secular rulers, while having a certain autonomy, “should be subject to him who cares for the ultimate end, and be directed by his command”.³⁹⁹ On the other hand, his doctrine of natural law opened the way for the people to judge and depose both popes and kings.

Aquinas does recognize that the king is the Lord’s anointed.⁴⁰⁰ And yet there is little place in his system for recognition of the sacred character of Christian kingship. The reason for this lack is not far to find: the Popes had destroyed such faith in the course of nearly two centuries of incessant propaganda against kingship and the sacrament of royal anointing, violently undermining every authority except their own. All reasonable men rebelled instinctively against this tyranny, but their lack of a truly Orthodox faith prevented them from understanding its cause and fighting against it effectively. And so, failing to understand the root of the tyranny that oppressed him, western man could turn from the extreme of tyranny to the other, equally barren and destructive extreme of *democracy* – rule by everyman rather than rule by one.

5. Boniface VIII, *Unam Sanctam* and Philip the Fair

“By the fourteenth century,” write Larry Siedentop, “an increasing number of voices were calling for something like representative government in the church. Calls for reform focused on the role of general councils. Was not a general council of the church the supreme authority in matters concerning the faith and well being of the church? Did not the authority of such a council constrain even the pope’s ordinary jurisdiction, his claim to be the final judge and legislator of the church?”

“The struggle between Boniface VIII and Philip the Fair [King of France], which began in 1297, gave these questions a new urgency. The French king – urged on by many cardinals and Franciscans – appealed to a general council, contending that Boniface was a usurper (that is, that the resignation of his predecessor, Celestine V, was ‘forced’ and invalid) and a heretic... The relationship between the papacy and church authorities – as well as papal relations with secular rulers asserting their sovereignty – came under unprecedented critical scrutiny...”⁴⁰¹

If Pope Innocent III represented the apotheosis of papal power, Boniface VIII represented a second megalomaniac peak. For as Fr. Seraphim Rose writes, he “seated himself on the throne of Constantine, arrayed himself in a sword, crown and sceptre, and shouted aloud: ‘I am Caesar – I am Emperor.’ This was

³⁹⁹ Canning, *op. cit.*, pp. 132, 133.

⁴⁰⁰ Aquinas, *On Kingship*, VII.61.

⁴⁰¹ Siedentop, *Inventing the Individual*, London: Penguin, 2010, p. 328.

not just an act but an indication of something extremely deep in the whole of modern thought: the search for a universal monarch, who will be Antichrist."⁴⁰²

In his struggle against the king, Boniface VIII made special use of the two swords metaphor, the last great metaphor of papal power, which had originally been developed in the eleventh century in an *anti*-papal spirit by Gottschalk of Aachen, a chaplain of the Emperor Henry IV. Pope Gregory VII, claimed Gottschalk, had "without God's knowledge usurped the regnum and sacerdotium for himself. In so doing he despised God's pious Arrangement which He wished principally to consist not in one, but in two: that is the regnum and sacerdotium, as the Saviour in His passion had intimated should be understood by the figurative sufficiency of the two swords. When it was said to Him, 'Lord, behold here are two swords', he replied, 'It is enough' (Luke 22.48), signifying by this sufficient duality that there were to be borne in the Church a spiritual and a carnal sword, by which every harmful thing would be cut off: the sacerdotal sword would be used to encourage obedience to the king on God's behalf, whereas the royal would be employed for expelling the enemies of Christ without, and for enforcing obedience to the sacerdotium within."⁴⁰³

However, the papists turned the allegory on its head by claiming that both the secular and the spiritual swords were in the hands of the Pope. They also pointed out that the Apostle Peter had, almost immediately after these words of Christ, used the secular sword to cut off Malchus' ear (Luke 22.50).

To which the riposte from the monarchist side was that the Lord had then ordered Peter to put up his sword, saying: "All they that take the sword shall perish by the sword" (Matthew 26.5)...

Prince Roman Mstislavich of Galicia gave a similar answer to a papal legate who came to him after the conquest of Constantinople by the crusaders in 1204, "declaring that the Pope would soon subdue all peoples with the sword of Peter and make him king. Roman took his sword and said: 'Is Peter's sword that the Pope has like this? If so, then with it he can take cities and give them to others. But this is against the Word of God: for the Lord forbade Peter to have such a sword and fight with it. But I have a sword given to me by God' ".⁴⁰⁴

The papists were able to get round even this objection. "The sword is yours to be drawn," wrote Bernard of Clairvaux to the Pope, "perhaps at your command, if not by your hand. Otherwise, if it in no way belonged to you, when the apostles said, 'Behold, there are two swords here', the Lord would not have replied to them, 'It is enough', but 'It is too much'. Both belong to the Church, that is the spiritual sword and the material, but the one is to be drawn

⁴⁰² Rose, in Monk Damascene Christensen, *Not of this World: The Life and Teaching of Fr. Seraphim Rose*, Forestville, Ca.: Fr. Seraphim Rose Foundation, 1993, p. 592.

⁴⁰³ Gottschalk, in Canning, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

⁴⁰⁴ Vladimir Rusak, *Istoria Russkoj Tserkvi* (History of the Russian Church), 1993, p 140.

for the Church, and the other also by the Church: the one by the priest's hand, the other by the soldier's, but, to be sure, at the priest's command and the emperor's order."⁴⁰⁵

In 1302, in his famous bull, Unam Sanctam, Boniface declared that submission to the Pope was a necessary condition of salvation for every creature. And he returned to the image of the sword: "He who denies that the temporal sword is in the power of Peter wrongly interprets the Lord's words, 'Put up thy sword into its scabbard'. Both swords, the spiritual and the material, are in the power of the Church. The spiritual is wielded *by* the Church; the material *for* the Church. The one by the hand of the priest; the other by the hand of kings and knights at the will and sufferance of the priest. One sword has to be under the other; the material under the spiritual, as the temporal authority in general is under the spiritual."⁴⁰⁶

Unam Sanctam was followed in 1303 by the appointment of Albert of Hapsburg as Holy Roman Emperor with authority over all rulers, including Philip the Fair.⁴⁰⁷ But an aide of the King of France noted: "The Pope's sword is merely made of words; my master's is of steel."⁴⁰⁸ So when French soldiers burst into Boniface's palace at Anagni, and a sword made of steel pressed onto his neck, the "spiritual" sword had to beg for mercy...

Aristides Papadakis concludes: "This earliest confrontation between the newly emerging monarchical nation-state and the late medieval papacy was to result in the collapse of the old Gregorian system of government..."⁴⁰⁹

6. The Templars

For now the papacy came under the domination of the French. This was particularly evident in the famous trial of the Knights Templars... A monastic-military sect founded under the protection of the papacy in 1118 in order to protect pilgrims to the Holy Land, they constituted perhaps the most famous movement accused of heresy in the Middle Ages. In exchange for their military service, in 1139 Pope Innocent II allowed them "to retain all the spoils from the Saracens, with no one else having any right to demand a portion".

After a distinguished beginning to their history during which they displayed great courage in support of the crusaders in the Holy Land, - indeed, they became "the most important defenders of European interests" there⁴¹⁰.

⁴⁰⁵ Canning, op. cit., p. 109.

⁴⁰⁶ De Rosa, op. cit., p. 79.

⁴⁰⁷ Richard Cavendish, "Boniface VIII's Bull Unam Sanctam", *History Today*, vol. 52 (11), November, 2002, p. 63.

⁴⁰⁸ De Rosa, op. cit., p. 79.

⁴⁰⁹ Papadakis, *The Orthodox East and the Rise of the Papacy*, Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1994, p. 358. We recall that Pope Gregory VII had come into conflict with King Philip of France - and won. Now a later King Philip avenged his ancestor's defeat.

⁴¹⁰ Jose Luis Corral Lafuente, "Swords in the Holy Land", *National Geographic History*, June/July, 2015, p. 72.

However, they were corrupted by the vast wealth they acquired both through donations and through rapine, and began to betray the Christian cause through deals with the Saracens. Worst of all, according to their enemies, they accepted dualistic, Manichaeic-Albigensian doctrines and began to worship an idol called “Baphomet”, accompanied by the renunciation of Christ and homosexual orgies.⁴¹¹

These “facts” were established during trials of their members by King Philip the Fair of France, who wanted their money, and Pope Clement V, who was coerced by Philip. The head of the Order, Jacques de Molay, and one other Templar, refused to admit their guilt even under torture. They were finally burned at the stake in Paris in 1314, and all their property was confiscated...

Many authorities assert that the Templars were completely innocent;⁴¹² certainly, the use of torture in the earlier trial, in 1307, by King Philip, makes the use of that evidence unsafe by modern standards of proof.⁴¹³

[7. Dante and De Monarchia](#)

In 1309 the Pope and his court moved to the French city of Avignon. The luxuries and corruption of the Avignon papacy earned it the title of “the second Babylon” from its contemporaries. Nor could the monastic orders, which were the traditional mainstay of the medieval papacy but had now lost their ascetic character, restore the authority of the Church...

The humiliation of the papacy was clearly an opportunity for the empire. Could it revive in order to take over the leadership of the western world? That was the dream of many. But, as Richard Chamberlin writes: “Looking down through the long perspective of the Holy Roman Empire is a melancholy experience of watching the dream fall apart. The Italians fought endless civil wars under the banner of Guelph or Ghibelline, Pope or Empire, but they were little more than pretexts for strife. Yet as the actual power of the emperor waned, the ideal of the universal monarch increased so that the imperial nadir coincided with its most able apologia, Dante’s De Monarchia.”⁴¹⁴

Dante’s work was written as if in reply to Boniface VIII’s Unam Sanctam and on a wave of hope occasioned by the arrival in Italy of the Holy Roman

⁴¹¹ According to some, this “idol” may in fact have been what we now know as the Shroud of Turin. See Ian Wilson, *The Shroud: the 2000-Year-Old Mystery Solved*, London: Bantam Press, 2010.

⁴¹² According to Bertrand Russell (op. cit., p. 503), “the best account of this proceeding is in Henry C. Lea’s *History of the Inquisition*, where, after full investigation, the conclusion is reached that the charges against the Templars were wholly without foundation”. However, some authorities, and in particular Lev Alexandrovich Tikhomirov (*Religiozno-filosofskie Osnovy Istorii*, Moscow, 1997, chapters 50, 51), think the evidence of their guilt is overwhelming, and take seriously the claim that the Templars are the link between ancient paganism and modern Freemasonry.

⁴¹³ See, for example, Piers Paul Read, *The Templars*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2002.

⁴¹⁴ Chamberlin, “The Ideal of Unity”, *History Today*, vol. 53 (11), November, 2003, p. 63.

Emperor Henry VII in 1311. Not that Dante was anti-papist; he believed that the Pope should govern spiritual affairs as the Emperor governed political affairs. But his *De Monarchia* is Ghibelline, inasmuch as it denies to the Church supreme command in temporal things, and his great dream of universal peace could only be achieved, he believed, through the universal monarchy.

“Dante’s view of Empire,” writes Watt, “hinged on three fundamental theses, each in the treatise the subject of a book. The first argued that the only guarantee of peace and justice for the Christian world lay in the establishment of unity under one single ruler.⁴¹⁵ The second argued that under God’s providence this role had been assigned to the Roman Emperor, even from its origins in pre-Christian times, and given special confirmation of it after the Messiah in sign of its right to rule the world had chosen to live, work and died under its sovereignty. The third thesis postulated that this single universal rulership was given by God directly to each emperor, without mediation by way of the papacy and was exercised independently of any jurisdictional control by the head of the Church...”⁴¹⁶

In this way Dante comes close to returning to the Byzantine idea of the symphony of powers. For while he argues that the Emperor should rule over temporal matters as the Pope rules over spiritual ones, he rules out the complete separation of Church and State in the modern sense. They must work together as equals in common obedience to the One God.

“Wherefore,” he concludes, “let Caesar honor Peter as a first-born son should honor his father, so that, refulgent with the light of paternal grace, he may illumine with greater radiance the earthly sphere over which he has been set by Him who alone is Ruler of all things spiritual and temporal...”⁴¹⁷

It was a noble ideal, perhaps the last expression of the Orthodox understanding of politics in the Western world. But the ideal did not survive: Henry VII arrived in Italy in response to Dante’s summons; but by 1313 he was dead, and with him died the dominion of the Empire in Italy.⁴¹⁸ And so “Dante’s call for the risen majesty of empire became its requiem.”⁴¹⁹

⁴¹⁵ For “the human race is at its best and most perfect when, so far as its capacity allows, it is most like to God. But mankind is most like to God when it enjoys the highest degree of unity... All concord depends upon the unity of wills; mankind is at its best in a state of concord; for as man is at his best in body and soul when he is in a state of concord, the same is true of a house, a city and a kingdom, and of mankind as a whole. Therefore mankind at its best depends upon unity in the wills of its members. But this is impossible unless there is one will which dominates all others and holds them in unity, for the wills of mortals influenced by their adolescent and seductive delights, are in need of a director.” (Dante, *De Monarchia*). (V.M.)

⁴¹⁶ Watt, *op. cit.*, p. 412.

⁴¹⁷ Dante, *De Monarchia*, book III, XVI, 9.

⁴¹⁸ Aurelia Henry, *The De Monarchia of Dante Alighieri*, introduction, edited with translation and notes by Aurelia Henry, Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1904. <http://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/2196>.

⁴¹⁹ Chamberlin, “The Ideal of Unity”, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

The failure of the Empire would appear to have paved the way for a revival of the papacy. But it was not to be: natural law and a host of proto-Protestant theories, combined with the Black Death and the scandal of the schism in the papacy, would undermine Innocent III's confident ideal for ever (or at least until the Counter-Reformation papacy in the sixteenth century). Both empire and papacy would soon cede their dominion over western man's mind and imagination to the neo-pagan ideas of Renaissance Humanism...

*July 20 / August 2, 2016.
Holy and Glorious Prophet Elijah.*

27. THE CONTRADICTIONS OF WESTERN MORALITY

One could be forgiven for believing that our society is the most hedonist and all-permissive in human history. Vice of all kinds is not simply tolerated but positively encouraged. Sodom and Gomorrah had nothing on the present-day Babylon... And yet man is not so much, as Aristotle said, a political animal, as the *moral* animal; that is, he cannot help thinking in terms of good and evil, right and wrong. Even a gang of thieves and murderers has its system of morality – and woe to those who transgress its rules. So if you look closely at the way the modern West conceives of morality, you will see that while very much that was considered evil in the past is now considered good, there are some things that are condemned with an extraordinary and wildly excessive zeal. It is as if we have to compensate for so much evil by being excessively censorious about *something*, even if that something is really quite innocent.

A case in point is child sexuality. In an article entitled “Aged five, and accused of sexual crimes”, Peter Stanford writes: “Joanne, let’s call her, teaches eight- and nine-year-olds in an inner-city state primary. She doesn’t want to give her real name or that of the school, she explains, because safeguarding is such a sensitive area of a teacher’s work.

“The curriculum requires her to take swimming lessons. ‘One of the boys recently pulled down another boy’s swimming shorts as a joke,’ she recalls. ‘He was just being ridiculous and I knew there was 100 per cent no sexual motive in what he had done. But still I filled in the form, because it’s better to report something – and it be nothing – than the alternative.’

“Joanne is highlighting the pressures and additional workload now being placed on primary-school teachers around the issue of safeguarding. Her comments to some way towards the almost tripling in reporting of ‘sex crimes’ in schools over three years that was revealed this week. In 2011-12, the number stood at 719. In 2014-15, it had risen to 1,955...”⁴²⁰

Of course, seemingly reasonable reasons can be given for this criminalizing of children. Child abuse has grown enormously in Britain, as in the whole of the West; the recent apprehension of a paedophile ring discovered *millions* of photographs of child abuse on the ring’s computers. The police, who are overburdened already, now have to take on an enormously increased workload in order to satisfy the horrified public’s quite understandable demand for justice and prevention. In order to help them, they need to identify potential child abusers at an early age. Then, if and when one of them is brought before the courts in later life, the reports of their “safeguarding” by primary school-teachers will be invaluable in order to secure a conviction.

Paedophilia is indeed a horrific crime. It should be targeted and punished with the full weight of the law. But has it occurred to modern legislators that

⁴²⁰ Stanford, *The Sunday Telegraph* (London), August 14, 2016, p. 23.

the vast apparent increase in paedophilia, along with many other adult sex-crimes, such as rape, are the result of the collapse in Christian morality that we see throughout the western world? It seems intuitively likely, for example, that paedophilia and homosexuality are psychologically related, and that the legalization of homosexuality among adults should have encouraged the sexual abuse of children; for in the mind of a pervert there must seem little difference between the “legal” vice of homosexuality and the “illegal” vice of child abuse. Therefore the licence given to adult homosexuals may be being paid for by the abuse of children.

Christian morality is simple and easy to understand, even if difficult to fulfill. *All* sexual activity is forbidden outside the lawful marriage of a (non-transgender) man and woman. So a man who is trying to follow the Law of God will check his sexual impulses, whatever the age or sex of the object of his lust. Modern “morality”, on the other hand, says: “You can do this and this and this (which was forbidden for your parents), and you can even “come out” about it and be proud of it, but you can’t do *that* unless you want to land up in prison (because he or she is too young). At first sight, there appears to be little logic in these distinctions, and no motivation to fulfill this “law”.

Nevertheless, let us try and find some logic in modern morality. The general principle seems to be: you can do what you want provided you do not harm another person in doing it. (This goes back to John Stuart Mill. A modern version is Russell Brand’s “Any group, tribe, society is free to live by any creed they choose, unless their conduct has a negative impact on other communities or our planet.”⁴²¹) Therefore all sexual acts involving just yourself are permitted. However, with another person they must be consensual. Rape is by definition non-consensual; sex with children must be presumed to be non-consensual because the child is probably too immature to understand what is happening and too weak to resist if he does. In accordance with this criterion, adultery is wrong because it harms the betrayed husband or wife. However, fornication and polygamy (for Muslims) are alright.

Now let us examine the contradictions here... First, why should all sexual acts involving just yourself be harmless? In Christian societies masturbation (or onanism, the sin of the Biblical figure Onan) was always assumed to be harmful, stunting and warping a man’s sexual development because it placed sexual pleasure outside the context of a loving married relationship. This idea has been mocked by modern liberal educationalists. However, recent psychological research suggests that the watching of online pornography leading to masturbation leads also to impotence. One young man found that he had to watch more and more extreme and violent pornography in order to produce the same physical reaction, and that he had trouble finding girls attractive as his sexuality “was completely wired to porn”.⁴²²

⁴²¹ Brand, *Revolution*, London: Century, 2014, pp. 192-193.

⁴²² Rosie Taylor, “Online porn harms young men’s health”, *Daily Mail* (London), August 16, 2016, p. 7.

Now it is already well-known that there is a direct connection between watching violent porn and paedophilia. This new research suggests that it also damages the man himself, making him impotent. So there is truth in the traditional view after all – and we have not even begun to talk about the consequences for a man’s relationship with God...

What about homosexuality? It is said that this is “moral” so long as it is between two consenting adults, and that it does harm neither to them nor to society as a whole. But is that true?

One obvious harmful effect is HIV, which is clearly that “penalty” of which St. Paul says: “men with men committing that which is shameful, receiving in themselves [i.e. in their own bodies] the penalty of their error which was due” (Romans 1.27). HIV is mainly, although not exclusively, spread by homosexual activity. For that very rational reason homosexuality remains a criminal offence in several African countries. Not so in the West! Why? It is difficult to find a rational answer to this question. After all, smoking has long ago been banned in the West because of its proven links to lung cancer; it is a health threat both to smokers and to those “passive smokers” who inhale their smoke. For similar reasons we place severe restrictions on the use of poisons and (except in the USA) guns; and we do not allow people to drive faulty cars or other kinds of potentially lethal machinery. But no restrictions whatsoever are placed on homosexual behavior, which kills just as surely (on average, homosexuals die much younger than heterosexuals). Of course, “safe sex” is encouraged in our society – but is not compulsory, and very often not practised. Moreover, vast amounts of money are poured into research on HIV, and HIV patients demand to have the latest medicines even if they are very expensive – and that money could be used more cost-effectively on other kinds of illness. Again, homosexual couples are allowed and even encouraged to adopt children, although this deprives the child of the vitally important experience – vitally important for his normal psychological development – of growing up with both a mother and a father.

Another example of the inconsistencies of western sexual morality is abortion. Not only in Christian societies, but in very many other cultures, this is considered a crime and murder. It harms both the mother, who very often suffers profound psychological consequences, and of course the child, who is murdered in an excruciatingly painful way and is deprived of the possibility of life on earth (if not in heaven – there is some evidence that God counts aborted babies as having been baptized in their own blood). The usual argument in favour of abortion is that it is the woman’s own body and she can do what she likes with it. But even from a purely physiological point of view it is manifestly *not* her own body, since its cells have a different DNA from hers.

Between them, abortion and homosexuality are turning the West into a giant geriatric hospital from which the young people are disappearing. Soon, if it is

not destroyed by nuclear bombs, the West will perish for these causes alone. So why are they tolerated, and even celebrated?

“Human rights” cannot be the answer. For human rights is simply the philosophy that everything I want I have the right to have. Behind this adult infantilism, this philosophical “justification” of complete selfishness and hedonism, there must lie something deeper...

That something deeper is: Satan. Being, as the Lord says, “a murderer from the beginning” (John 8.44), he wishes to *kill* us - first *spiritually*, by either making us commit mortal sins that lead us after death into hell and the fire of gehenna, or simply by “approving of those who commit them” (Romans 1.31), and then *physically*, through abortion, homosexuality, euthanasia and suicide (another mortal sin that the West no longer disapproves of, but considers a “right”) - all justified through the insanely cruel and stupid philosophy of “human rights”. Indeed, the West may be said to have been seduced by Satan into committing a slow collective suicide through its new, disastrous and completely irrational and contradictory system of “morality”. And the root of it all is its loss of faith in the one True God, Who alone can be the foundation of a true and consistent morality.

Nietzsche said, already over 150 years ago, that “God is dead”. But, madman and antichrist though he was, it is often forgotten that he said this *with regret* and even *in despair*, for he knew that it would lead to also to the death of all that was great and heroic in human life. Hence his desperate attempt to build a new system of morality going beyond the old system of good and evil. It would be based on pride in man alone, but would still exalt self-sacrificial heroism and denigrate the cheap materialism that he saw all around him. His contemporary Dostoyevsky said, “Without God, everything is permitted”. But Nietzsche spent his tragic life trying to prove the great Russian wrong, that although God was dead, some things were still *not* permitted. He failed, and yet it is not Nietzsche’s failure, but the contemporary West’s “success”, that has conclusively proved Dostoyevsky right. For it *has* shown that one can build a godless society in which everything is permitted, that there is a kind of “morality” that involves no sacrifice or self-restraint whatsoever, and that there is absolutely no heroism, or anything even remotely honourable, in hedonism...

August 4/17, 2106.
The Seven Sleepers of Ephesus.

28. SHAKESPEARE AND ORTHODOX CHRISTIANITY

The title of this article may seem paradoxical. Shakespeare was not, of course, an Orthodox Christian; nor, as far as we know, did he ever meet an Orthodox Christian or read an Orthodox book except for the Bible (which, however, he clearly knew well). So however transcendent his genius, and however vast his influence, we cannot take him as a teacher of Orthodoxy. Nevertheless, it has been recognized by generations of good judges that many great and important truths have been expressed by him with incomparable beauty, depth and power. So insofar as it good to honour truth exalted by beauty wherever it comes from, it will be good to pay our debt of honour to the great Bard – especially on this, the 400th anniversary of his death.

By the time Shakespeare reached his peak as a writer, England had undergone over sixty years of profound change – the transition, in essence, from the medieval to the modern world-view. But the transition was incomplete; people were confused; and in Shakespeare there arose the perfect recorder of this critical turning-point in European history. For, as Jonathan Bate writes, “his mind and world were poised between Catholicism and Protestantism, old feudal ways and new bourgeois ambitions, rational thinking and visceral instinct, faith and scepticism.”⁴²³ The transition from Catholicism to Protestantism profoundly influenced his work. For “he lived between the two great cataclysms in English history: the break from the universal Roman Catholic church and the execution of King Charles I.”⁴²⁴

The transition caused Shakespeare, like many of his fellow countrymen, to question the basis of their beliefs; and the very literary form of his plays was made possible by it. “For centuries,” writes Bolt, “the staple of English drama had been the cycles of ‘miracle’ plays, dramatizations of biblical stories organized by the guilds of tradesmen in the major towns and cities around the country. They were destroyed by the Protestant Reformation... By the time he began writing plays himself, the old religious drama was dead and buried...”

“... The old religious drama had offered to audiences a constant reminder that that they were under the watchful eye of God. The new Elizabethan drama concentrated instead on people in relationship with each other and with society.”⁴²⁵

It was a momentous change in the culture of Western Europe; and in this change Shakespeare both imitated life and influenced it. Thus in *Hamlet* (1600), perhaps the most famous literary work in history, Shakespeare found a new technique – the device of the soliloquy – to express the interior conflicts and confusions, not only of his hero, but of the new, secularized humanity that was coming into existence.

⁴²³ Bolt, *Soul of the Age*, London: Penguin, 2008, p. 18.

⁴²⁴ Bolt, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

⁴²⁵ Bolt, *op. cit.*, pp. 18, 19, 20.

“With *Hamlet*,” writes James Shapiro, “a play poised midway between a religious past and a secular future, Shakespeare finally found a dramatically compelling way to internalize contesting forces: the essay-like soliloquy proved to be the perfect vehicle for Hamlet’s efforts to confront issues that, like Brutus’, defied easy resolution. And he further complicated Hamlet’s struggle by placing it in a large world of unresolved post-Reformation social, religious and political conflicts, which is why the play is so often taken as the ultimate expression of its age...

“... The soliloquies restlessly return to these conflicts, which climax in ‘To be or not to be’: in a world that feels so ‘weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable’, is it better to live or die? And is the fear of what awaits him in the next world enough to offset the urge to commit suicide? Is the Ghost come from Purgatory to warn him or should he see this visitation in a Protestant light (for Protestants didn’t believe in Purgatory), as a devil who will exploit his melancholy and who ‘Abuses me to damn me’ (II, ii, 603). Is revenge a human or a divine prerogative? Is it right to kill Claudius at his prayers, even if this means sending his shriven soul to heaven? When, if ever, is killing a tyrant justified – and does the failure to do so invite damnation?”⁴²⁶

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It was this last, political question that especially exercised Shakespeare, as it did his countrymen at this time. Of course, he had touched upon the question of the nature of political authority, its rights and limitations, in several of the history plays of the previous decade, when he had been able, with his usual skill, to present both sides of the argument in a convincing manner. *Henry V* and *Richard II* are especially interesting for Orthodox readers because of their profound exploration of the nature of sacred kingship, its responsibility before God and man. The parallels with the life of Tsar-Martyr Nicholas, who like Richard, was forced to abdicate from his throne, are numerous, as in

*Not all the water in the rough rude sea
Can wash the balm from an anointed King.*

As for *Julius Caesar*, it is probably the profoundest study of the morality of revolution and revolutionaries in the English language.

Hamlet and *Troilus and Cressida* continue the themes of loyalty and betrayal, both political and personal, that are so central to the whole of Shakespeare’s oeuvre. We may suppose that Shakespeare was fairly conservative, even monarchist in his political views. Thus in *Troilus and Cressida* we find the famous speech on “degree”, i.e. hierarchy:

⁴²⁶ Shapiro, 1599. *A Year in the Life of William Shakespeare*, London: Faber and Faber, 2005, pp. 337-338.

*Take but degree away, untune that string,
 And, hark, what discord follows! Each thing melts
 In mere oppugnancy: the bounded waters
 Should lift their bosoms higher than the shores,
 And make a sop of all this solid globe;
 Strength should be lord of imbecility,
 And the rude son should strike his father dead;
 Force should be right; or, rather, right and wrong –
 Between whose endless jar justice resides –
 Should lose their names, and so should justice too.*

Nevertheless, we may also suppose that Shakespeare felt the tug of revolutionary tendencies and to some extent sympathized with them. Thus there is real passion in Hamlet's attempt to expose the evil deeds of the false King Claudius in the "play within the play" scene:

*Ophelia. The King rises.
Hamlet. What, frightened with false fire!
Queen. How fares my lord?
Polonius. Give o'er the play.
King. Give me some light. Away!
Polonius. Lights, lights, lights!*

But this was dangerous territory in Elizabethan and Jacobean England, where the monarchy so jealously guarded its privileges. In any case, even if he sympathized to some extent with the rebels against the monarchists, Shakespeare was perfectly well aware where revolution ended – in hell, where the ghost of Hamlet's father came from. Thus Hamlet exposes the false king - but at the same time destroys both himself and all those whom he loves.

Up to this point, in spite of the political content of his plays, Shakespeare had managed, unlike several of his dramatist colleagues, to escape censorship (carried out in that age by bishops) and stay out of prison. But the Gunpowder Plot of November, 1605, when a Catholic conspiracy to blow up the Houses of Parliament had been foiled by the authorities, raised the political temperature in the country, inducing spy-mania, paranoia and suspicions of treason to an unparalleled degree. Shakespeare had the choice: to play safe and not allude to recent events or the controversies surrounding them, or to follow Hamlet's own advice to dramatists and "hold the mirror up to nature" and give "the very age and body of the time his form and pressure". He chose the latter, riskier course, and the result was one of his greatest plays, *Macbeth*.

Macbeth was performed at court in front of King James sometime in 1606. James, like his predecessor Elizabeth, believed in "degree", hierarchy and the order of being, and considered that "equality is the mother of confusion and an enemy of the Unity which is the Mother of Order".⁴²⁷ At the same time he

⁴²⁷ Harold Nicolson, *Monarchy*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1962, p. 201.

acknowledged that there is an important distinction between an autocrat, who “acknowledges himself ordained for his people”, and a tyrant, who “thinks his people ordained for him, a prey to his passions and inordinate appetites.” Although a king was “a little God to sit on this throne and rule over other men”, he nevertheless had to provide a good example to his subjects. But while not free in relation to God, the king was free in relation to his subjects. Hence the title of James’ book, *The True Law of Free Monarchies*.

As Jonathan Bate writes, *Macbeth* “is steeped in King James’s preoccupations: the rights of royal succession, the relationship between England and Scotland [James was the son of Mary Queen of Scots, who had been murdered by his predecessor, Queen Elizabeth of England], witchcraft, the sacred powers of the monarch, anxiety about gunpowder, treason and plot. A deeply learned man, the king had published a treatise explaining how monarchs were God’s regents upon the earth and another arguing for the reality of witchcraft or ‘demonology’. He considered himself something of an adept at distinguishing between true and false accusations of witchcraft. He took a deep interest in such customs as the tradition of the sacred power of the king’s ‘touch’ to cure subjects afflicted with the disease of scrofula (known as ‘the king’s evil’).

“Religion and politics were joined seamlessly together. The Bible said that rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft: if the monarch was God’s representative upon earth, then to conspire against him was to make a pact with the instrument of darkness – in the Gunpowder trials, Jesuits such as Father Garnet were described as male witches. Treason was regarded as more than a political act: it was, as one modern scholar puts it, ‘a form of possession, an action contrary to and destructive of the very order of nature itself. The forces of the netherworld seek for their own uncreating purposes the killing of the legitimate king in order to restore the realm of tyranny and chaos.’

“In this world, killing the king is the ultimate crime against nature. ‘O horror, horror, horror’, says Macduff as he returns on stage having stared into the heart of darkness, seen how the gashed stabs on the king’s body look like a breach in nature. ‘Tongue nor heart cannot conceive nor name thee’: the language here alludes to the famous passage in St. Paul about the inexpressible wonders that God has prepared in the kingdom of heaven for those who love Him. Macduff, by contrast, has momentarily entered the kingdom of hell, where a drunken porter keeps the gate. ‘Confusion’ now hath replication of the order of divine creation. But the art here is that of confusion and death: ‘Most sacrilegious murder hath broke ope / The Lord’s anointed temple and stole thence / The life o’ th’ building.’ The understanding of the play requires close attention to be paid to such words as ‘sacrilegious’, in which political violence is bound inextricably to articles of religious faith. ‘Treason has done his worst,’ says Macbeth in one of those moments when his conscience is pricked. *His* worst, not *its*: Treason is not a concept but a living thing. The devil’s disciple, he stalks the stage of politics and brings sleepless nights through which the

guilty man shakes and sweats with fear and terrible dreams, while the guilty woman descends into insanity..."⁴²⁸

But while great art can mirror great tensions, it cannot disperse them: from this time English society became increasingly polarized. The unity obtained between Catholics and Protestants, loyalists and revolutionaries, through the cult of the Virgin Queen Elizabeth had been largely a clever theatrical stunt, but it had worked. James I, however, had a more difficult time of it, having to unify not only Catholics and Protestants, but also English and Scots. On the one hand, he had to keep his Catholic-at-heart English subjects, the "recusants", in line by spying on them, chasing up secret Jesuits and compelling all Englishmen to swear the Oath of Allegiance and receive communion in the Anglican church at least three times a year. On the other hand, as a Scot, he had to persuade his radical Protestant fellow-countrymen north of the border that he had not only a Divine right to rule, but could play a part in the life of the official church and even appoint bishops: as he famously put it, "no king, no bishop".

James' plan to unite England and Scotland into one country failed. But the superb language of his other beloved project, the King James Version of the Bible (1604-11), translated by a committee of Anglicans and moderate Puritans, has had a profoundly unifying effect on the English-speaking peoples to this day. As Bill Bryson writes, "It was the one literary production of the age that rivaled Shakespeare's for lasting glory - and, not incidentally, played a more influential role in encouraging a conformity of spelling and usage throughout Britain and its infant overseas dominions."⁴²⁹ Nevertheless, there was no unity taking place within the political nation as the seventeenth century progressed: the Stuart kings increasingly gravitated towards the "right", while their subjects on the whole became more "leftist".

An early sign of the latter's increasing power was the ban placed by Puritan censors on any reference to God or Christ in the theatre. And so the word "God" disappears from Shakespeare from *Antony and Cleopatra* onwards.⁴³⁰ He took the hint and "retired" a few years later - he was not alive to witness the final closing down of the theatre by the Puritans in 1642. And so the scene was set for the English revolution - "that grand crisis of morals, religion and government", as Coleridge called it⁴³¹, or, as Charles George calls it, "the first major breach in Absolute Monarchy and the spawning of the first major, secular, egalitarian and liberal culture in the modern world".⁴³²

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⁴²⁸ Bate, *op. cit.*, pp. 346-347.

⁴²⁹ Bryson, *Shakespeare*, London: William Collins, 2016, p. 133.

⁴³⁰ James Shapiro, *1606. William Shakespeare and the Year of Lear*, London: Faber and Faber, 2015, p. 252.

⁴³¹ Coleridge, *Table Talk*, 9 November, 1833.

⁴³² George, *500 Years of Revolution: European Radicals from Hus to Lenin*, Chicago, 1998, p. viii.

Great tensions produce great art: 1606, the year after the Gunpowder Plot produced, besides *Macbeth*, also *King Lear* and *Antony and Cleopatra*, a trilogy unequalled in the history of literature with the possible exception of Dostoyevsky's trilogy of *The Idiot*, *The Devils* and *The Brothers Karamazov*.

King Lear is Shakespeare's Great Friday allegory, and the imagery reflects the theme: Lear is racked on a wheel; wood, earth, blood and instruments of torture abound. But the real victim is Lear's Christ-like daughter Cordelia. The scene of her sacrificial, all-forgiving death, and Lear's repentance as a result of it, is perhaps the most unbearably poignant in English literature.

Macbeth is Shakespeare's allegory of the Descent into hell. Everything is darkness, demons, madness. Macbeth's final despair, when he has lost all faith and hope, is ferocious in the cold, cruel clarity of its vision, as even the rhythm of the verse slows down to echo the everlastingness of his damnation:

*To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time;
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player,
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more. It is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing...*

As for *Antony and Cleopatra*, however, its imagery is full of light and fire, as befits an allegory of the Resurrection. For this play is much more than a love story. It is also a story about how a fallen woman sheds her corrupt past and rises incorruptible in a kind of literary Resurrection of the body, her illicit lover Antony becoming after his death an honourable husband in her imagination, even a type of Christ the Bridegroom:

*Give me my robe, put on my crown; I have Immortal longings in me...
Husband, I come.
Now to that name my courage prove my title!
I am fire and air; my other elements
I give to baser life.*

Of course, we cannot know whether Shakespeare considered his three greatest dramas to be an allegory of the central mysteries of the Christian faith. But the greatness of a writer does not reside in his consciousness of the depth of his art. The test is whether he makes *us* respond deeply and truly. By that criterion Shakespeare was a supremely Christian writer.

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Shakespeare can be bawdy; but there is always a profound seriousness underlying even the comedies. He delights in little spiritual epigrams which clearly point to a man who has thought deeply about life from a definitely religious viewpoint. Thus in his very earliest extant work, *Venus and Adonis*, we see his Christian morality clearly expressed:

*Love surfeits not: Lust like a glutton dies.
Love is all truth: Lust full of forged lies.*

A deeper meditation on the same theme is found in the incomparable *Sonnet 129*:

*Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove.
O, no! it is an ever-fixed mark,
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wand'ring bark,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come;
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
If this be error, and upon me prov'd,
I never writ, nor no man ever lov'd.*

The spiritual struggle between good and evil, angels and demons, is well known to Shakespeare. Thus in *Sonnet 144*, we read:

*Two loves I have, of comfort and despair,
Which like two angels do suggest me still;
The better angel is a man right fair,
The worser spirit a woman colour'd ill.
To win me soon to hell, my female evil
Tempteth my better angel from my side,
And would corrupt my saint to be a devil,
Wooing his purity with her foul pride.
And whether that my angel be turn'd fiend,
Suspect I may, yet not directly tell;
But being both from me, both to each friend,
I guess one angel in another's hell.
Yet this shall I ne'er know, but live in doubt,
Till my bad angel fire my good one out.*

Again, in the midst of the great, superficially pagan and sensuous drama of *Antony and Cleopatra* we are given a good spiritual tip: that our prayers are not always answered because it would not be good for us:

*We, ignorant of ourselves,
Beg often our own harms, which the wise powers
Deny us for our good; so find we profit
By losing of our prayers.*

Again, in *Richard II* we are exhorted to humility:

*whate'er I be,
Nor I, nor any man that but man is,
With nothing shall be pleased till he be eas'd
With being nothing.*

And in *Hamlet* we see a heartfelt desire for passionlessness:

*Give me that man
That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him
In my heart's core, ay, in my heart of heart.*

Even the foolish Polonius is allowed a wise, if slightly trite aphorism:

*To thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.*

Shakespeare mocked and undermined the medieval concept of chivalric “honour” and military glory, as in *Henry IV, part 1*:

*By heaven, methinks it were an easy leap
To pluck bright honor from the pale-fac'd moon . . .*

He did the same in *Hamlet*:

*Rightly to be great
Is not to stir without great argument,
But greatly to find quarrel in a straw
When honor's at stake...*

*Witness this army, of such mass and charge,
Led by a delicate and tender prince;
Whose spirit, with divine ambition puff'd,
Makes mouths at the invisible event;
Exposing what is mortal, and unsure,
To all that fortune, death, and danger dare,
Even for an egg-shell...*

Again, there is no sharper exposure of Christian Pharisaism than we find in *Measure for Measure*:

*But man, proud man,
Dress'd in a little brief authority,
Most ignorant of what he's most assur'd –
His glassy essence – like an angry ape
Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven
As makes the angels weep; who, with our spleens,
Would all themselves laugh mortal.*

Similar in its imagery, but still more powerful, and hardly less theological, is this passage from *Macbeth*:

*Besides, this Duncan
Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been
So clear in his great office, that his virtues
Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongued against
The deep damnation of his taking-off,
And pity, like a naked new-born babe,
Striding the blast, or heaven's cherubin, horsed
Upon the sightless couriers of the air,
Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye
That tears shall drown the wind.*

Again, what profounder exposure of the hypocrisy of Christian anti-semitism can we find than in Shylock's speech in *The Merchant of Venice*:

*I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions,
senses, affections, passions; fed with the same food, hurt with the same
weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed
and cooled by the same winter and summer as a Christian is? If you prick us
do we not bleed? If you tickle us do we not laugh? If you poison us do we not
die? And if you wrong us shall we not revenge? If we are like you in the rest,
we will resemble you in that. If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his
humility? Revenge. If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be
by Christian example? Why, revenge. The villainy you teach me I will
execute, and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction.*

At the same time, Shylock's greed and vengefulness is not spared, and mercy, the crown of Christian virtues, is portrayed with consummate grace:

*The quality of mercy is not strain'd,
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath: it is twice blest;
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes:
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest: it becomes
The throned monarch better than his crown;
His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,
The attribute to awe and majesty,*

*Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings;
 But mercy is above this sceptred sway;
 It is enthroned in the hearts of kings,
 It is an attribute to God himself;
 And earthly power doth then show likest God's
 When mercy seasons justice. Therefore, Jew,
 Though justice be thy plea, consider this,
 That, in the course of justice, none of us
 Should see salvation: we do pray for mercy;
 And that same prayer doth teach us all to render
 The deeds of mercy.*

However, we cannot leave the theme of Shakespeare and Christianity without considering the last work of his creative life, *The Tempest*. Like Beethoven who saved his greatest and most religious work to the end of his life, when he could no longer even hear, so Shakespeare left his most religious work to the end, when he was not even allowed to mention God in his plays. For just as *The Winter's Tale* is another – but much more explicit – allegory of the Resurrection, so *The Tempest* is an allegory of the end of the world.

The main character of the play, who controls the whole action, is Prospero. He is a sorcerer, which is, of course, an evil occupation for a Christian. And yet if we judge by the fruits of his actions, he is more like God Himself than a servant of demons. In fact, he is a type both of God and of Shakespeare. And when he has finally brought everything to a happy conclusion through a truly divine providence, reuniting lovers, correcting injustice and putting evil spirits in their place, he renounces everything:

*I have bedimm'd
 The noontide sun, call'd forth the mutinous winds,
 And 'twixt the green sea and the azured vault
 Set roaring war: to the dread rattling thunder
 Have I given fire and rifted Jove's stout oak
 With his own bolt; the strong-based promontory
 Have I made shake and by the spurs pluck'd up
 The pine and cedar: graves at my command
 Have waked their sleepers, oped, and let 'em forth
 By my so potent art. But this rough magic
 I here abjure, and, when I have required
 Some heavenly music, which even now I do,
 To work mine end upon their senses that
 This airy charm is for, I'll break my staff,
 Bury it certain fathoms in the earth,
 And deeper than did ever plummet sound
 I'll drown my book.*

Like Prospero, Shakespeare now renounces his “so potent art” and drowns the book of his plays in oblivion. (And they would have been forgotten but for

the heroism of the editors of the First Folio in 1623.⁴³³). What he needs now is not human recognition, but Divine Grace, “heavenly music”. For he does not over-estimate the reality or value of his creations, whose “fabric” is “baseless”. For only God is truly creative. And so in true humility he hands back the gift he received to the true Creator Who gave it him. But he goes further. Not only will his art now come to an end, but the theatre itself and the whole of present-day reality outside the theatre will come to an end. The whole of this solid globe will disappear (the word “globe” is a pun: it means both Shakespeare’s Globe theatre where *The Tempest* was staged, and the globe in the sense of the whole world), and in retrospect will seem like mere stagecraft and stage-props and play-acting in comparison with the incomparably greater and more substantial new creation that we will wake up to on the other side of the “sleep” that is death. Indeed, compared to what God has in store for us in the next life, our present temporal life is but an “insubstantial pageant”, a dream:

*Our revels now are ended. These our actors,
As I foretold you, were all spirits and
Are melted into air, into thin air:
And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,
The cloud-capp’d towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff
As dreams are made on, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep.*

It remained only for Shakespeare, a conscious Christian to the end, to ask forgiveness of his readers and spectators if his “rough magic” had caused anyone any harm:

*Now I want
Spirits to enforce, art to enchant,
And my ending is despair,
Unless I be relieved by prayer,
Which pierces so that it assaults
Mercy itself and frees all faults.
As you from crimes would pardon'd be,
Let your indulgence set me free.*

August 10/23, 2016.

29. ON NOT ROCKING THE BOAT

⁴³³ Bryson, *op. cit.*, p. 154.

“The protector of religion is the very body of the Church, even the people themselves.”

Encyclical of the Eastern Patriarchs, 17 (1848).

“Hide the truth,” goes the popular Greek saying, “and you hide Christ.” But is it always necessary to publish the truth, to be a whistle-blower? Are we not also supposed to hide our neighbour’s sins, leaving the judgement to God? After all, the Lord Himself says: “Judge not, that ye be not judged” (Matthew 7.1)... On the other hand, St. Paul says: “Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them” (Ephesians 5.11). Is there a contradiction here? No, says St. John Chrysostom: “Paul did not say ‘judge’, he said ‘reprove’, that is, correct. And the words, ‘Judge not that ye be not judged’ He spoke with reference to very small errors...”⁴³⁴ So we should hide our neighbour’s sins when they are small, - and when we ourselves commit the same sins, - but reprove and expose them when they are large and provide a bad example to others - “a little leaven leavens the whole lump”.

Indeed, to hide them, and not to reprove them, is a serious sin, according to the same Apostle. “It is reported continuously that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father’s wife. And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from you. For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus... For... do not ye judge them that are within [the Church]?... Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person” (I Corinthians 5.1-5, 12-13).

If even the major sins of laypeople should be judged - that is, reprovéd - in public by the Church, what about the canonical sins of hierarchs? It seems obvious that they, too, should be judged - and in public. After all, that is what the canon law of the Holy Church prescribes. And if the major sins of laypeople, which are usually done in private and affect only a small group of people, should be judged in public, then a fortiori the canonical sins of hierarchs, which are usually done in public and affect many more people, directly and indirectly, should be judged in public. It follows, of course, that public protests against publicly committed canonical transgressions - we are assuming that, as is usually the case nowadays, private exhortations achieve nothing and the hierarchs themselves do not correct themselves - are not only permissible but *obligatory*.

However, this conclusion is disputed by many - especially among the clergy. The practice among clergy of almost all Orthodox jurisdictions today is to cover up each other’s sins, as if the clergy were (as in medieval Catholicism)

⁴³⁴ St. John Chrysostom, *Homily 18 on Ephesians*.

a kind of closed corporation that exists only to serve the interests of its members, and not the salvation of all the rational sheep of Christ. When protests against the sins of the clergy arise from the lower ranks of the Church, these are usually sternly rejected as being “ill-conceived” (even when their truth is not disputed), “ill-timed” (there never seems to be a right time to protest), or “not the business of laypeople”. If the protests gather pace, and the transgression can no longer be hidden from public view, then the protesters are accused of “rocking the boat”, of shaming the Church before the world outside, even of preventing other people from joining the Church...

Let us look at these arguments a little more closely... But let us first concede this to those who wish to suppress the whistle-blowers: it would be better for all if the scandals of the Church could be healed by the bishops without the intervention or protests of the laity. That is, after all, the function, or one of the functions, of the hierarchy; we elect a man to the hierarchy precisely because we believe him to have the knowledge and the courage to heal the wounds of the Church through the grace that is given him in the sacrament of ordination. The problem is: by the Providence of God there has not been a time since the Apostolic age when the hierarchy has been able to rule the Church in accordance with the holy dogmas and canons without the help of the lower clergy and the laity...

If we look at the history of the Orthodox Church, we are struck by the *constant* struggle for the faith and canonical order – and the involvement of all ranks of the Church in that struggle. “Peace on earth”, in the sense of freedom from internal dissension and quarrels, was never the destiny of the Church on earth. In the period of the Ecumenical Councils, not only were bishops and patriarchates constantly warring against each other: the laity, too, often rose up publicly against their hierarchs when they betrayed the faith.

Sometimes order was restored only through the intervention of the kings – as the holy Emperors Marcian and Pulcheria intervened at the Fourth Ecumenical Council. St. Isidore of Pelusium approved of this intervention, writing: “Formerly, when those who had lived an evangelical and apostolic life were crowned with the priesthood, the priesthood was fearful by right for the royal power; but now the royal power is fearful to the priesthood. However, it is better to say, not ‘priesthood’, but those who have the appearance of doing the priestly work, while by their actions they insult the priesthood. That is why it seems to me that the royal power is acting justly.” It was acting justly, in Isidore’s view, because “although there is a very great difference between the priesthood and the kingdom (the former is the soul, the latter – the body), nevertheless they strive for one and the same goal, that is, the salvation of citizens”.⁴³⁵

Nor were these struggles only against manifest heretics, such as Arius or Nestorius. St. Theodore the Studite is noted as much for his struggles against

⁴³⁵ St. Isidore, *Tvorenia (Works)*, Moscow, 1860, vol. 3, pp. 400, 410 (in Russian).

the holy Patriarchs Tarasius and Nicephorus as against the iconoclast heretics. And the major struggles of the mid-ninth century were as much between Patriarchs Photius and Ignatius, both holy men, as between them and the heretical Pope Nicholas...

In this period, Christians of all ranks appear to have been much less inhibited about criticizing their hierarchs than they are today. The argument so often employed today to suppress dissent – “This is the hierarchs’ business, not yours” – was rejected by in the Early Church. Thus we read in *The Institutions of the Apostles*, “these sheep are not irrational but rational creatures – and we say this lest at any time a lay person should say, ‘I am a sheep and not a shepherd, and I have no concern for myself: let the shepherd look to that, for he alone will be required to give account for me.’ For even as the sheep that will not follow its good shepherd is exposed to the wolves, that is, to its destruction, to also the sheep that follows a bad shepherd is likewise exposed to unavoidable death, since the shepherd will devour him. Therefore, take care to flee from the ravening shepherd.”

Again, St. Athanasius the Great said: “As we walk the unerring and life-bringing path, let us pluck out the eye that scandalizes us-not the physical eye, but the noetic one. For example, if a bishop or presbyter-who are the eyes of the Church-conduct themselves in an evil manner and scandalize the people, they must be plucked out. For it is more profitable to gather without them in a house of prayer, than to be cast together with them into the gehenna of fire together with Annas and Caiaphas.”⁴³⁶

The best hierarchs of the time bemoaned the anarchy of conflicting opinions in which the most vainglorious and ill-informed were often the most eagerly heard. But they did not take this as an excuse to suppress dissent, but rather bewailed a general lack of zeal for curing the ills of the Church in a thorough-going manner. Thus St. Basil the Great wrote: “[In the Church] one must get to the bottom of the problems, so as to eradicate the sickness from its very root.”⁴³⁷ And St. John Chrysostom said: “A want of zeal in small matters is the cause of all our calamities; and because slight errors escape fitting correction, greater ones creep in.”⁴³⁸ These holy hierarchs also bewailed the bad impression that the internal quarrels of the Church made on those outside. However, this did not inhibit them from convening synods to depose heretics and evil-doers in the full glare of public scrutiny. Evidently they believed that glasnost (openness) was the price that had to be paid for true perestroika (reconstruction)...

From about the tenth century, the internal quarrels of the Churches appear to have died down, at any rate in the East. But this is a deceptive impression:

⁴³⁶ St. Athanasius the Great, PG 26:1257c.

⁴³⁷ St. Basil the Great, *Letter 156*.

⁴³⁸ St. John Chrysostom, *Homily 1 on Galatians*.

in these periods of comparative peace, leading Christians took it upon themselves to sound the alarm still more urgently, as if this peace was the peace of impending spiritual death. Consider, for example, the *Letter on Confession* by St. Simeon the New Theologian (+1022):

“It is permissible for an unordained monk to confess us. You will find this to be the case everywhere. This is because of the vesture and likeness [proschema] given by God as the monk’s inheritance and by which monks are named. So is it written in the God-inspired writings of the Fathers, and you will find this to be the case should you chance to examine them. To be sure, prior to the monks only the bishops had that authority to bind and loose which they received in succession to the Apostles. But, when time had passed and the bishops had become useless, this dread authority passed on to priests of blameless life and worthy of divine grace. Then also, when the latter had become polluted, both priests and bishops becoming like the rest of the people with many – just as today – tripped up by spirits of deceit and by vain and empty titles and all perishing together, it was transferred, as we said above, to God’s elect people. I mean to the monks. It was not that it had been taken away from the priests and bishops, but rather that they had made themselves strangers to it...

“... The Lord’s disciples preserved with all exactitude the rightness of this authority. But, as we said, when time had gone by, the worthy grew mixed and mingled with the unworthy, with one contending in order to have precedence over another and feigning virtue for the sake of preferment. Thus, because those who were holding the Apostles’ thrones were shown up as fleshly minded, as lovers of pleasure and seekers of glory, and as inclining towards heresies, the divine grace abandoned them and this authority was taken away from them. Therefore, having abandoned as well everything else which is required of those who celebrate the sacraments, this alone is demanded of them: that they be Orthodox. But I do not myself think that they are even this. Someone is not Orthodox just because he does not slip some new dogma into the Church of God, but because he possesses a life which keeps harmony with true teaching. Such a life and such a man contemporary patriarchs and metropolitans have at different times either looked for and not found, or, if they find him, they prefer [to ordain] the unworthy candidate instead. They ask only this of him, that he put the Symbol of the faith down in writing. They find this alone acceptable, that the man be neither a zealot for the sake of what is good, nor that he do battle with anyone because of evil. In this way they pretend that they keep peace here in the Church. This is worse than active hostility, and it is a cause of great concern...”⁴³⁹

St. Symeon’s chastisement of the Byzantine Church at the apparent height of its glory is astonishingly harsh. The Orthodoxy of the hierarchs of his time,

⁴³⁹ St. Symeon the New Theologian, *Letter on Confession*, 11, 13; translated in Alexander Golitzin (ed.), *St. Symeon the New Theologian. On the Mystical Life. The Ethical Discourses*, Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1997, pp. 196, 198-199.

he says, is purely formal: they are neither “zealots for the sake of what is good” nor do they “do battle with anyone because of evil”. While pretending to “keep peace here in Church”, they are in fact waging war against God.

The hierarchs he is describing are what the Lord calls “hirelings”. The hireling is not a wolf in sheep’s clothing, that is, a heretic, but neither is he a true shepherd, for he “is a hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not” (John 10.12). Nevertheless, he may well belong to the external organization of the True Church and receive the honour of a true shepherd. But he flees when the wolf comes and allows the sheep to be scattered, because he “careth not for the sheep” (John 10.13).

Commenting on this passage, St. Gregory the Great writes in his *Homilies on the Gospel*: “He flees, not by giving ground, but by withholding his help. He flees, because he sees injustice and says nothing. He flees, because he takes refuge in silence...”

And “by silence,” as another great Gregory, the Theologian, says, “God is betrayed...”

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Turning now to the present day, it would be a very bold (and foolish) man who would claim that the True Orthodox Church today is not in an even worse condition than the Church in tenth-century Byzantium. Formally speaking, our bishops are Orthodox: none of them confesses the heresies of ecumenism or newcalendarism or sergianism. They condemn (although sometimes not very loudly) the obviously heretical and apostate patriarchs of “World Orthodoxy”. But “someone is not Orthodox just because he does not slip some new dogma into the Church of God”, as St. Symeon says. If he does not confess a certain heresy, but allows it to infect the flock, then he is a hireling, and not a true shepherd. And this *is* happening in our Church – notably with regard to the soteriological and other heresies of Fr. John Romanides and his many followers and admirers in World Orthodoxy. Moreover, many other injustices and scandals are not being corrected, and the absolutely necessary sacramental unity that should exist between the True Orthodox Churches of different nationalities is being sabotaged...

The result is that many laypeople, especially (but not only) in the diasporas, are receiving tragically little pastoral care and instruction. Meanwhile, other people from other jurisdictions who are seeking the truth are being repelled by the uncorrected scandals they see in the Church. They look for the good works that will prove our faith – and do not see them.

The Apostle Paul calls on Timothy to “reprove, admonish and exhort” “in season and out of season” (II Timothy 4.2). But for today’s hierarchs every season seems to be out of season when it comes to rebuking and disciplining those who are destroying the Church. In such a situation, one would expect a

multitude of whistle-blowers to come forward from the lower ranks in order to call the hierarchs to carry out their duty. But the strange and alarming thing is that as the Church becomes weaker and weaker, so the protests become fewer and fewer and fainter and fainter.

Nor - except in a very few cases - does the recent and terrifying example of the fall of the Russian Church Abroad appear to have inspired our leaders with a godly fear that the same could happen to them.

Let us linger a little longer on the example of the Russian Church Abroad. The present writer remembers how, as early as the mid-1970s, hierarchs such as Archbishops Averky and Nikodim and laymen such as Professor Ivan Andreyevsky were deeply worried by the lack of a truly confessing stand in the Church against the heretics of World Orthodoxy. But all three men died in 1976, and the torch of protest was handed on to lesser men who commanded less respect - and were in any case told to shut up. Only the holy Metropolitan Philaret paid heed to their protests and sympathized with them - and to some extent succeeded in stopping the rot through the anathema against ecumenism in 1983. But when he died in 1985, and then Bishops Gregory Grabbe and Anthony of Los Angeles died in the mid-1990s, the way was open for the remaining hierarchs to "reinterpret" the 1983 anathema, join the Cyprianite schismatics, and then, in 2000, to vote for joining World Orthodoxy. From 2000 protests were punished by excommunications. And so it was a "purified" Church that finally joined the apostates in 2007...

In the True Orthodox Church of Greece today, the disease is different, but the situation is no less serious. Only very few seem to recognize this fact. Everything is covered by an eerie silence, as under snow in winter...

But this is not the silence of the prudent man who realizes that there is a time to speak and a time to keep silence. This is the silence of the hireling who is fleeing from the calls of his conscience and his pastoral duty... And the exhaustion of laypeople who have come to believe that nothing can be changed in the Church, that it is not their business, and that they must simply accept the status quo without protest, say "axios!" (worthy) to him who is "anaxios" (unworthy), hibernate, and quietly lose all hope...

But there is always hope, because, as St. Ambrose of Optina once said when he was in conflict with the Russian Holy Synod, "there is a Vladyko above all Vladykos", the Lord Jesus Christ. He is "the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls" (I Peter 2.25). And He is the Helmsman who will always guide the ship of the Church to the safe harbour of the Kingdom of heaven.

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Finally, let us look more closely at the metaphor of "not rocking the boat" and develop it a little... The Church, as we know, is compared to a boat whose Captain is Christ and whose chief rowers are the hierarchs. When a storm arises

from outside the boat, the hierarchs wake up the supposedly sleeping Christ (He gives the impression of sleeping only in order to give them the opportunity to act), and He calms the winds and the waves. That is the right order, the canonical order.

But what if the rowers themselves are asleep? Then the passengers have to act in order to wake up the rowers. And how can they do this without rocking the boat?

“But rocking the boat will let in water from outside,” goes the objection. Hardly. After all, the boat is already in a storm, and is already letting in water from all sides. A little rocking from within will hardly make the situation significantly worse. In any case, if the rowers are not woken, the whole boat will inevitably capsize sooner or later.

“But how can that be, when the boat is unsinkable?” continues the objection. However, *no* boat, in the sense of a Local Church, is unsinkable. In 1905 St. John of Kronstadt gave the Russians a list of distinguished Local Churches, such as the Carthaginian, which had been wiped off the face of the earth, and warned them that the same could happen to the Russian Church. If St. John could say this of a Church that was the largest in history, and was even at that time nourishing hundreds of thousands of future new martyrs in her bosom, then *no* Local Church, however ancient and venerable, is unsinkable. It is only the rightly confessing Church that is unsinkable; while the Church cannot be destroyed *everywhere*, she *can* be destroyed *anywhere* – that is, there is no Local Church in any part of the world which can be sure that she will not fall away from the truth. The Lord promised that the Church built on the Rock of the true faith would prevail over the gates of hell, and we must always preserve a lively faith in this truth. Holding it, we know that even if our Local Church falls, there will be another somewhere else that remains in the truth, and that “help and deliverance will come from another quarter”, as Mordecai said to Esther (Esther 4.14).

It is an attribute of fallen human nature to seek the illusion of security, infallibility or indestructibility, in something concrete, material and locatable. Thus the Jews sought to anchor their feeling of eternal superiority in the fact that they were “the sons of Abraham” – in a genetic, not a spiritual sense. And the Roman Catholics sought a guarantee of their Church’s infallibility in its location – Roma eterna et invicta. But the Church, as St. Maximus the Confessor taught, does not consist in genes or spatial location or anything material, but in *the right confession of the faith*. And that faith can disappear like the wind if God withdraws it from a soul – “the Spirit blows where It wishes” (John 3.8)...

But there is an important corollary to this truth: since the faith can be lost by any Church in any place, whatever its nationality or reputation, it has to be fought for with every ounce of reason, strength and passion. Our respect for the clergy and the grace of the priesthood should allow them time to correct their mistakes themselves. But when we see that the clergy do not deserve

respect, and that the grace they have received is being trampled on to the potential damnation of the whole Local Church, it is time for the lower ranks to act. For there is no salvation in following a “canonical” hierarch when he is not following the canons. Such “canonicity” is a lie and hypocrisy...

Let us conclude with some quotations from the Holy Fathers:

“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...”⁴⁴⁰

“‘But so-and-so,’ you say, ‘is a decent man, is a Priest, lives in great self-control, and does this and that.’ Do not talk to me about this decent person, this self-controlled, pious man who is a Priest; but if you like, suppose that this man is Peter, or Paul, or even an Angel come down from heaven. For not even in such a case do I regard the dignity of their persons... For our reckoning is not with our fellow-servants, but with our Master, and to Him we shall give an account for all that we have done in our life.”⁴⁴¹

“When there is no one to support the cause of true religion, we ought alone and all unaided to do our duty...”⁴⁴²

December 6/19, 2010; revised August 26 / September 8, 2016.

⁴⁴⁰ St. John Chrysostom, *Homily 34 on Hebrews*, 1.

⁴⁴¹ St. John Chrysostom, *First Baptismal Catechesis*, 5.

⁴⁴² St. Basil the Great, *On the Holy Spirit*, 30.

30. ROMANIA VERSUS THE NEW CALENDAR

1. Before the Calendar Change

The Romanian Church first encountered the temptation of 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.”⁴⁴³

However, Cuza succeeded in getting some leading hierarchs sent to foreign heterodox institutions for training. The bad fruits of this became manifest many years later, in 1916, when two-thirds of Romania was occupied by the Germans, Austro-Hungarians, Bulgarians and Turks. King Ferdinand I (1865-1927) withdrew to Iași, while Germany appointed a military governor for Wallachia. The Germans then introduced a decree that Christmas of 1916 and New Year’s Day of 1917 should be celebrated according to the western calendar.

On December 29, 1916 (Old Style) Archimandrite Galaction (Cordon) wrote to Metropolitan Primate Conon: “The issue that today preoccupies all strata of Romanian society in the territories under foreign occupation is, without doubt, the introduction of the Gregorian Calendar, imposed on us by the German government for use by our Church, even after the passing of the New Year and our Orthodox Theophany. From the standpoint of the traditional law and practice observed in the Eastern Orthodox Church from time immemorial, this innovation, which does not involve, in and of itself, an immutable dogma, but rather a difference of eleven or thirteen days between one calendar and the other, will nonetheless be a great moral blow for our Orthodox people, but, at the same time, a huge success for the Roman Catholic Church, whose hand can be seen here, too, in that, by availing herself of the German authorities, she is now endeavouring to force us to adopt her calendar, especially in the present circumstances, when the mission of the occupying body and its concerns are directed towards something totally different from what Romanians celebrate at Pascha, Christmas, and New Year, and especially when we can anticipate that even the occupation of our territory will not remain in effect once peace has been established and measures are taken to ensure the proper administration of our territory.”

⁴⁴³ 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.

It was not only the Catholics that Fr. Galaction feared, but also the “renegades” from the ranks of the Orthodox: “In the hand that is trying to orchestrate this arrangement, I can detect hiding with the greatest of caution under the mask of Catholicism the shadows of those renegades from our ranks who left because their exaggerated personal expectations were not fulfilled. Serving the cause of the enemy Church in this way, they are yearning to win there some miserable glory and a recompense greater than the thirty pieces of silver, the price of selling the traditions of the Lord’s Church. For this reason, as Your Eminence’s humble servant, I declare that you must energetically defend our traditional rights, and that I am ready to defend you, even at the price of my life, sacrificing the last drop of my blood out of respect for our ecclesiastical institutions and for the traditions inherited from our forefathers. Therefore, Your Eminence, make a grand gesture. Stretch forth your Archpastoral staff and defend with all courage the holy treasure that is entrusted to you. You are living in an age and in a situation in which you can no longer expect anything from the world. Out of respect for the position that you occupy, you must be willing to unite with the Lord in the struggle to preserve what He has established. If you come forth to fight with zeal, you will revive the memory of the great Metropolitans and patriots of our past, who were ready to die defending our traditional rights and ecclesiastical traditions with their pastoral staffs.”⁴⁴⁴

In another pastoral letter, Archimandrite Galaction wrote further about the Judases among the Romanian Orthodox clergy during the German occupation, and prophesied about the coming period of unparalleled suffering in the history of Orthodox Church.⁴⁴⁵

“For his opposition to the interference in Church affairs by the German occupying forces, [Archimandrite Galaction] was detained on January 18/31, 1917, by the German Central Police and interned as a hostage...

“This was the beginning of sufferings for the man who would become the founder of the Hierarchy of the Old Calendar Church of Romania.”⁴⁴⁶

[2. The Calendar Change](#)

A few years later, the leader of the Romanian Church was Metropolitan Miron (Cristea), a former uniate. 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 new calendar, and that it would be introduced in 1924.⁴⁴⁷

⁴⁴⁴ Archimandrite Galaction, in 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. 28-29.

⁴⁴⁵ Bujor, *op. cit.*, pp. 30-32.

⁴⁴⁶ Bujor, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

⁴⁴⁷ Monk Benjamin, <http://www.zlatoust.ws/letopis2.htm>, p. 118.

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."⁴⁴⁸

"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 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.'"⁴⁴⁹

In fact, only one hierarch rejected the calendar innovation - Metropolitan Visarion (Puiu) of Bucovina. He went into exile and died in Paris in 1964.⁴⁵⁰

Resistance to the reform was particularly strong in Bessarabia, where there had already been strong resistance to the union with Romania and the removal of Church Slavonic from the churches.

⁴⁴⁸ Iorga, *The History of the Romanian Church*; cited in Bujor, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

⁴⁴⁹ Bujor, *op. cit.*, pp. 26-27.

⁴⁵⁰ Bujor, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

“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...”⁴⁵¹

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

⁴⁵¹ 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.

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)⁴⁵², Hierodeacon David (the first abbot of the monastery at Slatioara), Hieromonk Pambo, Fr. Baruch, Fr. Gimnadius, 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.

“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.”⁴⁵³

“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 kandelia 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

⁴⁵² 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.)

⁴⁵³ Metropolitan Blaise, *Pravoslavnaia Rus'* (Orthodox Russia), № 2 (1479), 15/28 January, 1993, pp. 6-7.

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...”⁴⁵⁴

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 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.

4. The Persecution of the Old Calendarists

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)

⁴⁵⁴ Metropolitan Blaise, *The Life of the Holy Hierarch and Confessor Glicherie of Romania*, Etna, Ca.: Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies, 1999, pp. 24-25.

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."⁴⁵⁵

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."⁴⁵⁶

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.⁴⁵⁷ Among these was the famous priest-hermit Fr. John the Romanian (+1960), whose relics are still incorrupt...

"The first and foremost problem" for the True Orthodox, writes Constantin Bujor, "was the lack of Priests. Religious persecution against the clergy and Faithful

⁴⁵⁵ Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos, "The True Orthodox Christians of Romania", *The Orthodox Word*, January-February, 1982, vol. 18, № 1 (102), pp. 6-7.

⁴⁵⁶ Letter to Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky), in Glazkov, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

⁴⁵⁷ "The Convent of the Ascension on the Holy Mount of Olives, 1906-2006", *Orthodox Life*, September-October, 2006, p. 21.

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 according to the Gregorian Paschalion in 1926 and 1929 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 Nicholae Onofrei there is a photograph of Father Glicherie serving with Patriarch Damianos. On returning to Romania, Father Glicherie continued the struggle with greater zeal and invigorated the Old Calendar Church by building over thirty new Churches. He went to many places in the country, including Basarabia, accompanied by a group of monks from both Romania and Mount Athos, who helped him in convincing the Faithful to keep alive love, hope, and confidence in the power of the traditional Faith.

“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, Neamţ County, to bless the site for a new Church at Vadu in Moldavia, they met convoys of carriages from Mălini, Drăguşeni, 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.

“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 Rădăşeni, 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 Glicherie’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 Fälticeni. 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 Fälticeni. The same Father Teodoru had gotten the gendarmes drunk, thereby becoming an accomplice to their criminal action."⁴⁵⁸

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. Also, writes Glazkov, "the priests Fathers Boris Binetsky, Demetrius Stitskevich and Vladimir Polyakov were put on trial for serving according to the old style."⁴⁵⁹

In 1935, Hieromonk Glycherie heard of the return of the three bishops to the Old Calendar in Greece. And so late in the autumn he "travelled again to Mount Athos, accompanied by Monk Ghimnazie, who knew Greek... Their purpose was to bring an Old Calendarist Hierarch to Romania to perform Ordinations, or to have Father Ghimnazie or any other Romanian living on Mount Athos Consecrated to serve the Church back home."⁴⁶⁰

However, when they "asked the Old Calendar Greek bishops to consecrate Fr. Ghimnazie to the episcopate, the bishops could do nothing without their first-hierarch, Metropolitan Chrysostom of Florina, who, at the insistence of the newcalendarist Metropolitan of Athens, had been detained by the English authorities in Palestine...

"St. Glycherie set off for Yugoslavia. He visited the church of the Russian Church Abroad in Belgrade, where Metropolitan Anastasy was serving. Metropolitan Anastasy advised Fr. Glycherie to turn to Bishop Seraphim (Lyade) of the Russian Church Abroad, and ask him to go to Romania to order Old Calendar priests. Bishop Seraphim at that time was in Vienna. St. Glycherie set off there, but Vladyka Seraphim did not decide to go to Romania, knowing how dangerous it was."⁴⁶¹

After returning to Romania, on September 1, 1936 Fr. Glycherie came to the consecration of a church in the village of Bukhalnița-Neamț. He was accompanied by 4000 peasants on 500 wagons. When the procession was passing through the town of Piatra Neamț, the road was blocked by soldiers with machine guns. St. Glycherie and many other monks and laypeople were arrested. Many were killed.

⁴⁵⁸ Bujor, *op. cit.*, pp. 55-60.

⁴⁵⁹ Glazkov, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

⁴⁶⁰ Bujor, *op. cit.*, p. 98.

⁴⁶¹ Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 2, p. 52.

Glycherie was savagely beaten on the head with various clubs. Deacon David Bidascu was also beaten, and suffered from his wounds for the rest of his days.⁴⁶²

Metropolitan Cyprian writes: "Hieromonk Glycherie... was taken under guard to Bucharest and there condemned to death. He was, however, miraculously saved, in that the Theotokos appeared to the wife of the Minister of Justice and gave her an order to intercede with her husband on Father Glycherie' behalf. Her husband did not react in the manner of Pilate, but rather commuted Father Glycherie's death sentence and ordered him imprisoned in a distant monastery...

"[Patriarch Miron] ordered all of the churches of the True Orthodox Christians razed, and imprisoned any cleric or monastic who refused to submit to his authority. The monks and nuns were incarcerated in two monasteries, where they were treated with unheard of barbarity. Some of them, such as Hieromonk Pambo, founder of the Monastery of Dobru (which was demolished and rebuilt three times), met with a martyr's end. During the destruction of the Monastery of Cucova, five lay people were thrown into the monastery well and drowned. By such tactics the Patriarch wished to rid himself of the Old Calendarist problem!"⁴⁶³

In fact, over ten priests were killed or died in prison, including Fathers Pambo, Gideon and Theophanes.⁴⁶⁴ "Take, for example, Fr. Euthymius – he was in a concentration camp for 3 years with Fr. Pambo, and he told us how they tortured him. They threw him into a stream and forced other prisoners to walk over him as over a bridge; he was at that time about 27 years old."⁴⁶⁵

In February, 1938 Patriarch Miron became prime minister of Romania. Immediately there began a severe persecution of the Legionnaires, a patriotic movement within the new calendar church. In April Codreanu was arrested and sentenced to ten years in prison, and in November he was killed... Although the Romanian True Orthodox Church, unlike the Legionnaire movement, was a purely spiritual organization, it is not surprising that its leaders should have been put into the same category. Thus in 1938 the authorities now decided to accuse the True Orthodox leader Fr. Glycherie of being an Iron Guard (Legionnaire). "After Father Glicherie was arrested in 1936," writes Constantin Bujor, "all means of intimidation were employed to shatter his nervous system. He was incarcerated for more than two years in a variety of prisons, being transferred from one jail to another; Bucharest, Iezeru, Râmnicu Vâlcea, Iezeru, Râmnicu Vâlcea, Craiova, Bucharest, Iași, Iezeru, and Piatra Niamț. The accusation of being an Old Calendarist could not carry too long a sentence, and Father Glicherie was thus finally set at liberty in 1938 – much to the chagrin of those who had gone to such great lengths to have him arrested. So, once again, they fabricated false charges, this time accusing him of more serious infractions in order to have him decisively condemned. Thus, Hieromonk Glicherie was falsely accused of being active in the Legionary

⁴⁶² Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 2, p. 57.

⁴⁶³ Metropolitan Cyprian, *op. cit.*

⁴⁶⁴ Victor Boldewskul, "The Old Calendar Church of Romania", *Orthodox Life*, vol. 42, № 5, October-November, 1992, pp. 11-17.

⁴⁶⁵ Metropolitan Blaise, *Pravoslavnaia Rus'* (Orthodox Russia), № 2(1479), 15/28 January, 1993.

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..."⁴⁶⁶

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."⁴⁶⁷

"With the outbreak of World War II in 1939, Father Glycherie was set free and, along with his beloved co-struggler, Deacon David Bidascu, fled into the forest. There the two lived in indescribable deprivation and hardship, especially during the winter. In the midst of heavy snows, when their few secret supporters could not get frugal provisions to them, the Fathers were obliged to eat worms! However, Divine Providence protected them from their persecutors and, directed by that same Providence, the birds of the sky would erase traces of the Fathers' footprints in the snow by flying about and flapping their wings in the snow. And despite the harsh cold, not once did they light a fire, lest the smoke might betray their refuge. (The cold often approaches thirty degrees below zero during the winter in Romania.) Other ascetics were also hidden in the deserts, among them Father Damascene, Father Paisius, et al."⁴⁶⁸

4. The Old Calendarists under Communism

After the war, the Romanian Old Calendarists led by Hieromonk Glycherie continued to be fiercely persecuted. Nevertheless, as Metropolitan Cyprian writes, "the work of building churches was begun anew, since all of those formerly built had been demolished. In as short an interval of time, between

⁴⁶⁶ Bujor, op. cit., pp. 99-101.

⁴⁶⁷ Glazkov, op. cit., pp. 57-58.

⁴⁶⁸ Metropolitan Cyprian, op. cit.

the end of the war and 1950, almost all of the razed churches, as well as the ruins of the Monastery of Dobru, had been rebuilt. Between 1947 and 1948, the large Monastery of Slatioara (for men) was constructed, along with the monasteries of Bradatel Neamt and Bradatel Suceava (both for women)."⁴⁶⁹

Metropolitan Blaise writes: "In 1947 some people from our village went to Archimandrite Glycherie and said: something like freedom has come. The point was that the communists at first tried to win over the people to their side. They told them that they could come out of the woods and build a monastery. And in 1947 they built the monastery of Slatioara - the spiritual centre of our Church.

"It is difficult to say whether our position got worse under the communists or not. But essentially things remained the same - the persecutions continued. The communists destroyed only eight of our churches - not all of them. They were comparatively moderate.

"Before the war the Church was almost completely annihilated. Before the coming of the communists in 1944 we were accused of being Bolsheviks because we had the same calendar as the 'Russians'. Under the communists, after 1944, they called us followers of Antonescu, Iron Guardists, fascists, enemies of the people. In fact we took part in no political movements or parties. We entered into agreements neither with the civil authorities, nor with the monarchy, nor with the Iron Guardists, nor with the communists, nor with the Masons...

"1947-52 was a period of comparative freedom. The communist authorities even compelled the official church to return to us the icons, iconostases, bells and church utensils which they had removed. But in 1952, at two o'clock in the night of February 1st to 2nd, two lorries loaded with security police came to the monastery and arrested almost all the young monks together with the igumen, sparing only the very aged. They were sentenced to two years' imprisonment. Four of them died in camp."⁴⁷⁰

"The aim of this raid," writes Constantin Bujor, "was to destroy the organization of the Old Calendarist Church, to put a stop to her activities, and thus to abolish her. Arrests were carried out in an abusive manner because the Securitate had unlimited powers - it was a manifestation of Communist totalitarianism under the notorious 'dictatorship of the proletariat' promoted nationwide by the Romanian Workers' Party. During these years, thousands of arrests were made without any legal warrant in order to populate the forced labor camps. But the inhuman treatment of those detained in prisons and labor camps - the nation's leaders had always turned a blind eye to these abuses - had a negative impact on foreign relations for Romania, which was striving at the time to become a member of the United Nations. In order to extricate

⁴⁶⁹ Metropolitan Cyprian, *op. cit.*

⁴⁷⁰ Metropolitan Blaise, *op. cit.*

themselves from this mess, the Communist leaders sought a scapegoat by organizing a secret trial for a group of officers in charge of the labor camps. One of these officers, Cormoș from Cluj, testified that the officers did not consider themselves culpable, since they were under direct order from the higher authorities, who now were trying to wash their hands of any guilt. Needless to say, the leadership of the country accepted no culpability, and instead condemned the officers either to death or to years of harsh imprisonment. Then, in 1954, after two years, all of the Old Calendarists arrested were set free, together with numerous other political prisoners.

“While the clergy and some of the Faithful of the Old Calendar Church were serving time in prisons and labor camps, in Ardeal more and more believers were returning to the Church Calendar...

“[Nevertheless,] a careful analysis of the situation demonstrated that the persecution was now being intensified, especially against the leaders of the Church, who had already undergone years of harsh imprisonment and other sufferings at the hands of the previous regime. In order to ensure continuity in the leadership, it became necessary to Ordain Priests and Hierarchs to take up the banner of the struggle for the truth. The presence of a Hierarch was absolutely indispensable for the Old Calendar Church. To this end, contact was established with Bishop Galaction in Bucharest, who had in the past expressed his attachment to the Old Calendar, for which he had been condemned at the time of the German Occupation during the First World War.⁴⁷¹ He promised that when conditions at the Slatioara Monastery were favourable, he would come and assume the leadership of the Old Calendar Church. Thus, a delegation of Priests who formed part of the leadership and were personally known to Bishop Galaction was sent to Bucharest - Father Dionisie, Father Evloghie, and Father (later Metropolitan) Silvestru - and persuaded him to come to Slatioara Monastery.”⁴⁷²

On April 5/18, 1955 Bishop Galaction publicly declared in a letter to the newcalendarist synod that he had accepted to be the head of the Old Calendarist Church, and 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 Galacteon (Cordun)... appeared. Vladyka was holding Icons and a Cross in his hands, and he was giving each believer in

⁴⁷¹ Bishop Ambrose of Methone writes: “[Galaction] was Bishop of Silistre, which after the war was, with Southern Dobrodgea, ceded to Bulgaria. He was thus left without a diocese, and having been the confessor of the royal family, was a persona non grata who could not possibly be appointed to another see. He was thus a bishop in retirement, who continued to serve as invited (he in fact consecrated Teoctist, the present Patriarch, bishop) until 1955” (personal communication, 28 August, 2005). (V.M.)

⁴⁷² Bujor, op. cit., pp. 113-114, 115-116.

the Church an Icon. When he reached the pious Father Glycherie, he gave him the Cross."⁴⁷³

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. 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 Meftodie⁴⁷⁴) and several priests. When this was discovered, about a year later, he was placed under stronger observation in Căldărușani Monastery. But on Good Friday, 1959, Metropolitan Galaction was abducted by Fr. 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."⁴⁷⁵

This was not the first abduction carried out by the Romanian Old Calendarists in this period. "During the night of November 17, 1956, Archimandrite Glycherie, who had been abducted from his forced labour, was secretly consecrated a bishop [in Moara Domneasca]. Then they hid in our monastery, where every day ordinations took place. A year later they were again arrested."⁴⁷⁶

At about this time, the future Bishop Pahomie "and Hierodeacon Paisie (Urdă) travelled to Alba County to celebrate the Feast of Saint Nicholas at one of the Churches there. It was soon after the anti-Communist uprising in the Third Hungarian Revolution (October 10/23-October 22/November 4, 1956), had been crushed by Soviet tanks. The Romanian Securitate was monitoring all activities, making arrests, and trying and sentencing individuals. The intention of the monks was apparently known to Securitate forces, because on the way to Râmeț, Fathers Pahomie and Paisie were detained and taken to Securitate headquarters in Alba Iulia. After a few hours of interrogation, the Fathers were transported later than same night to Aiud, where, the next day, the interrogation continued. The monks began a hunger strike to protest their innocence. After five days of questioning, Father Pahomie was granted a vision

⁴⁷³ Metropolitan Blaise, *The Life of the Holy Hierarch and Confessor Glycherie of Romania*, Etna, Ca.: Center for Traditionalist Studies, 1999, p. 50.

⁴⁷⁴ 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. Metropolitan Galaction himself died in 1959. See *Foi Transmise et Sainte Tradition* (Transmitted Faith and Holy Tradition), N 79, November, 1994, p. 15; Bujor, *op. cit.*, pp. 133-145.

⁴⁷⁵ Metropolitan Blaise, *Pravoslavnaiia Rus'*, *op. cit.*; Bujor, *op. cit.*, pp. 126-127; Metropolitan Cyprian, *op. cit.*, pp. 8-9; Stefan and Girgiu Hîncu, personal communication, September, 1994; Bishop Ambrose, personal communication, May, 2006.

⁴⁷⁶ Metropolitan Blaise, *op. cit.*

at night in his cell, in which the Holy Hieromartyr Cyprian (+304) appeared to him and said, 'Brother, why have you been arrested, and why are you so distressed?' Father Pahomie replied that he was distressed because he had been illegally detained. Saint Cyprian told him not to be upset, but to pray to him, and they would be allowed to go home. With much difficulty, Father Pahomie succeeded in communicating his vision to Father Paisie, and both agreed to spend the whole night in prayer. In the morning, they were interrogated once more, signed the transcripts, and were then taken to the prosecutor's office. After their dossiers had been examined, the monks were released, although by that time it was too late for them to perform the Divine Services for Saint Nicholas' Day as they had planned...

"The monks returned to Bucharest, where they celebrated the Divine Services for Theophany. The news that in the Bucharest area a 'hotbed' of Old Calendarists had been established under the leadership of Bishop Evloghie swiftly reached the Patriarchate, which in turn notified the Securitate. Thus, Father Pahomie and Father Paisie were arrested again, while Bishop Evloghie went into hiding. Taken back to Aiud, where only two months earlier they had been set free, they were sentenced to eight months in prison..."⁴⁷⁷

After being abducted from captivity, Metropolitan Galaction "returned to Slatioara, where he was so weighed down with his sufferings that he was unable to serve the Divine Liturgy", and died on July 12, 1959.⁴⁷⁸

"The majority of the clergy who had been ordained were however arrested, and were not finally liberated until the amnesty of 1963, when Ceaucescu came to power. In 1958, the Romanian authorities ordered that all the monks under 60 and all the nuns under 55 should leave their monasteries, but, as always in these cases, the order had to be given through the local Metropolitans. Those of the new calendar complied (with one exception) and thousands of monks and nuns found themselves on the streets after a lifetime in their monasteries; the authorities, however, met with an absolute refusal from Saint Glicherie, who declared himself happy to return to prison rather than betray those under his care. Before this, the authorities bowed, though harassment of the monasteries continued, and several monasteries were closed by force..."⁴⁷⁹

About 4000 monastics were expelled from their communities. One of those who suffered at this time was Father (now Bishop) Demosthenes (Ionita): "In 1957 Metropolitan Glycherie ordained him to the priesthood. Within a month

⁴⁷⁷ Bujor, *op. cit.*, pp. 148-149.

⁴⁷⁸ "Saint Glicherie the Confessor, Metropolitan of Romania, 1881-1985", typescript of the Monastery of Sts. Cyprian and Justina, Fili, Attica, Greece, July, 1999. Bishop Ambrose of Methone writes: "Metropolitan Vlasie, who looked after [Galaction] remembers that he had a stroke six days before his death and was unconscious during that time; only his right hand moved, constantly passing the knots of his prayer-rope... He was buried secretly at night, and a load of concrete poured into the grave, for fear lest the new calendarists should take his body" (private communications, August 28, 2005, May 3, 2006).

⁴⁷⁹ "Saint Glicherie", *op. cit.*

after his ordination, Fr. Demosthenes went to Bucharest to assist Bishop Evloghie who was in hiding. There he was betrayed by an Old Calendar priest and arrested. The authorities demanded that Fr. Demosthenes reveal the whereabouts of the bishop, which he refused to do.

“On July 23, 1958, Fr. Demosthenes was again arrested. He, with a group of chanters, had served a funeral for his cousin in a closed church. A New Calendar priest reported this to the authorities, which resulted in his and the chanters’ arrest. Six officers took Fr. Demosthenes to the city Tirgu-Mures. Upon his arrival, he was led to a room where several guards took off his clothes, and later shaved off his hair and beard. His prison cell had a cement bed with no covers. For five months the civil authorities investigated and interrogated Fr. Demosthenes in an attempt to find some excuse to have him sentenced. The first round of questioning went along these lines:

“Interrogator: What activity does Glycherie have in this country? What measures does he plan against the Communists?

“Fr. Demosthenes: The Metropolitan teaches us to work, pray, and obey the laws of the state.

“Interrogator: Where are you hiding your guns?

“Fr. Demosthenes: Our guns are our church books.

“Chief Interrogator: Why doesn’t he tell us where the guns are? Hang him!

“At this point Fr. Demosthenes lost consciousness and fell to the floor. When he awoke, he found himself in his cell with a doctor. The doctor asked where he hurt and why he had fallen. Fr. Demosthenes responded, ‘I don’t remember.’ The doctor kicked him and responded, ‘This is our medicine for Old Calendarists who want to kill Communists.’

“Fr. Demosthenes spent the next seven years in concentration camps. His experience could comprise a chapter of Solzhenitsyn’s *Gulag Archipelago*. The prisoners were starved, tortured, and denied any form of comfort. At one point Fr. Demosthenes was so exhausted that he could not even remember the Lord’s Prayer. In 1959 the authorities promised all religious prisoners from his camp freedom if they signed a declaration of apostasy. Out of 2,000 prisoners only 90 agreed to sign. In the prison camp in Salcia, Fr. Demosthenes saw prisoners being trampled by horses as he and others worked on building canals and other projects in the freezing winter. Many years later, Fr. Demosthenes met one of the prison guards of Salcia, who informed him that it was indeed a miracle he had survived, for the guards had orders that no one was to leave that camp alive.

“In 1964 Fr. Demosthenes was freed from prison. When his mother saw him for the first time in seven years, she asked, ‘Why did they release you, did you compromise the faith?’ His mother was relieved to hear that her son had not betrayed the Church; this was her main concern. After three weeks he was again under house arrest. Fr. Demosthenes fled to the forests and lived in hiding for five more years.”⁴⁸⁰

Such was the life of the persecuted True Orthodox Church of Romania until the fall of Communism in Romania in 1989, when freedom was given to the Church and many new churches began to be built...

August 28 / September 10, 2016.

⁴⁸⁰ Victor Boldewskul, "The Old Calendar Church of Romania", *Orthodox Life*, vol. 42, N 5, October-November, 1992, pp. 13-15. Bishop Demosthenes spent seven years in prison.

31. THE HOLY GOD-SEER MOSES AND THE THEOLOGY OF ICONS

The life of the holy Prophet and God-Seer Moses, whose feast we celebrate today, is so full of extraordinarily significant words and actions that it is difficult to know where to begin. St. Gregory of Nyssa devoted a whole treatise, *The Life of Moses*, to expounding the iconic relationship between the life of Moses and the Life of Christ. In this short article we shall touch only on one small, but important aspect of his life: its teaching on the nature of icons.

Now the Holy Church in her service to Moses makes what at first sight looks like an extraordinary claim: that he was the very first “God-seer”, who saw God face-to-face: “Let Moses, the first among the prophets, be praised, for he was the first to converse openly with God, face to face, not in indistinct images, but beholding Him as in the guise of the flesh.”⁴⁸¹ “Not in indistinct images”, and “in the guise of the flesh”. So he must have had a clear vision of *the God-man, the Lord Jesus Christ, in His Humanity*. But how was that possible, seeing that Christ was not yet incarnate? The answer is: only by seeing Him *in an image, or icon* – but one not made with hands.

And yet, one will argue, was it not precisely to Moses that God emphasized the complete invisibility and unknowability of God? And did He not, in His Ten commandments inscribed on tablets of stone for Moses, forbid the making of images and say: “Thou shalt have no other gods beside Me. Thou shalt not make thyself an idol (ειδωλον), nor likeness (ομοιωμα) of anything, whatever things are in the heaven above, and whatever are in the earth beneath, and whatever are in the waters under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down (προσκυνησεις) to them, nor worship (λατρευσεις) them” (Exodus 20:2-5)? True, but Moses did not *make any idols*, nor did he *bow down to or worship* anything created. However, he did *see* an icon of Christ God in the mystical darkness of Mount Sinai... Moreover, in the same place, as St. Gregory of Nyssa writes, “he sees that tabernacle not made with hands, which he shows to those below by means of a material likeness”.⁴⁸² So it is not too bold to suggest that it is precisely Moses who lays a beginning to the *contemplation* of visible icons of God incarnate, and even to the *creation* of material icons of heavenly things.

But there is more. In this commandment, a distinction is made between veneration (προσκυνησεις) and worship (λατρευσεια) that was to become very important in the iconoclast controversy of the eighth and ninth centuries. Icons are to be venerated, but not worshipped. For an icon of Christ God, though holy and worthy of veneration, is not the same as Christ Himself, although we do truly see Him *through* the icon.

⁴⁸¹ *Menaion*, September 4, Mattins canon, Ode 1, troparion.

⁴⁸² St. Gregory of Nyssa, *The Life of Moses*, Part II, 169.

For an icon, according to St. Stephen the Younger, is a “door” into heaven. A door is not part of a room, but it makes possible access to the room. In the same way an icon of Christ is not Christ Himself, but it facilitates our access to Him. Therefore insofar as, in the words of St. Basil the Great, the honour given to an icon is ascribed to its Prototype, when we bow down and venerate an icon of Christ, we are offering honour and worship to Christ Himself.

As Professor Andrew Louth writes in his discussion of St. John of Damascus’ theology of icons: “According to John, we bow down for various reasons: sometimes we bow down to express honour for things or persons (and John gives various biblical examples of this); sometimes, however, we bow down in worship of God. Veneration, bowing down, *proskynesis*, is one thing; why we do it another. We can bow down to express honour (*time*), or to express worship (*latreia*, the word used in Exodus 20.5: ‘you shall not bow down or *worship*...’). Idolatry is to worship things created, not simply to honour them. This is the heart of John’s defence of the making and veneration of icons...”⁴⁸³

In another passage, Moses was told that He could not see God face-to-face, but had to hide behind a cleft in the rock, from behind which He could see, not His face, but only His back parts. Does this contradict what has just been said? No, it clarifies it; for it explains to us that Moses was able to see God face-to-face, not in the sense that He saw His essence, which is unknowable, but in the sense that He recognized Him in His incarnation, in His visible Humanity. “Sheltered by the stone, thou did not see the face of God, for it was hidden, O God-seer, but didst recognize the incarnation of the Word in His back parts.”⁴⁸⁴ Or, to be more precise, since Christ was not yet incarnate, Moses saw Him in an *icon* of His humanity, an icon not made with hands.

The visions of God by the Old Testament Prophets are iconographic visions of the Divine Energies of God, not of His Essence. Thus St. Gregory Palamas, commenting on the Patriarch Jacob's words: "I have seen God face to face [or person to person], and my soul has been saved", writes: "Let [the cacodox] hear that Jacob saw the face of God, and not only was his life not taken away, but as he himself says, it was saved, in spite of the fact that God says: 'None shall see My face and live'. Are there then two Gods, one having His face accessible to the vision of the saints, and the other having His face beyond all vision? Perish the impiety! The face of God which is seen is the Energy and Grace of God condescending to appear to those who are worthy; while the face of God that is never seen, which is beyond all appearance and vision let us call the Nature of God."⁴⁸⁵

Abraham's vision at the oak of Mamre was likewise an iconographic vision of God, not in His Essence, but in His Energies. Thus St. John Chrysostom

⁴⁸³ Louth, *Greek East and Latin West*, Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2007, pp. 52-53.

⁴⁸⁴ *Menaion*, September 4, Mattins canon, Ode 5, troparion.

⁴⁸⁵ St. Gregory Palamas, *Triads*.

writes: "How is it that elsewhere Scripture says, 'No one will see God and live' (Exodus 33.20)? How, then, would we interpret the words of Scripture, 'He appeared'? How did He appear to the just man? Surely he didn't see His true being? No – God forbid. What, then? He was seen in the way He alone knows and in the manner possible for Abram to see. In His inventiveness, you see, our wise and loving Lord, showing considerateness for our human nature, reveals Himself to those who worthily prepare themselves in advance. He explains this through the sacred author in the words, 'I gave many visions and took shape in the works of the inspired authors' (Hosea 12.2). Isaiah in his time saw him seated, something that is inapplicable to God, since He doesn't sit down – how could He, after all, with His unique nature being incorporeal and indefectible? Daniel too saw Him, as the Ancient of Days. Zechariah had a different vision of Him, and Ezekiel in turn a different one. This is the reason, therefore, that He said, 'I gave many visions', that is, I appeared in a way suited to each one."

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Since Moses and the other Old Testament Prophets truly saw God in visible form, not in His Essence, but in His Energies, in icons not made with hands, the Seventh Ecumenical Council declares: "Eternal be the memory of those who know and accept and believe the visions of the prophets as the Divinity Himself shaped and impressed them, whatever the chorus of the prophets saw and narrated, and who hold to the written and unwritten tradition of the Apostles which was passed on to the Fathers, and on account of this make icons of the Holy things and honour them." And again: "Anathema to those who do not accept the visions of the prophets and who reject the iconographies which have been seen by them (O wonder!) even before the Incarnation of the Word, but either speak empty words about having seen the unattainable and unseen Essence, or on the one hand pay heed to those who have seen these appearances of icons, types and forms of the truth, while on the other hand they cannot bear to have icons made of the Word become man and His sufferings on our behalf."⁴⁸⁷

But this is not the last connection of Moses with the New Testament teaching on icons. At the Transfiguration of Christ on Tabor, he was counted worthy to see the Prototype of the image He had seen on Sinai, not in darkness now, but shining in the Divine Light. Not that there was no Light in the first vision: St. Paul says that Moses' face was shining with Light as he came down from Sinai, but had to "put a veil over his face, so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the End of what was passing away. But their minds were blinded... Nevertheless, when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away" (II Corinthians 3.13-14, 16).

At the Transfiguration the veil was taken away, and the Lord was seen in all His glory. We Orthodox Christians, unlike the Israelites of the Old Testament,

⁴⁸⁶ St. John Chrysostom, *Homily 32 on Genesis*, 4.

⁴⁸⁷ See St. Nicodemus' comments on this decree in *The Rudder*, Chicago: Orthodox Christian Educational Society, 1957, pp. 420-421.

do not have a veil over our hearts; we are not blinded that we should not see the Light. As we chant in the Divine Liturgy after receiving Communion: "We have seen the true Light, we have received the Heavenly Spirit." For having been illumined by the True Faith and Holy Baptism, we are like the Apostles and Prophets on Mount Tabor, Who saw Christ both in the Uncreated Energies of His Divinity and in the created matter of His Humanity. For "we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord" (II Corinthians 3.18).

And that passage from the veiled to the unveiled vision of God, from images and likenesses not made by hands to the Uncreated Archetype Himself, was indicated to us first of all by the holy Prophet and God-seer Moses, of whom the Church chants: "Even after thy death, thou didst see the Lord, O God-seer, and not in dim images as before thou didst in the rock; but thou didst behold Him as Christ in a human body, illumining all with His Divinity."⁴⁸⁸

*September 4/17, 2016.
Holy Prophet and God-seer Moses.*

⁴⁸⁸ *Menaion*, September 4, Mattins canon, Ode 9, troparion.

32. LIBERAL DEMOCRACY AND THE END OF HISTORY

Probably the best-known and best-articulated defence of liberalism that has appeared in the last twenty-five years is *The End of History and the Last Man* by the Harvard-trained political scientist Francis Fukuyama. In view of the fame of this thesis, any anti-modernist world-view, and in particular any truly coherent defence of our Orthodox Christian faith, and in particular of its attitude to politics, must take into account what Fukuyama says and refute it, or, at any rate, show that those of his analyses that are correct must lead to different conclusions from the ones he draws. What makes Fukuyama's thesis particularly interesting to Orthodox Christians is that it is possible for us to agree with 99% of his detailed argumentation while differing fundamentally from him in our final conclusions.

Fukuyama's original article entitled "The End of History?" argued, in his words, "that liberal democracy represented 'the end point of mankind's ideological evolution' and 'the final form of human government,' and as such constituted 'the end of history'. That is, while earlier forms of government were characterized by grave defects and irrationalities that led to their eventual collapse, liberal democracy was arguably free from such fundamental internal contradictions. This was not to say that today's stable democracies, like the United States, France, or Switzerland, were not without injustice or serious social problems. But these problems were ones of incomplete implementation of the twin principles of liberty and equality on which modern democracy is founded, rather than flaws in the principles themselves. While some present-day countries might fail to achieve stable liberal democracy, and others might lapse back into other, more primitive forms of rule like theocracy or military dictatorship, the *ideal* of liberal democracy could not be improved on."⁴⁸⁹

Fukuyama's original article appeared in the summer of 1989, and it received rapid and dramatic support from the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe almost immediately after. Thus by 1991 the only major country outside the Islamic Middle East and Africa not to have become at least nominally democratic was Communist China - and cracks were appearing there as well. Not that Fukuyama predicted this outcome: as he honestly admits, only a few years before neither he nor the great majority of western political scientists had anticipated the fall of communism any time soon. Probably the only prominent writers to predict both the fall of communism and the nationalist conflicts and democratic regimes that followed it were Orthodox Christian ones such as Gennady Shimanov and Alexander Solzhenitsyn, neither of whom was noted as being a champion of democracy. This fact alone should make us pause before trusting too much in Fukuyama's judgements about the future of the world and the end of history. Nevertheless, it must be admitted that at the present time History *appears* to be going his way. It is another question whether this direction is the *best* possible way, or whether it is possible to consider other possible outcomes to the historical process...

⁴⁸⁹ Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1992, p. xi.

1. Reason, Desire and Thymos

Why, according to Fukuyama, is History moving towards world-wide democracy? At the risk of over-simplifying what is a lengthy and sophisticated argument, we may summarise his answer under two headings: *the logic of scientific advance*, and *the logic of human need*, in particular *the need for recognition*. Let us look briefly at each of these.

First, the survival of any modern State militarily and economically requires that *science and technology* be given free rein, which in turn requires the free dissemination of ideas and products both within and between States that only political and economic liberalism guarantees. "The scientific-technical elite required to run modern industrial economies would eventually demand greater political liberalization, because scientific inquiry can only proceed in an atmosphere of freedom and the open exchange of ideas. We saw earlier how the emergence of a large technocratic elite in the USSR and China created a certain bias in favor of markets and economic liberalization, since these were more in accord with the criteria of economic rationality. Here the argument is extended into the political realm: that scientific advance depends not only on freedom for scientific inquiry, but on a society and political system that are as a whole open to free debate and participation."⁴⁹⁰

Moreover, it is not reasonable to expect that the advance of science can be halted or reversed for an indefinite period. Even the destruction of civilization through a nuclear or ecological catastrophe, and the demand for a far more careful evaluation of the effects of science and technology that such a catastrophe would elicit, would not alter this. For it is inconceivable that the principles of scientific method should be forgotten as long as humanity survives on the planet; and any State that eschewed the application of that method would be at an enormous disadvantage in the struggle for survival.

Fukuyama admits that the logic of scientific advance and technological development does not by itself explain why most people in advanced, industrialized countries prefer democracy. "For if a country's goal is economic growth above all other considerations, the truly winning combination would appear to be neither liberal democracy nor socialism of either a Leninist or democratic variety, but the combination of liberal economics and authoritarian politics that some observers have labeled the 'bureaucratic authoritarian state,' or what we might term a 'market-oriented authoritarianism.'"⁴⁹¹

Interestingly, as an example of such a "winning combination" of liberal economics and authoritarian politics, Fukuyama mentions "the Russia of Witte

⁴⁹⁰ Fukuyama, op. cit., p. 117.

⁴⁹¹ Fukuyama, op. cit., p. 123.

and Stolypin" - in other words, of Tsar Nicholas II... And in our own time the premier example is China...

Since the logic of scientific advance is not sufficient in itself to explain why most people and States choose democracy, Fukuyama has resort to a second, more powerful argument based on a Platonic model of human nature. According to this model, there are three basic components of human nature: *reason*, *desire* and the force denoted by the almost untranslatable Greek word *thymos*. Reason is the handmaid of desire and thymos; it is that element which distinguishes us from the animals and enables the irrational forces of desire and thymos to be satisfied in the real world. Desire includes the basic needs for food, sleep, shelter and sex. Thymos is usually translated as "anger" or "courage"; but Fukuyama defines it as that desire which "desires the desire of other men, that is, to be wanted by others or to be *recognized*".⁴⁹²

Now most liberal theorists in the Anglo-Saxon tradition, such as Hobbes, Locke and the founders of the American Constitution, have focused on desire as the fundamental force in human nature because on its satisfaction depends the survival of the human race itself. They have seen thymos, or the need for recognition, i.e. *ambition*, as an ambiguous force which should rather be suppressed than expressed; for it is ambition that leads to tyrannies, wars and all those conflicts which endanger "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness". The American Constitution with its system of checks and balances was designed above all to prevent the emergence of tyranny, which is the clearest expression of what we may call *megalothymia*. Indeed, for many the prime merit of democracy consists in its prevention of tyranny.

A similar point of view was expressed by the Anglican writer, C.S. Lewis: "I am a democrat because I believe in the Fall of Man. I think most people are democrats for the opposite reason. A great deal of democratic enthusiasm descends from the ideas of people like Rousseau, who believed in democracy because they thought mankind so wise and good that everyone deserved a share in government. The danger of defending democracy on those grounds is that they are not true. And whenever their weakness is exposed, the people who prefer tyranny make capital out of the exposure. I find that they're not true without looking further than myself. I don't deserve a share in governing a henroost, much less a nation. Nor do most people - all the people who believe in advertisements, and think in catchwords and spread rumours. The real reason for democracy is just the reverse. Mankind is so fallen that no man can be trusted with unchecked power over his fellows..."⁴⁹³

But this argument is deficient on both logical and historical grounds. Let us agree that Man is fallen. Why should giving very many fallen men a share in government reverse that fall? In moral and social life, two minuses do not make

⁴⁹² Fukuyama, *op. cit.*, p. 146.

⁴⁹³ Lewis, "Equality", *The Spectator*, CLXXI (27 August, 1943), p. 192; *The Business of Heaven*, London: Collins, 1984, p. 186.

a plus. Democratic institutions may inhibit the rise of tyranny in the short term; but they also make it almost certain that democratic leaders will be accomplished demagogues prepared to do almost anything to please the electorate. One man's ambition may check the full expression of another's; but the combination of many contradictory wills can only lead to a compromise which is exceedingly unlikely to be the best decision for society as a whole.

In fact, if wisdom in politics, as in everything else, comes from God, "it is much more natural to suppose," as Vladimir Trostnikov says, "that divine enlightenment will descend upon the chosen soul of an Anointed One of God, as opposed to a million souls at once".⁴⁹⁴ The Scripture does *not* say vox populi - vox Dei, but: "The heart of the king is in the hand of the Lord; he turns it wherever He will" (Proverbs 21.1).

In spite of his being a democrat, Lewis was very perceptive about the evil uses to which the word "democracy" could be put. Thus his *Screwtape* (an imaginative incarnation of the devil) writes: "*Democracy* is the word with which you must lead them by the nose. The good work which our philological experts have already done in the corruption of human language makes it unnecessary to warn you that they should never be allowed to give this word a clear and definable meaning. They won't. It will never occur to them that *democracy* is properly the name of a political system, even a system of voting, and that this has the most remote and tenuous connection with what you are trying to sell them. Nor of course must they ever be allowed to raise Aristotle's question: whether 'democratic behaviour' means the behaviour that democracies like or the behaviour that will preserve a democracy. For if they did, it could hardly fail to occur to them that these need not be the same.

"You are to use the word purely as an incantation; if you like, purely for its selling power. It is a name they venerate. And of course it is connected with the political ideal that men should be equally treated. You then make a stealthy transition in their minds from this political ideal to a factual belief that all men *are* equal. Especially the man you are working on. As a result you can use the word *democracy* to sanction in his thought the most degrading (and also the most enjoyable) of all human feelings... The feeling I mean is of course that which prompts a man to say *I'm as good as you*. The first and most obvious advantage is that you thus induce him to enthrone at the centre of his life a good, solid, resounding lie.

"Now, this useful phenomenon is in itself by no means new. Under the name of Envy it has been known to the humans for thousands of years. But hitherto they always regarded it as the most odious, and also the most comical, of vices. Those who were aware of feeling it felt it with shame; those who were not gave it no quarter in others. The delightful novelty of the present situation is that

⁴⁹⁴ Trostnikov, "The Role and Place of the Baptism of Rus in the European Spiritual Process of the Second Millenium of Christian History", *Orthodox Life*, vol. 39, № 3, May-June, 1989, p. 34.

you can sanction it - make it respectable and even laudable - by the incantatory use of the word *democracy*.⁴⁹⁵

In another place Lewis admits that not democracy, but *monarchy* "is the channel through which all the *vital* elements of citizenship - loyalty, the consecration of secular life, the hierarchical principle, splendour, ceremony, continuity - still trickle down to irrigate the dustbowl of modern economic Statecraft".⁴⁹⁶

In any case, has democracy really been such a defence against tyranny? Let us take the example of the first and most famous democracy, Athens.

In the sixth century BC, Athens had been ruled by Solon, one of the wisest and most benevolent of autocrats, who showed his superiority to personal ambition by retiring into voluntary exile at the height of his fame. Later, in the fifth century, Athenian democracy was led by a good leader, Pericles. But by the end of the century Socrates, the state's most distinguished citizen, had been executed; Melos had been reduced and its population cruelly butchered; and a futile and morale-sapping war against Sparta had been lost.

The lessons were not lost on the philosophers of the next century: Plato turned from democracy to the ideal of the philosopher-king; while Aristotle, as we have seen, distinguished between "democratic behaviour" meaning "the behaviour that democracies like" and "democratic behaviour" meaning "the behaviour that will preserve a democracy" - the two do not coincide.

The behaviour that democracies like is peaceful money-making and pleasure-seeking. The behaviour that will preserve a democracy is war and strict discipline, in which the rights of the individual must be subordinated to the will of the state. Moreover, in order to *attain* democracy, the rights of individuals must be not only subordinated, but destroyed, sometimes on a massive scale. As Shakespeare put it in *Julius Caesar* (II, 1):

Ligarius. *What's to do?*

Brutus. *A piece of work that will make sick men whole.*

Ligarius. *But are not some whole that we must make sick?*

Thus it is a striking fact that all the greatest tyrants of modern times have emerged on the back of violent democratic revolutions: Cromwell - of the English revolution; Napoleon - of the French revolution; Lenin - of the Russian revolution. And was not Hitler elected by the German democracy? Again, democracies have been quite prepared to throw whole peoples to the lions of tyranny for ephemeral gains. We think of the Helsinki Accords of 1975, by which the West legitimised the Soviet conquest of Eastern Europe; or Taiwan's

⁴⁹⁵ Lewis, *op. cit.*, pp. 190-191.

⁴⁹⁶ Lewis, "Myth and Fact", in *God in the Dock: Essays on Theology*, edited by Walter Hopper, Fount Paperbacks, 1979.

expulsion from the United Nations at the insistence of Red China and with the complaisance of the United States.

So thymos, or ambition, is an aspect of human nature that the Anglo-Saxon liberal tradition has difficulty in accommodating. Liberals approve of the use of thymos in overthrowing tyrannies, but are short of ideas on how to tame it within an existing democracy. Recognizing this weakness in the Anglo-Saxon model, Fukuyama turns to a consideration of the German idealist tradition, as represented by the philosopher Friedrich Hegel, who attributed a much more positive value to thymos.

Hegel agreed with the Anglo-Saxons that democracy was the highest form of government, and therefore that the triumph of democracy - which for some mysterious reason he considered to have been attained by the tyrant Napoleon's victory at Jena in 1806 - was "the End of History". But democracy was the best, in Hegel's view, not simply because it attained the aim of self-preservation better than any other system, but also, *and primarily*, because it gave expression to thymos in the form of *isothymia* - that is, it allowed each citizen to express his thymos to an equal degree. For whereas in pre-democratic societies the satisfaction of thymos in one person led to the frustration of thymos for many more, thereby dividing the whole of society into one or a few masters and a great many slaves, as a result of the democratic revolutions of the eighteenth century the slaves overthrew their masters and achieved equal recognition in each other's eyes. Thus *through the winning of universal human rights everyone, in effect, became a master and was able to satisfy his thymos.*

Hegel's philosophy was an explicit challenge to the Christian view of political freedom and slavery.

Christians regard slavery as a secondary evil that could be turned into good if used for spiritual ends. "For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant" (I Corinthians 7.22; Onesimus). So "live as free men, yet without using your freedom as a pretext for evil; but live as servants of God" (I Peter 2.16).

St. Augustine developed this teaching, and asserted that if slaves "cannot get freedom from their masters, they can make their slavery into a kind of freedom, by performing this service not in deceitfulness and fear but in faithfulness and love, until injustice passes away and all dominion and human power are brought to nothing and God is all in all..."⁴⁹⁷

But this doctrine offended Hegel's pride, his thymos. So without arguing in detail against it, he rejected it as unworthy of the dignity of man. And he rejected Anglo-Saxon liberalism for similar reasons, insofar as he saw placing

⁴⁹⁷ St. Augustine, *The City of God*, XIX, 15; translated by Maurice Wiles and Mark Santer, *Documents in Early Christian Thought*, Cambridge University Press, 1977, pp. 241-242.

self-preservation as the main aim of life and society as effete and degrading. Thus Hegel would have agreed with Shakespeare's words in *Hamlet*, IV, 4:

*What is a man,
If his chief good and market of his time
Be but to sleep and feed? A beast, no more.*⁴⁹⁸

The essence and glory of man consists in his love of glory and honour:

*Rightly to be great
Is not to stir without great argument,
But greatly to find quarrel in a straw
When honour's at the stake.*

For the greatness of man lies in his *transcendence* of self-preservation, in his capacity for self-sacrifice. And this is a manifestation of thymos.

Fukuyama develops the Hegelian critique of Anglo-Saxon liberalism as follows: "It is precisely the moral primacy accorded to self-preservation or comfortable self-preservation in the thought of Hobbes and Locke that leaves us unsatisfied. Beyond establishing rules for mutual self-preservation, liberal societies do not attempt to define any positive goals for their citizens or promote a particular way of life as superior or desirable to another. Whatever positive life may have has to be filled by the individual himself. That positive content can be a high one of public service and private generosity, or it can be a low one of selfish pleasure and personal meanness. The state as such is indifferent. Indeed, government is committed to the tolerance of different 'lifestyles', except when the exercise of one right impinges on another. In the absence of positive, 'higher' goals, what usually fills the vacuum at the heart of Lockean liberalism is the open-ended pursuit of wealth, now liberated from the traditional constraints of need and scarcity.

"The limitations of the liberal view of man become more obvious if we consider liberal society's most typical product, a new type of individual who has subsequently come to be termed pejoratively as the *bourgeois*: the human being narrowly consumed with his own immediate self-preservation and material well-being, interested in the community around him only to the extent that it fosters or is a means of achieving his private good. Lockean man did not need to be public-spirited, patriotic or concerned for the welfare of those around him; rather, as Kant suggested, *a liberal society could be made up of devils, provided they were rational* [italics added]. It was not clear why the citizen of a liberal state, particularly in its Hobbesian variant, would ever serve in the army and risk his life for his country in war. For if the fundamental natural right was self-preservation of the individual, on what grounds could it ever be rational

⁴⁹⁸ Shakespeare was the favourite author of the German idealists. But a careful reading of his plays demonstrates that he was no democrat, but rather a convinced defender of the hierarchical order in society. See *Richard II* and *Henry V*.

for an individual to die for his country rather than trying to run away with his money and family? Even in times of peace, Hobbesian or Lockean liberalism provided no reason why society's best men should choose public service and statesmanship over a private life of money-making. Indeed, it was not clear why Lockean man should become active in the life of his community, be privately generous to the poor, or even make the sacrifices necessary to raise a family.

"Beyond the practical question of whether one can create a viable society in which all public-spiritedness is missing, there is an even more important issue as to whether there was not something deeply contemptible about a man who cannot raise his sights higher than his own narrow self-interests and physical needs. Hegel's aristocratic master risking his life in a prestige battle is only the most extreme example of the human impulse to transcend merely natural or physical need. Is it not possible that the struggle for recognition reflects a longing for self-transcendence that lies at the root not only of the violence of the state of nature and of slavery, but also of the noble passions of patriotism, courage, generosity, and public spiritedness? Is recognition not somehow related to the entire moral side of man's nature, the part of man that finds satisfaction in the sacrifice of the narrow concerns of the body for an objective principle that lies beyond the body? By not rejecting the perspective of the master in favor of that of the slave, by identifying the master's struggle for recognition as somehow at the core of what is human, Hegel seeks to honor and preserve a certain moral dimension to human life that is entirely missing in the society conceived of by Hobbes and Locke. Hegel, in other words, understands man as a moral agent whose specific dignity is related to his inner freedom from physical or natural determination. It is this moral dimension, and the struggle to have it recognized, that is the motor driving the dialectical process of history."⁴⁹⁹

Now to the Christian ear there is an inner contradiction in this critique. While agreeing that there is something profoundly repellent in the bourgeois liberal's selfish pursuit of comfortable self-preservation, we cannot agree that the struggle for recognition is anything other than a different, and still more dangerous, form of egoism. For what is self-transcending in the pure affirmation of self? Patriotism, courage and generosity are indeed noble passions, but if we attribute them to the simple need for recognition, are we not reducing acts of *selflessness* to disguised forms of *selfishness*? And so if Anglo-Saxon liberalism panders to the ignoble passion of lust, does not Hegelian liberalism pander to the satanic passion of pride?

It follows from Fukuyama's analysis that the essential condition for the creation of a perfect or near-perfect society is the rational satisfaction both of desire and of thymos. But the satisfaction of thymos is the more problematic of the two requirements. For while the advance of science and open markets can be trusted to deliver the goods that desire - even the modern consumer's highly

⁴⁹⁹ Fukuyama, *op. cit.*, pp. 160-161.

elastic and constantly changing desire - requires in sufficient quantities for all, it is a very tricky problem to satisfy everyone's thymos without letting any individual or group give expression to *megalothymia*.

However, democracy has succeeded by replacing megalothymia by two things. "The first is a blossoming of the desiring part of the soul, which manifests itself as a thorough-going *economization* of life. This economization extends from the highest things to the lowest, from the states of Europe who seek not greatness and empire, but a more integrated European Community in 1992, to the college graduate who performs an internal cost-benefit analysis of the career options open to him or her. The second thing that remains in place of megalothymia is an all pervasive isothymia, that is, the desire to be recognized as the equal of other people."⁵⁰⁰

In other words, democracy rests on the twin pillars of greed and pride: the rational (i.e. scientific) manipulation of greed developed *without* limit (for the richer the rich, the less poor, eventually, will be the poor, the so-called "trickle down" effect), and pride developed *within* a certain limit (the limit, that is, set by other people's pride).

There are now no checks on fallen human nature except *laws* - the laws passed by fallen human beings - and the state's apparatus of law-keeping. That may be preferable to *lawlessness*, as Solzhenitsyn pointed out in the 1970s, comparing the West with the Soviet Union; but it means that within the limits of the laws the grossest immorality is permitted. Truly a house built on sand!

[2. Democracy and Nationalism](#)

Now there are two "thymotic" phenomena that will have to be controlled and neutralized if the democrat's ideal of a satisfied, isothymic citizenry is to be achieved: religion and nationalism. Nationalism is a threat because it implies that all men are not equal, which in turn implies that it is right and just for one group of men to dominate another. As Fukuyama admits, "Democracy is not particularly good at resolving disputes between different ethnic or national groups. The question of national sovereignty is inherently uncompromisable: it either belongs to one people or another - Armenians or Azerbaijanis, Lithuanians or Russians - and when different groups come into conflict there is seldom a way of splitting the difference through peaceful democratic compromise, as there is in the case of economic disputes. The Soviet Union could not become democratic and at the same time unitary, for there was no consensus among the Soviet Union's nationalities that they shared a common citizenship and identity. Democracy would only emerge on the basis of the country's breakup into smaller national entities. American democracy has done surprisingly well dealing with ethnic diversity, but that diversity has been contained within certain bounds: none of America's ethnic groups constitutes

⁵⁰⁰ Fukuyama, op. cit., p. 190.

historical communities living on their traditional lands and speaking their own language, with a memory of past nationhood and sovereignty."⁵⁰¹

Since democracy cannot contain give expression to nationalism without contradicting its own egalitarian principles, it has to undermine it - not by force, of course, but in the democratic way, that is, by sweet reason and material inducements. However, sweet reason rarely works when passions run high and deep, so in the end the warring nations have to be *bribed* to keep the peace. This works up to a point, but experience shows that even economically advanced countries whose desire is near to being satisfied cannot control the eruption of thymotic nationalist passions. Thus "economic development has not weakened the sense of national identity among French Canadians in Quebec; indeed, their fear of homogenization into the dominant Anglophone culture has sharpened their desire to preserve their distinctness. To say that democracy is more functional in societies 'born equal' like the United States begs the question of how a nation gets there in the first place. Democracy, then, does not necessarily become more functional as societies become more complex and diverse. In fact, it fails precisely when the diversity of a society passes a certain limit."⁵⁰²

In spite of this fact, the ideologues of democracy continue to believe that nationalism is a threat that can only be contained by building ever larger supra-national states. Thus the European Community was founded in 1956 on the premise that, besides the economic rewards to be reaped from the Union, it would prevent the recurrence of war between the European states in general and France and Germany in particular. Of course, the bloody breakdown of supra-national states such as the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia does not speak in support of this argument. But the democrats riposte by declaring that it is not supranationalism as such that was to blame for these breakdowns, but rather the communist system, which suppressed the thymotic aspirations of its citizens and so fuelled nationalism instead of sublimating it.

So is the democratic model of supranationalism represented by the European Union solving the problem of nationalism? The evidence seems to point in the opposite direction. Thus as the moment of the irreversible surrender of national sovereignties, i.e. monetary union, drew nearer, resistance stiffened in several countries, as witnessed by the majorities against it in many national polls. And as this resistance became stronger, so the sweet reason of the Eurocrats turned into the harsh language of threatened coercion. Thus the French Prime Minister proposed that those countries who decided not to join the monetary union (he had in mind especially Great Britain, the most sceptical of the Union's nation states) should be subject to economic penalties. And the German Chancellor said (again, his remarks were aimed particularly at Britain) that the result of a failure to unite in Europe would mean *war*. This is in spite of the fact that there had been no war or even threat of war in Western

⁵⁰¹ Fukuyama, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

⁵⁰² Fukuyama, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

Europe for the past fifty years! When the UK finally voted unambiguously to leave the EU in 2016, the head of the EU Commission denounced this act as "nationalism" and unambiguously evil.

So much for the "voluntary" union of states in the spirit of democracy and brotherhood! If you don't surrender your sovereignty, we will crush you! This is the language of nationalist hatred in supra-national guise, and it points to a central paradox or internal contradiction in democracy.

The contradiction consists in the fact that while democracy prides itself on its spirit of peace and brotherhood between individuals and nations, the path *to* democracy, both within and between nations, actually involves an unparalleled destruction of personal and national life. For much has been said, and truly said, about the destructive power of nationalism; but much less about how it protects nations and cultures and people *from* destruction (as, for example, it protected the Orthodox nations of Eastern Europe from destruction under the Turkish yoke). Again, much has been said, and truly said, about how democracy creates a culture of peace which has prevented the occurrence of major wars between democratic states; but much less about how democracy has drastically weakened the bonds created by societies other than the state, from the ethnic group and the church to the working men's club and the mother's union, with the result that, deprived of community identities, atomized, democratic man has found himself in a state of undeclared war against, or at any rate alienation from, his neighbour.

This may explain why, at just the moment when democracies seem to have matured and solved all major internal contradictions and inequalities, new nationalisms are appearing - the Basque, Scottish and North Italian nationalisms, for example, in the modern European Union. For men must feel that they *belong to a community*, and not just to such an amorphous community as "the European Union", still less "the International Community". But to create a community means to create partitions - not hostile partitions, not impermeable partitions, but partitions nevertheless, partitions that show who is inside and who is outside the community, criteria of membership which *not* everyone will be able to meet. The resilience of nationalism in both its positive and negative modes is a sign of the perennial need for *community*, a need which democracy has abysmally failed to satisfy.

However, while Fukuyama fully accepts the existence and seriousness of this lack in democratic society, he still seems to think that the most important and powerful sources of community life, religion and nationalism, are either already out or on the way out.

Thus in an uncharacteristically bold and unqualified statement he declares that "contrary to those who at the time believed that religion was a necessary and permanent feature of the political landscape, *liberalism vanquished religion*

in Europe [his italics].⁵⁰³ In 2016, when Islam looks set to dominate Europe within a generation, this remark looks simply stupid...

As for nationalism, Fukuyama recognizes that this is likely to continue and even increase in some regions for some time yet. But in the end it, too, is destined to "wither away". Thus he considers the rise of nationalism in the highly cultured, democratic and economically advanced Germany of the 1920s and 30s to have been "the product of historically unique circumstances". "These conditions are not only not latent in most developed societies, but would be very hard (though not impossible) to duplicate in other societies in the future. Many of these circumstances, such as defeat in a long and brutal war and economic depression, are well known and potentially replicable in other countries. But others have to do with the special intellectual and cultural traditions of Germany at the time, its anti-materialism and emphasis on struggle and sacrifice, that made it very distinct from liberal France and England. These traditions, which were in no way 'modern', were tested by the wrenching social disruptions caused by Imperial Germany's hothouse industrialization before and after the Franco-Prussian War. It is possible to understand Nazism as another, albeit extreme, variant of the 'disease of the transition', a byproduct of the modernization process that was by no means a necessary component of modernity itself. None of this implies that a phenomenon like Nazism is now impossible because we have advanced socially beyond such a stage. It does suggest, however, that fascism is a pathological and extreme condition, by which one cannot judge modernity as a whole."⁵⁰⁴

Pathological and extreme Nazism may be, but it cannot be dismissed as simply an ugly but easily excised wart on the superbly toned body of Modernity. Hitler was elected in a democratic manner, and Nazism was the product of one of the fundamental internal contradictions of democracy, the fact that while promising fraternity, it nevertheless atomizes, alienates and in many other ways *pulverizes* the "brothers", making them feel that life is a jungle in which every man is essentially alone. Sovietism was also a product of democracy, and an exposure of another of its internal contradictions - that between freedom and equality. These "deviations" to the right and left do not point to the righteousness of a supposed "royal way" in between. Rather, they are symptoms, warning signs pointing to the inner pathological nature of the ideal they both professed and to which they both owed their existence - democracy, the rule of the people.

The European Union gives as its main justification the avoidance of those nationalistic wars, especially between France and Germany, which have so disfigured the region's history. But even if France and Germany are friends now, most of the old nationalisms show no sign of dying. Moreover, the crisis in the Eurozone has reanimated traditional antipathy towards the most

⁵⁰³ Fukuyama, *op. cit.*, p. 271.

⁵⁰⁴ Fukuyama, *op. cit.*, p. 129.

powerful state in it, Germany. For pious exhortations are as useless in the face of nationalist fervour as exhortations to chastity in the face of aroused lust. In both cases *grace* is required to give power to the word.

The problem is that when the grace that holds apparent opposites in balance is absent, it is very easy for a nation, as for an individual person, to swing from one extreme to the other, as the history of the twentieth century, characterised by lurches from nationalist Fascism to internationalist Communism shows.

Late in the nineteenth century Constantine Leontiev saw that the nationalism of the states of Europe could lead to a no less dangerous internationalist abolition of states "... A state grouping *according to tribes and nations* is... nothing other than the preparation - striking in its force and vividness - for the transition to a cosmopolitan state, first a pan-European one, and then, perhaps, a global one, too! This is terrible! But still more terrible, in my opinion, is that fact that so far in Russia nobody has seen this or wants to understand it..."⁵⁰⁵ "A grouping of states according to pure nationalities will lead European man very quickly to the dominion of internationalism."⁵⁰⁶

More recently, Gabriel Robin has written: "The two ideologies, of Communism and of Europe, have much more in common than they [the Euroenthusiasts] like to admit... One had its apparatchiks, the other its Eurocrats... Their respective credos come together [in many respects including their belief in] the inevitable withering away of the nation-state..."⁵⁰⁷

3. Democracy and Religion

The second threat to democracy, according to Fukuyama, is religion. Religion is a threat because it postulates the existence of absolute truths and values that conflict with the democratic lie that it doesn't matter what you believe because one man's beliefs are as good and valid as any other's. That is why, as the Russian Slavophile Alexei Khomyakov pointed out, religion always declines under democracies.

Fukuyama writes: "Like nationalism, there is no inherent conflict between religion and liberal democracy, *except at the point where religion ceases to be tolerant or egalitarian.*"⁵⁰⁸

It is not surprising, therefore, that the flowering of liberal democracy should have coincided with the flowering of the ecumenical movement in religion, and that England, the birthplace of liberal democracy, should also have supplied,

⁵⁰⁵ Leontiev, "Tribal Politics as a Weapon of Global Revolution", letter 2. Constantine Leontiev, *Selected Works*, edited and with an introductory article by I.N. Smirnov, Moscow, 1993, p. 314.

⁵⁰⁶ Leontiev, "On Political and Cultural Nationalism", letter 3, *op. cit.*, p. 363.

⁵⁰⁷ Robin, in Bernard Connolly, *The Rotten Heart of Europe*, London: Faber and Faber, 2012, p. xlvii.

⁵⁰⁸ Fukuyama, *op. cit.*, p. 216. Italics added.

in the form of the Anglican Church, the model and motor for the creation of the World Council of Churches. For ecumenism is, in essence, the application of the principles of liberal democracy and egalitarianism to religious belief.

Paradoxically, Fukuyama, following Hegel, recognizes that the idea of the unique moral worth of every human being, which is at the root of the idea of human rights, is Christian in origin. For, according to the Christian view, "people who are manifestly unequal in terms of beauty, talent, intelligence, or skill, are nonetheless equal insofar as they are moral agents. The homeliest and most awkward orphan can have a more beautiful soul in the eyes of God than the most talented pianist or the most brilliant physicist. Christianity's contribution, then, to the historical process was to make clear to the slave this vision of human freedom, and to define for him in what sense all men could be understood to have dignity. The Christian God *recognizes* all human beings universally, recognizes their individual human worth and dignity. The Kingdom of Heaven, in other words, presents the prospect of a world in which the isothymia of every man - though not the megalothymia of the vainglorious - will be satisfied."⁵⁰⁹

Leaving aside for the moment the question whether this is an accurate representation of the Christian understanding of freedom and equality, we may note that, however useful this idea has been in bringing the slave to a sense of his own dignity, it has to be rejected by the democrat because it actually reconciles him with his chains rather than spurring him to throw them off. For Christianity, as Hegel - and, it would seem, Fukuyama, too - believes, is ultimately an ideology of slaves, whatever its usefulness as a stepping stone to the last ideology, the ideology of truly free men, Democracy. If the slaves are actually to become free, they must not be inhibited by the ideas of the will of God (which, by definition, is of greater authority than "the will of the people") and of the Kingdom of Heaven (which, by definition, cannot be the kingdom of this world). The Christian virtues of patience and humility must also go, and for very much the same reason. For the revolution needs *proud* men, *greedy* men, *impatient* men, not ascetic hermits - even if, after the revolution, they have to limit their pride and impatience (if not their greed) for the sake of the stability of democracy.

But this last point leads Fukuyama to a still more important admission: that religion is useful, perhaps even necessary, to democratic society even *after* the revolution. For "the emergence and durability of a society embodying rational recognition appears to *require* the survival of certain forms of irrational recognition."⁵¹⁰ One example of such a survival is the "Protestant work-ethic", which is the recognition that work has a value in and of itself, regardless of its material rewards.

⁵⁰⁹ Fukuyama, *op. cit.*, p. 197.

⁵¹⁰ Fukuyama, *op. cit.*, p. 207.

The problem for the democrats is that the thymotic passions which were necessary to overthrow the aristocratic masters and create democratic society tend to fade away when the victory has been won but the fruits of the victory still have to be consolidated and defended. It is a profound and important paradox that men are much more likely to give their lives for unelected hereditary monarchs than for elected presidents or prime ministers, even though they consider the latter more "legitimate" than the former. The reason for this is that very powerful religious and patriotic emotions attach to hereditary monarchs that do not attach to democratic leaders precisely because, whether consciously or unconsciously, they are perceived to be kings *not* by the will of the people, but by the will of God, Whose will the people recognizes to be more sacred than its own will.

Fukuyama struggles bravely with this ultimately intractable problem: "The liberal state growing out of the tradition of Hobbes and Locke engages in a protracted struggle with its own people. It seeks to homogenize their variegated traditional cultures and to teach them to calculate instead their own long-term self-interest. In place of an organic moral community with its own language of 'good and evil', one had to learn a new set of democratic values: to be 'participant', 'rational', 'secular', 'mobile', 'empathetic', and 'tolerant'. These new democratic values were initially not values at all in the sense of defining the final human virtue or good. They were conceived as having a purely instrumental function, habits that one had to acquire if one was to live successfully in a peaceful and prosperous liberal society. It was for this reason that Nietzsche called the state the 'coldest of all cold monsters' that destroyed peoples and their cultures by hanging 'a thousand appetites' in front of them.

"For democracy to work, however, citizens of democratic states must forget the instrumental roots of their values, and develop a certain irrational thymotic pride in their political system and way of life. That is, they must come to love democracy not because it is necessarily better than the alternatives, but because it is *theirs*. Moreover, they must cease to see values like 'tolerance' as merely a means to an end; tolerance in democratic societies becomes the defining virtue. Development of this kind of pride in democracy, or the assimilation of democratic values into the citizen's sense of his own self, is what is meant by the creation of a 'democratic' or 'civic culture'. Such a culture is critical to the long-term health and stability of democracies, since no real-world society can long survive based on rational calculation and desire alone."⁵¹¹

Quite so; but is it rational to believe that telling the people that "they must come to love democracy not because it is necessarily better than the alternatives, but because it is *theirs*" is going to fire them more than the ideas of Islamic Jihad or "The Mystic Union of the Aryan race"? Is not loving an ideology just because it is *my* ideology the ultimate irrationality? Is not an ideology - any ideology - that appeals to a Being greater than itself going to have greater emotional appeal than such infantile narcissism? Moreover, the "purer" a

⁵¹¹ Fukuyama, *op. cit.*, pp. 214-215.

democracy, the more serious the problem of injecting warmth into "the coldest of all cold monsters". For what "democratic" or "civic culture" can replace, from a psychological point of view, full-blooded religion - believing in absolute truths and values that are not just projections of our desires?

Fukuyama discusses at some length how democratic society allows its megalothymic citizens to harmlessly "let off steam" - that is, excess thymos - through such activities as entrepreneurialism, competitive sport, intellectual and artistic achievement, ecological crusading and voluntary service in non-democratic societies. He has much less to say about how thymos is to be *generated* in relation to the central values and symbols of democratic society when that society is becoming - in this respect, at any rate - distinctly anaemic and "microthymic". Why, for example, should I go to war to make the world safe for democracy? To defend the good of "tolerance" against the evil of "intolerance"? But why shouldn't my "enemy" be intolerant if he wants to? Doesn't tolerance itself declare that one man's values are just as good as any other's? Why should I kill him just because, by an accident of birth, he hasn't reached my level of ecumenical consciousness and remains mired in the fanaticism of the pre-millennial, non-democratic age?

The fact is that whereas democracy wages war on "bigoted", "intolerant", "inegalitarian" religion, it desperately needs some such religion itself...

4. The Dialectics of Democracy

In the last section of his book, entitled "The Last Man", Fukuyama examines two threats to the survival of democracy, one from the left of the political spectrum and the other from the right. From the left comes the challenge constituted by the never-ending demand for equality based on an ever-increasing list of supposed inequalities. "Already, forms of inequality such as racism, sexism, and homophobia have displaced the traditional class issue for the Left on contemporary college campuses. Once the principle of equal recognition of each person's human dignity - the satisfaction of their isothymia - is established, there is no guarantee that people will continue to accept the existence of natural or necessary residual forms of inequality. The fact that nature distributes capabilities unequally is not particularly just. Just because the present generation accepts this kind of inequality as either natural or necessary does not mean that it will be accepted as such in the future...

"The passion for equal recognition - isothymia - does not necessarily diminish with the achievement of greater de facto equality and material abundance, but may actually be stimulated by it...

"Today in democratic America there is a host of people who devote their lives to the total and complete elimination of any vestiges of inequality, making sure that no little girl should have to pay more to have her locks cut than a little boy, that no Boy Scout troop be closed to homosexual scoutmasters, that no

building be built without a concrete wheelchair going up to the front door. These passions exist in American society because of, and not despite, the smallness of its actual remaining inequalities...⁵¹²

The proliferation of new "rights", many of them "ambiguous in their social content and mutually contradictory", threatens to dissolve the whole of society in a boiling sea of resentment. Hierarchy has all but disappeared. Anyone can now refuse obedience to, or take to court, anyone else - even children their parents. Bitter nationalisms re-emerge even in "the melting pot of the nations" as Afro-Americans go back to their roots in order to assert their difference from the dominant race. The very concept of degrees of excellence as something quite independent of race or sex is swept aside as all children are deemed to be equally intelligent, while Shakespeare's claim to pre-eminence in literature is rejected because he is he had the unfair advantage of being "white, male and Anglo-Saxon".

Fukuyama rightly points out that the doctrine of rights springs directly from an understanding of what man is. But the egalitarian and scientific revolutions undermine the Christian concept of man which the founders of liberalism, both Anglo-Saxon and German, took for granted, denying that there is any essential difference between man and nature because "man is simply a more organized and rational form of slime". It follows that essential human rights should be accorded also to the higher animals, like monkeys and dolphins, who can suffer pain as we do and are supposedly no less intelligent.⁵¹³

"But the argument will not stop there. For how does one distinguish between higher and lower animals? Who can determine what in nature suffers, and to what degree? Indeed, why should the ability to experience pain, or the possession of higher intelligence, become a title to superior worth?⁵¹⁴ In the end, why does man have more dignity than any part of the natural world, from the most humble rock to the most distant star? Why should insects, bacteria, intestinal parasites, and HIV viruses not have rights equal to those of human beings?"⁵¹⁵

The paradox is that this new understanding of life, human and sub-human, is in fact very similar to that of Hinduism, which has evolved, in the form of

⁵¹² Fukuyama, *op. cit.*, pp. 294, 295.

⁵¹³ On December 27, 1995, British Television (Channel 4) screened "The Great Ape Trial", a quasi-legal debate on the question whether apes should have human rights - that is, the rights to life, liberty and freedom from torture. Evidence was heard from a variety of academic "experts" from around the world who spoke about the apes' similarity or otherwise to human beings in tool-using and making, language, social relations, emotionality, and genetic makeup. The conclusion reached by the "jury" (with the exception of a journalist from *The Catholic Herald*) was that apes should indeed have human rights since they belong to "a community of equals" with us.

⁵¹⁴ This point has been developed by Joanna Bourke, Professor of History at London University, in *What It Means to be Human*, London: Virago, 2011.

⁵¹⁵ Fukuyama, *op. cit.*, pp. 297-298.

the Indian caste system, probably the most stubbornly inegalitarian society in history!

Fukuyama concludes his examination of the challenge from the Left: "The extension of the principle of equality to apply not just to human beings but to non-human creation as well may today sound bizarre, but it is implied in our current impasse in thinking through the question: What is man? If we truly believe that he is not capable of moral choice or the autonomous use of reason, if he can be understood entirely in terms of the sub-human, then it is not only possible but *inevitable* that rights will gradually be extended to animals and other natural beings as well as men. The liberal concept of an equal and universal humanity with a specifically human dignity will be attacked both from above and below: by those who assert that certain group identities are more important than the quality of being human, and by those who believe that being human constitutes nothing distinctive against the non-human. The intellectual impasse in which modern relativism has left us does not permit us to answer either of these attacks definitively, and therefore does not permit defense of liberal rights traditionally understood..."⁵¹⁶

Fukuyama goes on to examine "a still greater and ultimately more serious threat" coming from the Right. This amounts to the accusation that when democratic man has won all his universal human rights, and become totally free and equal, he will be, to put it crudely, *a worthless nonentity*.

For individuals striving for something that is purer and higher are more likely to arise "in societies dedicated to the proposition that all men are *not* created equal. Democratic societies, dedicated to the opposite proposition, tend to promote a belief in the equality of all lifestyles and values. They do not tell their citizens how they should live, or what will make them happy, virtuous, or great. Instead, they cultivate the virtue of toleration, which becomes the *chief* virtue in democratic societies. And if men are unable to affirm that any particular way of life is superior to another, then they will fall back on the affirmation of life itself, that is, the body, its needs, and fears. While not all souls may be equally virtuous or talented, all bodies can suffer; hence democratic societies will tend to be compassionate and raise to the first order of concern the question of preventing the body from suffering. It is not an accident that people in democratic societies are preoccupied with material gain and live in an economic world devoted to the satisfaction of the myriad small needs of the body. According to Nietzsche, the last man has 'left the regions where it was hard to live, for one needs warmth.'

"One still works, for work is a form of entertainment. But one is careful lest the entertainment be too harrowing. One no longer becomes poor or rich: both require too much exertion. Who still wants to rule? Who obey? Both require too much exertion.

⁵¹⁶ Fukuyama, *op. cit.*, p. 298.

"No shepherd and one herd! Everybody wants the same, everybody is the same: whoever feels different goes voluntarily into a madhouse."

"It becomes particularly difficult for people in democratic societies to take questions with real moral content seriously in public life. Morality involves a distinction between better and worse, good and bad, which seems to violate the democratic principle of tolerance. It is for this reason that the last man becomes concerned above all for his own personal health and safety, because it is uncontroversial. In America today, we feel entitled to criticize another person's smoking habits, but not his or her religious beliefs or moral behavior. For Americans, the health of their bodies - what they eat and drink, the exercise they get, the shape they are in - has become a far greater obsession than the moral questions that tormented their forbears."⁵¹⁷

"Modern education... stimulates a certain tendency towards relativism, that is, the doctrine that all horizons and value systems are relative to their time and place, and that none are true but reflect the prejudices or interests of those who advance them. The doctrine that says that there is no privileged perspective dovetails very nicely with democratic man's desire to believe that his way of life is just as good as any other. Relativism in this context does not lead to the liberation of the great or strong, but of the mediocre, who were now told that they had nothing of which to be ashamed. The slave at the beginning of history declined to risk his life in the bloody battle because he was instinctively fearful. The last man at the end of history *knows* better than to risk his life for a cause, because he recognizes that history was full of pointless battles in which men fought over whether they should be Christian or Muslim, Protestant or Catholic, German or French. The loyalties that drove men to desperate acts of courage and sacrifice were proven by subsequent history to be silly prejudices. Men with modern educations are content to sit at home, congratulating themselves on their broadmindedness and lack of fanaticism. As Nietzsche's Zarathustra says of them, 'For thus you speak: "Real are we entirely, and without belief or superstition.'" Thus you stick out your chests - but alas, they are hollow!"⁵¹⁸

"A dog is content to sleep in the sun all day provided he is fed, because he is not dissatisfied with what he is. He does not worry that other dogs are doing better than him, or that his career as a dog has stagnated, or that dogs are being oppressed in a distant part of the world. If man reaches a society in which he has succeeded in abolishing injustice, his life will come to resemble that of the dog. Human life, then, involves a curious paradox: it seems to require injustice, for the struggle against injustice is what calls forth what is highest in man."⁵¹⁹

For a man is in fact more than a dog or a log. Even when all his desires have been satisfied, and even when all injustice has been eradicated, he wants, not

⁵¹⁷ Fukuyama, *op. cit.*, pp. 305-306.

⁵¹⁸ Fukuyama, *op. cit.*, pp. 306-307.

⁵¹⁹ Fukuyama, *op. cit.*, p. 311.

to sleep, but to *act*. For he has a free will that depends on nothing outside itself...

The basis of this irrational freedom was described by Dostoyevsky's underground man as: "one's own free, unrestrained choice, one's own whim, be it the wildest, one's own fancy, sometimes worked up to a frenzy... And where did these sages pick up the idea that man must have something which they feel is a normal and virtuous set of wishes? What makes them think that man's will must be reasonable and in accordance with his own interests? All man actually needs is *independent* will, at all costs and whatever the consequences..."⁵²⁰

Here we come to the root of the democratic dilemma. Democracy's *raison d'être* is the liberation of the human will, first through the satisfaction of his most basic desires, and then through the satisfaction of every other person's desires to an equal extent. But the problem is that the will, thus satisfied, has only just *begun* to manifest itself. For the will is not essentially a will *to* anything - not a will not to eat, not a will to power; it is simply will *tout court*. "I *will*, therefore I *am*. And if anyone else wills otherwise, to hell with *him*! And if I myself will otherwise, to hell with *me*!"

So perhaps *war* (and suicide) must be permitted in the society whose purpose is "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness"? Of course, this was not the Founding Fathers' intention. They were reasonable men. But perhaps they did not pursue their reasoning through to its logical conclusion. Perhaps they did not understand that those bloody Roman dictators were not stupid when they defined the desires of the mob as bread and circuses, in which "circuses" had to include gladiatorial *murder*.

Hegel, unlike the Anglo-Saxons, did have a place for violence and war in his system - not war for war's sake, but war for democracy's sake. "A liberal democracy that could fight a short and decisive war every generation or so to defend its own liberty and independence would be far healthier and more satisfied than one that experienced nothing but continuous peace. Hegel's view of war reflects a common experience of combat: for while men suffer horribly and are seldom as frightened and miserable, their experience if they survive has the tendency of putting all things in a certain perspective."⁵²¹

But for men who believe in nothing beyond themselves, whether democracy or any other value, there is nothing ennobling or purifying about war. It simply debases them still further. That has been the fate of those Russian soldiers, who, on returning from the war in Chechnya, continue the war in mindless murders of their own people. For such men, war has become an end in itself. In a world in which all objective values have been radically undermined, killing is the only

⁵²⁰ Dostoyevsky, *Notes from Underground*, New York: Signet Classics.

⁵²¹ Fukuyama, *op. cit.*, pp. 329-30.

way they have to prove to themselves that they exist, that they, at any rate, can make an objective difference to their surroundings.

For "supposing", continues Fukuyama, "that the world has become 'filled up', so to speak, with liberal democracies, such that there exist no tyranny and oppression worthy of the name against which to struggle? Experience suggests that if men cannot struggle on behalf of a just cause because that just cause was victorious in an earlier generation, then they will struggle *against* the just cause. They will struggle for the sake of struggle. They will struggle, in other words, out of a certain boredom: for they cannot imagine living in a world without struggle. And if the greater part of the world in which they live is characterized by peaceful and prosperous liberal democracy, then they will struggle *against* that peace and prosperity, and against that democracy."⁵²²

As examples of this phenomenon, Fukuyama cites the évènements in France in 1968, and the scenes of patriotic pro-war enthusiasm repeated in Paris, Petrograd, London, and Vienna in August, 1914. And yet there is a much better example much closer to home - the *crime* that has become such a universal phenomenon in modern democracies from London to Johannesburg, from Bangkok to Sao Paolo, from Washington to Moscow. It is as if Dostoyevsky's underground man has now become a whole class - the underclass of the metropolitan octopuses, whose tentacles extend ever wider and deeper into the major institutions and governments of the world.

Democratic man, unable to free himself from the shackles of democratic thought, superficially ascribes the causes of crime to poverty or unemployment, to a lack of education or a lack of rights. But most modern criminals are not hungry, nor are they struggling for rights; there is no *need* as such in most modern crime, no *idealism*, however misguided. Their only need is to kill and to rape and to steal - not for the sake of revenge, or sex, or money, but just for their own sake. And their only ideal is to express their own, "independent will, at all costs and whatever the consequences". Thus the logical consequence of the attainment of full democracy is *nihilism, the universal war of every man against every man, for the sake of no man and no thing*. For "modern thought raises no barriers to a future nihilistic war against liberal democracy on the part of those brought up in its bosom. Relativism - the doctrine that maintains that all values are merely relative and which attacks all 'privileged perspectives' - must ultimately end up undermining democratic and tolerant values as well."⁵²³

Conclusion

Fukuyama should have concluded his superbly consistent argument at this point, saying: "Democracy is doomed; we must find some other truths and

⁵²² Fukuyama, op. cit., p. 330.

⁵²³ Fukuyama, op. cit., p. 332.

values - *absolute* truths and values, or we shall all perish in a morass of relativism and nihilism." But at this point the limitations of his democratic education lead him to make his only act of mauvaise foi.

Like a Shostakovich symphony, which, after plumbing the depths of tragic despair, must perforce have a bombastic finale, Fukuyama declares his faith that democracy will win out in the end, if only because all other systems are dead or in the process of dying. And in an aptly American metaphor he compares the progress of democracy to a wagon train that, having crossed the Rockies in a raging blizzard and having withstood all the assaults of wild Indians and howling coyotes, comes to rest in - smog-filled, drug-addicted, crime-infested Los Angeles?... Only in the very last sentence does he - very tentatively, as if fearing to have his head shot off by a last Indian sniper - recover himself somewhat and look over the parapet of democracy's last stand: "Nor can we in the final analysis know, provided a majority of the wagons eventually reach the same town, whether their occupants, having looked around a bit at their new surroundings, will not find them inadequate and set their eyes on a new and more distant journey..."⁵²⁴

At the end of the Cold War, when Fukuyama wrote his book, liberal democracy appeared to have triumphed over all other politico-economic systems. It had survived the socialist and fascist revolutions of the period 1789-1945, had won the Cold War, and even appeared to be on the point of "turning" the last and most powerful survival of the revolutionary ethos, Communist China. But Fukuyama, an avid supporter of democracy, still had his doubts - even if these doubts were overridden by his conviction that democracy represents "the end of history", the final, and best, politico-economic system. The basic doubt can be expressed as follows: can a system built, not on the eradication, but on the exploitation and rational management of man's fallen passions, and not on absolute truth, but on the relativization of all opinions through the ballot box, bring lasting peace and prosperity?

In a sense there is no competition; for the only system that is *radically* different from liberal democracy, Orthodox Autocracy, sets itself a quite different goal: not peace and prosperity in this life, but the salvation of the soul in the next. Even if it could be proved that liberal democracy satisfied the earthly needs of men better than Orthodox Autocracy, this is no way invalidates Autocracy, insofar as the true subjects of Autocracy would gladly exchange happiness and prosperity in this life for salvation in the next. For while the purpose of democracy is the fullest satisfaction of man's *fallen* nature, the purpose of Autocracy is the creation of the political and social conditions maximally conducive to the recreation of man's original, *unfallen* nature in the image of Christ. Democracy seeks *satisfaction*, but Autocracy - *salvation*.

But it may be doubted whether liberal democracy will achieve its own stated ends. The cult of reason and liberalism, wrote the former revolutionary L.A.

⁵²⁴ Fukuyama, op. cit., p. 339.

Tikhomirov, “very much wants to establish worldly prosperity, it very much wants to make people happy, but it will achieve nothing, because it approaches the problem from the wrong end.

“It may appear strange that people who think only of earthly prosperity, and who put their whole soul into realising it, attain only disillusionment and exhaustion. People who, on the contrary, are immersed in cares about the invisible life beyond the grave, attain here, on earth, results constituting the highest examples yet known on earth of personal and social development! However, this strangeness is self-explanatory. The point is that *man* is by his nature precisely the kind of being that Christianity understands him to be *by faith*; the aims of life that are indicated to him *by faith* are precisely the kind of aims that he has in reality, and not the kind that reason divorced from faith delineates. Therefore in educating a man in accordance with the Orthodox world-view, we conduct his education *correctly*, and thence we get results that are good not only in that which is most important [salvation] (which unbelievers do not worry about), but also in that which is secondary (which is the only thing they set their heart on). In losing *faith*, and therefore ceasing to worry about the most important thing, people lost the possibility of developing man in accordance with his true nature, and so they get distorted results in earthly life, too.”⁵²⁵

Thus even the most perfectly functioning democracy will ultimately fail in its purpose, for the simple reason that while man is fallen, he is not *completely* fallen. He is still made in the image of God, so that even when all his fallen desires have been satisfied there will still be an unsatisfied longing for something higher, something to satisfy the God-shaped hole at the centre of his being (St. Augustine). “Happiness” – the supreme “right” of man, according to the American Constitution – is unattainable as long as only our own, and not other people’s happiness, our own glory, and not God’s glory, is the goal; and even if attained on earth, it will only be brief and bring inevitable ennui; for it will immediately stimulate a desire for the infinitely greater happiness of heaven, eternal joy in God. The revolutionary age that followed the age of reason highlighted this truth, albeit in a perverted, demonic way; for it showed that there is more in heaven and earth and in the soul of man – far greater heights, as well as far more abysmal depths – than was ever dreamt of in the complacent psychology of the liberal philosophers.

September 6/19, 2016.

Miracle of the Holy Archangel Michael.

⁵²⁵ Tikhomirov, “Dukhovenstvo i obschestvo v sovremennom religioznom dvizhenii” (“The Clergy and Society in the Contemporary Religious Movement”), in *Khristianstvo i Politika* (Christianity and Politics), Moscow, 1999, pp. 30-31.

33. JULIAN THE APOSTATE AND PUTIN THE NEW APOSTATE

The Holy Apostles and Martyrs in the time of the pagan Roman empire believed, on the one hand, that the emperor's power was established by God and should be obeyed whenever possible, and on the other hand, that he should be disobeyed if he commanded something contrary to God's commandments. No authority, whether political or ecclesiastical, should be listened to if it contradicted the supreme authority, which is God. As the Apostles said to the Jewish Sanhedrin: "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge" (Acts 4.19).

According to Protestant writers, after the persecutions ended and the empire became Christian, the Church lost her independence and entered into a union with the State that made her a slave of the Emperors. Paradoxically, therefore, according to the Protestants, the triumph of the Church under St. Constantine was at the same time the end of the Church as an independent institution. Worse than that: according to some Protestants, as Fr. Irenaeos Plac writes, "the Church apostasized with the legalization of Christianity under Constantine, around 311-313 AD. The argument goes that with actual tolerance and later acceptance by the government, Church affairs became about power and worldly things, leading to the apostasy of the Church. This argument is rather easily disposed of, as many of the conventions these Protestants name as evidences of the apostasy are historically established to have been practiced well before the legalization of the Church. Whether it is icons, veneration of the Virgin mother, authority of bishops or most any other practice, the historical evidence for the universal practice of these marks of the faith are numerous. From the writings of St. Ignatius on bishops, to the excavation of 3rd century church buildings replete with icons, to ancient papyrus scrolls with hymns to the Theotokos, the idea that 'everything changed in the Church with the edicts of Constantine is simply historically disprovable."⁵²⁶

As regards the Church's relationship to the State, the Protestants are also wrong: the fourth-century Fathers showed a heroic independence even in relation to the most Christian of the Emperors. *Of course*, the accession of the first Christian Emperor with its many major benefits for the Church and for the spreading of Christianity was welcomed by the Church, and the bishops willingly entered into a "symphony of powers" between Church and State. But when the Emperors betrayed the Faith - as did, for example, most of the emperors in the fifty-year period between St. Constantine the Great and St. Theodosius the Great - the Holy Fathers rose up in protest against them, using language that was as strong as anything uttered against the pagan emperors.

Thus when St. Constantine's son Constantius apostasized from Orthodoxy and converted to the Arian heresy, believing that Christ was not the pre-eternal God and Creator but a created being, St. Athanasius, who had previously

⁵²⁶ Plac, *Facebook*, July 3, 2016.

addressed him as “very pious”, a “worshipper of God”, “beloved of God” and a successor of David and Solomon, now denounced him as “patron of impiety and Emperor of heresy,... godless, unholy,.. this modern Ahab, this second Belshazzar”, like Pharaoh, worse than Pilate and a forerunner of the Antichrist.⁵²⁷ Again, St. Hilary of Poitiers wrote to Constantius: “You are fighting against God, you are raging against the Church, you are persecuting the saints, you hate the preachers of Christ, you are annulling religion; you are a tyrant no longer only in the human, but in the divine sphere... You lyingly declare yourself a Christian, but are a new enemy of Christ. You are a precursor of Antichrist, and you work the mysteries of his secrets.”⁵²⁸

Constantius’ heretical cast of mind made it easier for him to assume the place of Christ as head of the Church. Thus at the Council of Milan in 355, he said: “My will is law”. To which St. Osius of Cordoba, replied: “Stop, I beseech you. Remember that you are a mortal man, fear the Day of Judgement, preserve yourself pure for that. Do not interfere in matters that are essentially ecclesiastical and do not give us orders about them, but rather accept teaching from us. God has entrusted you with the Empire, and to us He has entrusted the affairs of the Church. And just as one who seizes for himself your power contradicts the institution of God, so fear lest you, in taking into your own hands the affairs of the Church, do not become guilty of a serious offence. As it is written, give to Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God what is God’s. We are not permitted to exercise an earthly role; and you, Sire, are not authorised to burn incense.”

At about this time, the Persian King Shapur started to kill the clergy, confiscate church property and raze the churches to the ground. He told St. Simeon, Bishop of Seleucia and Ctesiphon, that if he worshipped the sun, he would receive every possible honour and gift. But if he refused, Christianity in Persia would be utterly destroyed. In reply, St. Simeon not only refused to worship the sun but also refused to recognize the king by bowing to him. This omission of his previous respect for the king’s authority was noticed and questioned by the King. St. Simeon replied: "Before I bowed down to you, giving you honour as a king, but now I come being brought to deny my God and Faith. It is not good for me to bow before an enemy of my God!" The King then threatened to destroy the Church in his kingdom... He brought in about one hundred priests and about one thousand other Christians and killed them before the saint’s eyes. The saint encouraged them to hope in eternal life. And after everyone had been killed, he himself was martyred.⁵²⁹

This shows that the Fathers and Martyrs of the Church recognized the authority of kings and emperors only so long as they did not persecute the Church of God. At the same time, non-recognition – that is, recognition of the

⁵²⁷ St. Athanasius, in J. Meyendorff, *Imperial Unity and Christian Divisions*, Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1989, p. 36. In his *History of the Arians* (77) Athanasius also calls him “the abomination of desolation’ spoken of by Daniel”.

⁵²⁸ F.W. Farrar, *The Lives of the Fathers*, Edinburgh, 1889, vol. I, p. 617.

⁵²⁹ St. Demetrius of Rostov, *Lives of the Saints*, April 17.

power as tyrannical - did not necessarily mean rebellion. Thus the Fathers did not counsel rebellion against heretical emperors such as Constantius, but only resistance against those of his laws that encroached on Christian piety.

However, when Julian the Apostate (361-363) came to the throne, passive resistance turned into active, if not physical, attempts to have him removed. A baptized Christian who had studied together with SS. Basil the Great and Gregory the Theologian in Athens, he tried to destroy the Orthodox Church and turn the empire back to paganism. Therefore St. Basil prayed for his defeat in his wars against the Persians, and it was through his prayers that the apostate was in fact killed.⁵³⁰

St. Basil defined the difference between a true king and a tyrant as follows: "If the heart of the king is in the hands of God (Proverbs 21.1), then he is saved, not by force of arms, but by the guidance of God. But not everyone is in the hands of God, but only he who is worthy of the name of king. Some have defined kingly power as lawful dominion or sovereignty over all, without being subject to sin." And again: "The difference between a tyrant and a king is that the tyrant strives in every way to carry out his own will. But the king does good to those whom he rules."⁵³¹ This definition seems very strict. For what Roman emperor was not subject to sin and always did good to those whom he ruled? By this definition almost all the emperors were in fact tyrants... However, we can bring St. Basil's definition more into line with how the Christians actually regarded the emperors if we make two important distinctions. The first is between the personal evil of many of the emperors, on the one hand, and the goodness of the institution that they maintained and incarnated, on the other. And the second is between the status of the pagan emperors before Constantine, on the one hand, and the status of the pagan or heretical emperors after Constantine, on the other.

What made Julian the Apostate so terrible in the eyes of the Holy Fathers was precisely the fact that he was an apostate, a Christian emperor who then reverted to paganism. Apart from being an apostate, Julian was the first - and last - of the Byzantine emperors who openly trampled on the memory and legitimacy of St. Constantine, declaring that he "insolently usurped the throne". In this way he questioned the legitimacy of the Christian Empire as such - a revolutionary position very rare in Byzantine history. If, as Paul Magdalino suggests, "each emperor's accession was a conscious act of renewal of the imperial order instituted by Constantine the Great," and "the idea of each new ruler as a new Constantine was implicit in the dynastic succession established by the founder of Constantinople"⁵³², then Julian's rejection of

⁵³⁰ Theodoret, *Ecclesiastical History*, III, 19.

⁵³¹ St. Basil, quoted in Fomin, S. & Fomina, T. *Rossia pered Vtorym Prishestvoiem* (Russia before the Second Coming), Moscow, 1994, pp. 66, 102.

⁵³² Magdalino (ed.), *New Constantines: the Rhythm of Imperial Renewal in Byzantium, 4th-13th Centuries*, Aldershot: Variorum, 1994, pp. 2, 3.

Constantine was clearly a rejection of the imperial order as such. In this sense Julian was an *anti-emperor* as well as an *anti-christ*.

That this is how the Byzantines looked at it is suggested by what happened at the death of Julian and the accession of the Christian Emperor Jovian in 363: "Themistus assured the people of the city that what they were getting, after Constantine's son Constantius and Constantine's nephew Julian, was nothing less than a reincarnation of Constantine himself."⁵³³ Jovian's being a "new Constantine" was a guarantee that he represented a return to the old order and true, Christian Romanity (Romanitas). From this time new Byzantine emperors were often hailed as new Constantines, as were the Christian kings of the junior members of the Christian commonwealth of nations from England to Georgia.

Another act of Julian's that elicited particular horror was his reversal of Emperor Hadrian's decree forbidding the Jews from returning to Jerusalem and, still worse, his helping the Jews to rebuild the Temple...

By a miracle of God the rebuilding of the Temple was forcibly stopped. St. Gregory the Theologian tells how the Jews enthusiastically set about the rebuilding. But "suddenly they were driven from their work by a violent earthquake and whirlwind, and they rushed together for refuge to a neighbouring church... There are some who say that the church doors were closed against them by an invisible hand although these doors had been wide open a moment before... It is, moreover, affirmed and believed by all that as they strove to force their way in by violence, the fire, which burst from the foundation of the Temple, met and stopped them; some it burnt and destroyed, others it injured seriously... But the most wonderful thing was that a light, as of a cross within a circle, appeared in the heavens... and the mark of the cross was impressed on their garments... a mark which in art and elegance surpassed all painting and embroidery."⁵³⁴

But if Julian had succeeded, then, wondered the Christians, what would have prevented him from sitting in the Temple as God – that is, from becoming the Antichrist himself? And so it is from this time, as Gilbert Dagron points out, "that the face of each emperor or empress is scrutinized to try and recognize in it the characteristic traits of the Antichrist or of the sovereigns, good or bad, who precede his coming..."⁵³⁵

It is instructive to consider how Julian died. In the *Life* of the Apostate's contemporary, St. Julian the Hermit of Mesopotamia (October 18), we read that during the Apostate's war with the Persians the believers asked St. Julian to pray that this enemy of the Christians should be overthrown. St. Julian prayed for this for ten days, and then heard a voice from heaven: "The unclean and

⁵³³ Magdalino, *op. cit.*, pp. 3-4.

⁵³⁴ Quoted in Marjorie Strachey, *Saints and Sinners of the Fourth Century*, London: William Kimber, 1958, p. 78). St. Ambrose of Milan and the fifth-century Church historians Socrates, Sozomen, Theodoret and Rufinus all confirm St. Gregory's story.

⁵³⁵ Dagron, *Empereur et Prêtre* (Emperor and Priest), Paris : Gallimard, 1996, p. 167.

abominable beast has perished." And it was true: the Apostate had perished in the war.⁵³⁶

And it was not only St. Julian's prayers that effected it. St. Basil had also prayed for it before the tomb of the Great Martyr Mercurius. Then he noticed that the martyr's sword had disappeared. A few days later, it reappeared, covered in blood. And it turned out that a mysterious warrior had appeared to the Apostate in the desert and thrust him through; last words were: "Galilean [Christ], you have conquered!"

St. Basil's friend, St. Gregory the Theologian, rejoiced at the news of the Apostate's death: "I call to spiritual rejoicing all those who constantly remained in fasting, in mourning and prayer, and by day and by night besought deliverance from the sorrows that surrounded us and found a reliable healing from the evils in unshakeable hope... What hoards of weapons, what myriads of men could have produced what our prayers and the will of God produced?"

Gregory called Julian not only an "apostate", but also "universal enemy" and "general murderer", a traitor to Romanity as well as to Christianity, explicitly denying that his was a power from God and therefore requiring obedience: "What demon instilled this thought in you? If every authority were acknowledged as sacred by the very fact of its existence, Christ the Savior would not have called Herod 'that fox'. The Church would not hitherto have denounced ungodly rulers who defended heresies and persecuted Orthodoxy. Of course, if one judges an authority on the basis of its outward power, and not on its inner, moral worthiness, one may easily bow down to the beast, i.e. the Antichrist, 'whose coming will be with all power and lying wonders' (II Thessalonians 2.9), to whom 'power was given... over all kindred, and tongues, and nations. And all that dwelt upon the earth shall worship him, whose names were not written in the book of life of the Lamb' (Revelation 13.7-8)." ⁵³⁷

After Julian, nobody believed that *all* emperors were established by God. The principle of monarchical power was good and from God. That was what St. Paul meant when he said that "all authority is from God" (Romans 13.1). But St. Paul had specified what he meant by "power" by saying that the king was "a servant of God for good", to reward the good and punish the evildoers. This could not apply to rulers such as Julian. They were not kings or authorities, but rebels and tyrants.

*

It is commonly accepted among True Orthodox Christians that today we live in the times before the Antichrist. So we should be looking out for a figure similar to Julian the Apostate and getting ready to "flee to the mountains". And indeed, there is no shortage of "scare stories": one sees the number of the

⁵³⁶ St. Demetrius of Rostov, *Lives of the Saints*, October 18, the *Life* of St. Julian.

⁵³⁷ St. Gregory, *First Word against Julian*, 35; *Second Word against Julian*, 26.

Antichrist in his income tax forms or in chips inserted under the skin, another sees him in Barak Obama or Donald Trump...

But the sad fact is that contemporary Orthodox Christians routinely fail to draw the obvious lesson to be drawn from the reaction of the Holy Fathers to Julian the Apostate: that the Antichrist will be *an apostate Orthodox Christian*. That apostasy need not be open – until he claims to be god. On the contrary, it is likely to be covered by the guise of external piety. But you cannot be an apostate from a religion you have never claimed to belong to. So that rules out any Western political or religious leader.

If we search out among the leaders of the so-called Orthodox world for a possible Antichrist figure then there is one obvious candidate: Vladimir Putin. Now Putin is obviously not *the* Antichrist – but he is definitely a forerunner of the Antichrist, whose “Orthodox Christianity” masks a hatred of truly Orthodox Christianity. Putin is, or claims to be, a baptized Orthodox Christian – but is seeking to return Russia to the antichristian Soviet Union, and clearly reveres Stalin more than “Bloody Nicholas” (as he once called Tsar Nicholas II on camera). Putin undoubtedly has pretensions to imperial greatness – but proudly belongs to an organization, the KGB, which killed the last legitimate Orthodox Christian emperor and heir of St. Constantine, Tsar Nicholas II, and fiercely persecuted all monarchists until 1991. Putin does not claim to be god – but does not object when so many people seem to worship him as hardly less than a god. Putin has no plans (as far as we know) to rebuild the Jerusalem temple – but he is the friend of many Jewish rabbis who do have such plans, and has himself wobbled in prayer with a Jewish hat on his head in front of the Wailing Wall. Like Julian, Putin wages war against the enemies of Orthodoxy – but, again like him, he will undoubtedly fall before those enemies, because he himself is the worst enemy of all...

However, the real tragedy is not in the appearance of Putin the Apostate. The real tragedy is that the majority of the Orthodox people, rejecting the example of the Holy Fathers in the time of Julian, hail the new apostate Putin as the true successor of St. Constantine and the Orthodox Christian emperors. Putin is not the Antichrist, but if the people that follow him now were to meet the real Antichrist, they would almost certainly lack the discernment to see him for what he is.

September 24 / October 7, 2016.

[34. THE STARS AND EARTHLY CATASTROPHES](#)

It is a common belief among pagan peoples that there is a close connection between events in the heavens and events on earth. Stars are seen as gods that cause people to act in certain ways and to experience certain outcomes, good or bad. This is, of course, the false religion of astrology, which so many

moderns, even so-called Christians, believe in. It probably goes back as far as Nimrod, who is thought to have practiced astrology on the top of the Tower of Babel. However, as Nimrod tried to get closer and closer to the objects of his worship in the heavens, we read that God looked down from heaven and destroyed the Tower...

A modern substitute for astrology is astronomy. Of course, modern astronomers would hotly dispute such a judgement, insisting that while astrology is pure superstition without any basis in fact, their researches and probings deeper and deeper into the galaxies are completely rational ventures that produce real knowledge. I wonder... Anybody who has witnessed the peculiar obsession of astronomers and cosmologists with their science, or see the ecstatic outpourings of emotion that accompanied, for example, the successful landing of a space probe onto a frozen comet some months ago by scientists of the European Space Agency, could be forgiven for thinking that there is perhaps more emotion, and less pure reason, involved in these researches than appears on the surface...

Be that as it may, there is no doubt that events in the heavens can *symbolize* events on the earth, even if they do not cause them. This has been the belief of many generations of Orthodox Christians. For example, the sun symbolizes Christ, the Sun of Righteousness. And the moon symbolizes the Church, which borrows its light from the Sun and waxes and wanes in accordance with its fortunes on earth. Stars symbolize bishops or churches (Revelation 12.4).

Moreover, major events in Church history have often been foreshadowed, it would seem, by unusual events in the sky. Thus the momentous event of the Great Schism was heralded in the heavens by a huge explosion. "Arab and Chinese astronomers recorded the appearance of the bright Crab Supernova in [July] 1054. At X-ray and gamma-ray energies above 30 KeV, the Crab is generally the strongest persistent source in the sky today."⁵³⁸ Again, in 1066, as armies were being assembled in France to invade Orthodox England, Halley's Comet flashed across the sky. Again, in July, 1927, as Metropolitan Sergius signed his notorious pro-Soviet declaration that would elicit the greatest schism in the Orthodox Church since 1054, a major earthquake took place in Jerusalem. And now astronomers around the world are getting very excited by an extraordinary upcoming event...

Recently⁵³⁹, a BBC4 programme first summarized what is known about *black holes*, those terrifying objects of enormous gravity where the laws of physics cease to operate and which do not allow matter or light to escape from them once it has crossed the black hole's "event horizon". Then it went on to report on an extraordinary event due to take place in the summer of 2017: a gas cloud, or perhaps an unusually shaped star, is due to cross the event horizon of the black hole at the centre of our own galaxy, the Milky Way – and that event will

⁵³⁸ Dr. Jerjis Alajaji, personal communication, March 22, 2010.

⁵³⁹ On October 25, 2016.

be *visible* with the aid of special new telescopes. The scientists don't know exactly what will happen at that point, but one hypothesis is that just before disappearing into impenetrable and irreversible blackness in the midst of the black hole, the wandering star will flare up and produce an extraordinarily bright light.

Now let us turn to Holy Scripture: "These men are spots in your love feasts, while they feast with you without fear, serving only themselves. They are clouds without water, carried out by the winds; late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, pulled up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame, wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever" (Jude 12-13).

There is scarcely any more powerful and frightening language in the whole of Holy Scripture. Evil men are here compared to wandering stars that are swallowed up into some kind of eternal black hole - evidently, a symbol for hell. So could the gas cloud or star several times the size of our earth that is about to be swallowed up into a physical black hole be a symbol for the destruction of our evil civilization, a process that will begin in about nine months time?

This is of course speculation. And yet it may not be "mere" speculation. There are solid grounds for believing that a nuclear war between East and West is closer now than at any time since the Cuban crisis of 1962. Moreover, today's unprecedented crisis in faith and morals on both sides of the rapidly re-emerging Iron Curtain must surely bring its due punishment from God, as many of the prophecies suggest. If so, then we can be only grateful to God if He has provided us with a warning from the heavens...

October 14/27, 2016.

950th anniversary of the Battle of Hastings, when the English Orthodox Autocracy was destroyed.

35. CHRISTIANITY AND KARMA

In our multicultural world, it is almost inevitable that some words from other cultures and even religions will creep into people's vocabulary. But we have to be wary of them, and be aware of their religious roots, too, lest we unwittingly begin to absorb their heterodox content. One such concept that has become fashionable even among completely secular people is the Hindu idea of *karma*. "It must be karma," or "my karma", they say when they suffer something unfortunate. The idea is that we reap what we sow; bad things that happen to us are related to, or caused by, previous sins of ours, as a kind of punishment.

There is nothing especially sinister or heterodox about "karma" if understood in this simple way, shorn of its Hindu connotations. Indeed, St. Paul said: "Do not be deceived. God is not mocked: for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap" (Galatians 6.7). And again: "They sow the wind, and reap the whirlwind" (Hosea 8.7). God chastises every son He receives, in order to cleanse him from past sins and train him out of the bad habits and evil passions that engendered those sins.

Moreover, in some of the earliest texts of Hinduism, we find passages expressing essentially the same correct thought:

*Now as a man is like this or like that,
according as he acts and according as he behaves, so will he be;
a man of good acts will become good, a man of bad acts, bad;
he becomes pure by pure deeds, bad by bad deeds;*

*And here they say that a person consists of desires,
and as is his desire, so is his will;
and as is his will, so is his deed;
and whatever deed he does, that he will reap.⁵⁴⁰*

The problem is that in modern Hinduism, and in the numerous New Age religions and sects that are related to it, karma is linked to the completely pagan and heretical idea of *reincarnation*. A man of sinful life with bad karma, reaps what he sows – but in a later life, and in another incarnation. So in punishment for his sins he may return as a bird or a worm...

It is astonishing how popular the idea of reincarnation has become – even among those who call themselves Orthodox Christians. Three *World Values* surveys carried out in the 1990s found that while Russians as a whole were not particularly religious, 20% of them believed in reincarnation.⁵⁴¹

⁵⁴⁰ *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, 4.4.5-6 (7th Century BC).

⁵⁴¹ Kimmo Kaariainen, *Religion in Russia after the Collapse of Communism*, Lewiston-Queenston-Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 1998, p. 84.

Something akin to reincarnation is commonly found in cults and false religions. Thus it is difficult not to see in the Roman Catholic cult of the papacy the idea that all Popes are quasi-reincarnations of St. Peter. Again, in Fr. Seraphim Rose's account of the tragedy of Jonestown and the power that the leader of the Jonestown cult, Jim Jones, had over his followers, he writes: "He claimed not merely to be the 'reincarnation' of Jesus, Buddha, and Lenin: he openly stated that he was an oracle or medium for discarnate entities from another galaxy."⁵⁴²

So what does the Gospel say about reincarnation? Very simple: "It is appointed to men to die *once*, but then the judgement" (Hebrews 9.27). So we have only one life, and will die only once, and will then be judged for what we have done in that one life. Nor, if we are condemned at that judgement, will we be sent to serve a kind of purgatorial term in the body of another human being or animal; for we must suffer the penalty of our sins in the same body and soul through which we committed them. There is no escaping ourselves: we shall remain ourselves, having to live with ourselves and all the passions that we have made inescapable parts of ourselves - to all eternity.

And yet there is one way to escape the "karma" attached to our evil deeds. That way is to lay hold of the Way, the Truth and the Life, the Lord Jesus Christ, and thereby break out of the dismal cycle of sin and payment for sin, destroying "karma" forever. For "we have been sanctified through the offering of the Body of Jesus Christ *once and for all*" (Hebrews 10.10).

What all kinds of paganism, whether ancient and crude or modern and sophisticated, fail to understand is that since God is free and we are made free in His image, the relationship between sin and retribution, crime and punishment is *not* determined. Yes, he who commits sin is the slave of sin, and if we do not repent of our sins we will die in them and suffer all their terrible consequences, not only in this life but also - much more fearfully - in the next. But Christ has freely taken all our sins upon Himself, and all He requires from us, besides sincere repentance, is a free and grateful recognition of this fact. Grace destroys sin, and grace is free, gratis. Through grace we have been delivered from our evil deeds and the "karma" of corruption and death has been destroyed; for Christ has risen from the dead, trampling on our death by His Death.

October 30 / November 12, 2016.

⁵⁴² Rose, *Orthodoxy and the Religion of the Future*, Platina, Ca.: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 1975, p. 198.

36. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HOLY ARCHANGEL MICHAEL IN WORLD HISTORY

The akathist to the Holy Archangel Michael, together with the other services to him in the Menaion, is astoundingly rich in teaching, much of it derived from Holy Scripture but some also from the unwritten treasures of Holy Tradition. Let us examine this teaching as it is revealed to us in the akathist especially:

“Rejoice, first-created star of the world!” (kontakion 1). So the Archangel is the first of all the rational creatures. For the angels were created before men, and the great Michael is the “first-created star of the world”!

“Manifesting within thyself the invincible power of zeal for the glory of God, O Michael, thou didst take thy stand at the head of the choirs of the angels against the malice-breathing morning star most proud” (kontakion 3). So the first virtue of the holy Archangel Michael, and the one which characterizes him most closely, is *zeal*. Now zeal, according to Archbishop Averky, is a certain fiery warmth of the spirit akin to love, without which the Christian life is simply impossible. Zeal is that which takes the Christian out onto the field of Christian combat. Without it, he would never venture out upon that path. He would be conquered even before the battle began!

And who is the battle against? “The malice-breathing morning star most proud”. Our battle is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers – that is, the demons. It is the free will of the devil that is the ultimate cause of evil. The evil of men is simply a following of demonic evil. When, in 1963, there was a major disturbance of church life in San Francisco, St. John Maximovich, the local bishop, was asked who was the cause of the disturbance. He refused to name a man, but firmly replied: “The devil”.

It was by St. Michael that “the spirit of evil was laid low even unto hell” (Ikos 4) – that same event which the Lord described in the Gospel: “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven” (Luke 10.18). As St. Dmitri of Rostov writes: “The holy Chief Commander Michael, the faithful servant of the Lord, was appointed by God as general and commander over the entire assembly of the nine angelic orders. When Satan exalted himself in pride, fell away from God into perdition, and was cast into the abyss, Michael called together all the ranks and hosts of angels and cried out with a mighty voice, ‘Let us attend! Stand aright before Him Who created us, and do not consider doing what is not pleasing to God. Behold what has befallen those created with us, who until now were communicants of the divine light! Behold how they were straightway exiled from light into darkness because of pride, cast from the heights into the abyss! Behold how the morning star, which lit up the dawn, has fallen to earth and been crushed!’”⁵⁴³

⁵⁴³ St. Dmitri, *The Great Collection of the Lives of the Saints*, November 8, pp. 128-129.

The Archangel did many great wonders in the Old Testament. It was he who “struck down Pharaoh with his faithless Egyptians in his overweening pride” (ikos 8). It was he who was “the mediator of the law given by the hand of Moses on Mount Sinai”, and who refused to allow Satan to take away Moses’ dead body so that the Israelites could worship it as an idol (Jude 9, ikos 11). It was he who “gloriously led the Jews in their wanderings through the wilderness” (ikos 8). It was through him that “the judges and leaders of Israel found strength and protection”, and “the prophets and high priests of the Jews received the gift of knowledge from the all-knowing God. (ikos 5) It was he who announced the good tidings to Manoah that he was to receive a son, Samson (kontakion 6), and who strengthened Gideon against the Midianites. It was he who told Joshua, son of Nun: “Put off thy shoe from thy foot; I am the chief captain of the hosts of the Lord” (Joshua 5.13-15; ikos 6). It was he who “quenched the flame of the fiery furnace of Babylon” (ikos 8). It was he who lifted the Prophet Habbakuk from Judah to Babylon to give food to the Prophet Daniel in the lions’ den (Kontakion 8; Bel and the Dragon, vv. 30-38). It was he who, in answer to the anguished prayer of King Hezekiah, killed 185,000 warriors of the Assyrian King Sennacherib in one night (IV Kings 19.34-35; ikos 9). It was he who “strengthened the pious Maccabees on the field of battle” and “struck down in the temple itself Heliodorus, captain of King Antiochus”.

Thus the holy archangel is “the untiring guardian of crowned heads”, “swift to overthrow those withstanding authority as they oppose the command of God” and “appeaser of the mighty wave of popular tumult” (ikos 6). It is he who “sets up in the height of power the servants of God in time of need” and “brings down from the height of power the servants of strength and glory those who are unworthy and insolent” (ikos 12).

The miracles of the Archangel in the New Testament are too numerous to mention. Often he appears as the instrument of the wrath of God on sinful humanity. Thus in the fifth century a terrible plague afflicted the Christians of Britain until, in 492, he was seen sheathing his sword at the place now known as St. Michael’s Mount in Cornwall. The plague immediately stopped...

Again, in the life of St. Elizabeth the New Martyr we read the following. The Lord bestowed upon St. Elizabeth the gift of spiritual discernment and prophecy. Her confessor, Fr. Metrophan, once related that not long before the revolution he had a very vivid and clearly prophetic dream, but he did not know how to interpret it. It was composed of a sequence of four pictures, in colour. The first revealed a beautiful church. Suddenly, it became surrounded by tongues of fire, and the whole church went up in flames - a terrifying spectacle. The second showed a portrait of the Empress Alexandra Fyodorovna in a black frame; the corners of the frame sprouted forth shoots bearing lily buds that blossomed, becoming so large as to conceal the portrait. The third showed the Archangel Michael holding a flaming sword. In the fourth, St. Seraphim of Sarov stood on his knees on a rock, his hands upraised in prayer. Perplexed by this dream, Fr. Metrophan described it to St. Elizabeth one morning before the Liturgy. St. Elizabeth said she understood the dream. The

first picture signified that there would soon be a revolution in Russia, that a persecution would be raised against the Church, and for our sins, our unbelief, the country would be brought to the brink of destruction. The second picture signified that her sister and the entire Royal Family would receive a martyr's death. The third picture containing St. Michael signified that subsequently Russia would be overtaken by frightful tribulations. The fourth signified that by the prayers of St. Seraphim and other saints and righteous ones of the Russian land, and by the intercession of the Mother of God, the country and its people would obtain mercy.

Again, St. Ephraim the Syrian identifies the destroyer of Gog and Magog (which according to some plausible interpretations is neo-Soviet power) in Ezekiel 38-39 with the Archangel Michael: "Then Divine Justice will call upon Michael, the leader of the hosts, and send him to destroy their camps, as [he did] the camps of Sennacherib. At the command, and with his mighty and terrible sword, the angel shall go forth and destroy their armies in the twinkling of an eye, and in the same moment Divine Justice, thundering from on high, shall destroy their camps with rocks of fire. Their slain shall lie upon the ground, innumerable as the sands. Beasts and men shall die, and the whole camp shall perish, and flame shall be set loose against the sea and against the islands. The bow of Gog, the evil king, shall fall from his left hand, and the arrows from his left (Ezekiel 39.3); and his camp shall be wholly destroyed. Then the Lord from His glorious heaven shall set up His peace. And the kingdom of the Romans [the Orthodox Christian empire] shall rise in place of this latter people, and establish its dominion upon the earth, even to its ends, and there shall be no one who will resist it..."⁵⁴⁴

As champion of church truth the Archangel is especially close to those fighting for the Orthodox faith. For he is the "unconquerable opponent of the enemies of the faith and the adversaries of the Holy Church", "who dost enlighten with the light of faith those sitting in darkness" and "who dost direct along the path of truth and repentance those made foolish through false wisdom" (ikos 10). Being bodiless, the angels are specially called to fight heresy, for this is a sin of the spirit and not of the flesh. And so we pray: "O archangels of God, leaders of the bodiless powers, by your boldness save us from all heresy" (Mattins canon, Ode 6, second canon to the angels).

One such champion of the truth was St. Wilfrid, Metropolitan of York in the seventh century, who was having a long tussle with the Roman papacy over canonical matters. Once, as he was once returning to England from Rome, he fell seriously ill and was close to death. On the fifth day of his illness, St. Michael appeared to him: "I am Michael the messenger of the Most High God, who sent me to tell thee that years of life have been added to thee by the intercession of Holy Mary, the Birthgiver of God and Ever-Virgin, and by the lamentations of thy followers, which have reached the ears of the Lord; and this

⁵⁴⁴ St. Ephraim, *Sermon on Gog and Magog and on the end and consummation*; translated by M.F. Toal, *The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers*, London: Longmans, 1963, vol. 4, p. 355.

shall be a sign to thee: from this day thou shalt begin to grow better day by day, and thou wilt reach thy native land; and all the most precious of thy possessions will be returned to thee, and thou wilt end thy life in peace. Also be prepared; for after the space of four years I will visit thee again. Now remember that thou hast built churches in honour of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul; but thou hast built nothing in honour of the Holy Ever-Virgin Mary, who is interceding for thee. Thou hast to put this right and to dedicate a church in honour of her."⁵⁴⁵

Finally we come to the *eschatological* significance of the Archangel Michael, his service to God and men at the very end of the world. On the last day, Christ will descend from heaven "at the voice of the archangel" (I Thessalonians 4.16), and the Archangel Michael "shall gather the chosen from the four ends of the earth". Then by him "at the voice of God sinners shall be committed like tares to the eternal fire", and by him "the righteous shall be gloriously made to settle in the mansions of the heavenly Father" (ikos 12).

St. John Maximovich, who was baptized with the name Michael, once said that two saints were especially important in the very last times: the holy Archangel Michael and the holy Great-Martyr George, who should be prayed to with special fervour. Let us follow this wise advice and pray to the holy Archangel Michael, remembering that God "has made one Church of angels and men" (Mattins, first canon to the angels, Ode 9, troparion), and that they are appointed to help us as their fellow servants of God, also made in the image of God. ! For, as the Prophet Daniel says, "At that time Michael shall stand up, the great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people" (Daniel 12.1).

November 9/22, 2016.

⁵⁴⁵ Monk Stephen, *Vita Wilfridi*.

37. THE THIRD ALL-EMIGRATION COUNCIL OF THE RUSSIAN CHURCH ABROAD

In 1974 the Third All-Emigration Council of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia (ROCOR) took place in the monastery of the Holy Trinity in Jordanville, New York. Just as the First Council, held at Karlovtsy in 1921, had defined the relationship of ROCOR to the Bolshevik regime and the Romanov dynasty; and the Second Council, held in Belgrade in 1938, defined her relationship to the Church inside Russia; so the Third Council tried to define her relationship to the ecumenical and dissident movements. As Metropolitan Philaret, president of the Council, said in his keynote address: "First of all, the Council must declare not only for the Russian flock, but for the entire Church, its concept of the Church; to reveal the dogma of the Church... The Council must determine the place our Church Abroad holds within contemporary Orthodoxy, among the other 'so-called' churches. We say 'so-called' for though now people often speak of many 'churches', the Church of Christ is single and One."⁵⁴⁶

There was much to discuss. In the last decade the apostatic influence of the ecumenical movement had broadened and deepened, and Metropolitan Philaret, had assumed a leading role in the struggle against it through his "Sorrowful Epistles". Under the influence of his leadership, many non-Russians, such as the Greek American Monastery of the Holy Transfiguration in Boston, had sought refuge in ROCOR, and this movement had been strengthened by the application of the two Greek Old Calendarist Synods to enter into communion with her. ROCOR was no longer an exclusively Russian jurisdiction, and she could no longer be seen as simply an outpost of Russian Orthodox anti-communism. She was a multi-ethnic, missionary Church fighting the main heresies of the age on a number of fronts throughout the world. However, such a vision of ROCOR was shared by only a minority of her hierarchs, among whom Archbishop Averky of Jordanville was the most prominent.

ROCOR was now isolated from almost all other Orthodox Churches; and the question arose how to justify this. Some saw the isolation of ROCOR as necessitated, not so much by the struggle against ecumenism, as by the need to preserve *Russianness* among the Russian émigrés. This created a problem for a Church that was rapidly filling up with non-Russian converts. It was not that the preservation of *Russianness* as such was not an undoubted good. The problem arose when it hindered the missionary witness of the Church to non-Russian believers. Such phyletistic tendencies inevitably led to a loss of Church consciousness in relation to ecumenism, and to a feeling that ROCOR was closer to Russians of the MP, ecumenist though they might be, than to True Orthodox Christians of Greek or French or American origin.⁵⁴⁷

⁵⁴⁶ Third All-Diaspora Council, 1974, Protocol 1, August 26 / September 8, Synodal Archives, p. 2; quoted in Nun Vassa (Larin) "'Glory be to God, Who did not Abandon His Church', The Self-Awareness of ROCOR at the Third All-Diaspora Council of 1974",

<http://www.russianorthodoxchurch.ws/01newstructure/pagesen/articles/svassasobor.htm>.

⁵⁴⁷ See Eugene Pavlenko, "The Heresy of Phyletism: History and the Present", *Vertograd-Inform*, №

Another cause of division was the stricter attitude that ROCOR was now being forced to adopt towards "World Orthodoxy", the Local Orthodox Churches that participated in the ecumenical movement. Most of the hierarchs had passively acquiesced in Metropolitan Philaret's "Sorrowful Epistles", and in the union with the Greek Old Calendarists. But they began to stir when the consequences of this were spelled out by the zealots in ROCOR: no further communion with the new calendarists, the Serbs and Jerusalem. The unofficial leader of this group of bishops was Archbishop Anthony of Geneva, who was supported by Bishop Laurus of Manhattan, Archbishop Philotheus of Hamburg and Bishop Paul of Stuttgart.⁵⁴⁸ His main opponents were Metropolitan Philaret, Archbishops Anthony of Los Angeles and Averky of Syracuse, Bishop Gregory (Grabbe)⁵⁴⁹ and, especially, the Greek-American Monastery of the Holy Transfiguration in Boston.

Archbishop Anthony of Geneva was a powerful hierarch who had already once apostasized to the Moscow Patriarchate.⁵⁵⁰ He continually proclaimed that the MP was a true Church.⁵⁵¹ Moreover, he concelebrated frequently with the heretics of "World Orthodoxy", and even, in 1986, ordered his Paris clergy to concelebrate with the new calendarists in Greece, and not with the Old Calendarists. He was a thorn in the side of Metropolitan Philaret until the latter's death in 1985...

In his address to the Council, entitled "Our Church in the Modern World", he declared: "By the example of our First Hierarchs [Anthony and Anastasy] we must carefully preserve those fine threads which bind us with the Orthodox world. Under no circumstances must we isolate ourselves, seeing around us often imagined heretics and schismatics. Through gradual self-isolation we will fall into the extremism which our metropolitans wisely avoided, we will reject that middle, royal path which until now our Church has travelled... By isolating ourselves, we will embark upon the path of sectarianism, fearing everyone and everything, we will become possessed with paranoia."

This somewhat hysterical appeal not to separate from the World Orthodox at

13, November, 1999.

⁵⁴⁸ Nun Vassa, *op. cit.*

⁵⁴⁹ "In his report to Metropolitan Philaret on 7 December of 1972, Archpriest George Grabbe, who then headed the Synod's External Affairs Department, protested against Bishops Nikon and Laurus having united in prayer with Archbishop Iakovos during the visit of the relics of St. Nicholas to the Greek Church in Flushing, NY. His protest was motivated on the basis of determinations of the ROCOR Councils of Bishops of 1967 and 1971 that its clergy must by all means avoid prayerful communion with hierarchs who were ecumenists, and even more so because ROCOR had accepted clerics who had left these other churches for 'dogmatic reasons'." (Psarev, *op. cit.*, p. 4).

⁵⁵⁰ "In 1945, being in Serbia, he went over to the MP and waited for a Soviet passport so as to go to the USSR, but the Soviet authorities took their time with the passport, bestowing on him in the meantime the rank of archimandrite [through Patriarch Alexis I]. But, fed up with waiting for permission to return, [in 1949] the future bishop left for Switzerland to his brother Bishop Leontius, where he was reunited with ROCOR, having received a penance for his joining the MP." (Vladimir Kirillov, May 15, 2006 <http://elmager.livejournal.com/66190.html?thread=283278>; Bernard le Caro, "A Short Biography of Archbishop Antony (Bartoshevich) of Geneva and Western Europe (+1993)", http://www.orthodoxengland.org.uk/vl_antony_b.pdf).

⁵⁵¹ He said as much to the present writer in October, 1976.

just the point when they were embarking upon “super-ecumenism” was criticised by Fr. George Grabbe: “The report does not mention to the degree necessary, maybe, that life goes on, and the sickness of ecumenism deepens and widens more and more. Condescension, *oikonomia*, must under different circumstances be applied differently, and to different degrees. In doses too great it can betray the Truth.” Archbishop Anthony of Los Angeles also opposed him, recalling that “we have many Greek [Old Calendarist] parishes. Our concelebration with the new calendarists was very bitter for them.”⁵⁵²

The leader of one of the Greek Old Calendarist parishes within ROCOR, Fr. Panagiotes Carras, sent an appeal to the Synod of Bishops on August 24, 1974 on behalf of all “non-Russian monasteries, parishes, and laity of ROCOR”, in which he called on the ecumenists to be labelled as heretics who had lost the Holy Spirit and who should be subjected to the canonical sanctions that apply to heretics and schismatics.

Metropolitan Philaret was sympathetic to this appeal, and moved for an official statement that the MP was graceless. According to the witness of a seminarian present at the Council, the majority of bishops and delegates would have supported such a motion. However, at the last minute the metropolitan was persuaded not to proceed with the motion on the grounds that it would have caused a schism.⁵⁵³ Nine years later, the ROCOR Council of Bishops did anathematize ecumenism.

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Voices were heard at the 1974 Council arguing for union between ROCOR and the schismatic Paris and American Metropolia jurisdictions. Love, they said, should unite us, and we should not emphasize our differences. Metropolitan Philaret, however, pointed out that love which does not wish to disturb our neighbour by pointing out his errors is not love but hatred!⁵⁵⁴

The divisions that were beginning to emerge between Metropolitan Philaret and

⁵⁵² *Protocol № 4 of the All-Diaspora Council, August 29 / September 11, 1974; Synodal Archives, p. 4; Nun Vassa, op. cit.*

⁵⁵³ Fr. Basil Yakimov, “Re: Fundamental Question”, orthodox-synod@yahoo.groups.com, 4 June, 2003. And the following is an extract from Protocol № 3 of the ROCOR Sobor, dated October 8/21, 1974: “Bishop Gregory says that to the question of the existence (of grace) it is not always possible to give a final reply immediately. The loss of grace is the consequence of spiritual death, which sometimes does not come immediately. Thus plants sometimes die gradually. In relation to the loss of grace in the Moscow Patriarchate, it would be interesting to make the comparison with the position of the iconoclasts, although the sin of the Patriarchate is deeper. The President [Metropolitan Philaret] says that we cannot now issue a resolution on grace in the Moscow Patriarchate, but we can be certain that grace lives only in the true Church, but the Moscow hierarchs have gone directly against Christ and His work. How can there be grace among them? The metropolitan personally considers that the Moscow Patriarchate is graceless.” (*Tserkovnie Novosti* (Church News), № 4 (95), June-July, 2001, p. 9).

⁵⁵⁴ See his letters to Fr. Victor Potapov, *Vertograd-Inform*, № 11 (44), November, 1998, pp. 28-32, and to Abbess Magdalena of Lesna of December, 1979.

the majority of other hierarchs were expressed by him in a letter to one of his few allies, Protopresbyter George Grabbe, the Secretary of the Synod. Describing a meeting with the hierarchs, he wrote: "I saw how truly alone I am among our hierarchs with my views on matters of principle (although on a personal level I am on good terms with everyone). And I am in earnest when I say that I am considering retiring. Of course, I won't leave all of a sudden, unexpectedly. But at the next Sobor I intend to point out that too many things that are taking place in our church life do not sit well with me. And if the majority of the episcopacy agrees with me than I will not raise the matter of retiring. But if I see that I am alone or see myself in the minority then I will announce that I am retiring. For I cannot head, nor, therefore bear the responsibility for that with which I am not in agreement in principle. In particular, I do not agree with our practice of halfway relations with the American and Parisian schismatics. The Holy Fathers insistently state that long and obdurately continuing schism is close to being heresy, and that it is necessary to relate to stubborn schismatics as to heretics, not allowing any communion with them whatsoever (how Vladyka Anthony's hair would stand on end at such a pronouncement! But I remain unyielding)..."⁵⁵⁵

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Also discussed at the Council was the dissident movement in the Soviet Union. As we have seen, détente affected both the political and cultural spheres (the works of such figures as Sakharov and Solzhenitsyn), and also the religious sphere (Solzhenitsyn again, Bishop Hermogen of Kaluga, the priests Yeshliman, Yakunin and Dudko, the layman Boris Talantov).

Those hierarchs of ROCOR, such as Anthony of Geneva, whose attitude to events in Russia was dictated as much by political as by spiritual or ecclesiological considerations, were inclined to raise the dissidents to the status of true Church confessors.⁵⁵⁶ For on the one hand, they were sincere anti-communists and despised the kow-towing of the MP hierarchs to communism. On the other hand, they would not have dreamed of denying that the MP was a true Church.

The position of these hierarchs was threatened by the anti-ecumenist zeal of Metropolitan Philaret, Archbishop Averky and the Boston monastery. But the expulsion of Solzhenitsyn to the West in 1974 presented them with an opportunity. Archbishop Anthony brought Solzhenitsyn to the Council, where he created a sensation by his rejection of the zealot view. Then Anthony himself read a report calling on ROCOR to support the dissidents, in spite of the fact that they were ecumenists and in the MP. He was countered by Archbishop Anthony of Los Angeles, who, while respecting the courage of the dissidents, objected to a recognition that would devalue the witness of the true catacomb confessors.

⁵⁵⁵ Metropolitan Philaret to Fr. George Grabbe, July 12/25, 1975, *Vertograd-Inform*, № 11 (68), November, 2000, pp. 52-53.

⁵⁵⁶ Many West European members of ROCOR belonged to the NTS, a secret anti-communist political party which was infiltrated by both the KGB and the CIA.

One of the most important Soviet dissidents was the Moscow priest Fr. Dmitri Dudko, who conducted open meetings in his church that attracted many and influenced many more. Unlike Solzhenitsyn, he knew of the Catacomb Church, and wrote of it in relatively flattering terms: "We all recognize Patriarch Tikhon and we look on Patriarch Sergius' [acts] as a betrayal of the Church's interests to please the authorities. The following (Patriarchs) - Alexis and the present Pimen - only go on the road already opened. We have no other hierarchy. The Catacomb Church would be good - but where is it? The True Orthodox Church - these are good people, morally steadfast; but they have almost no priesthood, and you simply can't find them, while there are many who are thirsting. And one has to be ministered to by the hierarchy we do have. Immediately the question arises: are they ministering to us? Basically, they are the puppets of the atheists. And another question: at least, are they believers? Who will answer this question? I fear to answer..."⁵⁵⁷

These sentiments elicited sympathy from members of ROCOR. Less well known - because edited out of his books as published in the West⁵⁵⁸ - was Fr. Dmitri's ecumenism... The right attitude to him would have been to applaud his courage and the correct opinions he expressed, while gently seeking to correct his liberalism and ecumenism. In no way was it right to treat him as if he were a true priest in the True Church, and an example to be followed that was no less praiseworthy than those of the true confessors in the catacombs. But that is precisely what many in ROCOR now began to do.

Even the 1974 Council was tempted, declaring: "The boundary between preservation of the Church and seductive self-preservation was drawn by his Holiness Patriarch Tikhon, his lawful locum tenens Metropolitan Peter, Metropolitan Cyril of Kazan, Metropolitan Joseph of Petrograd and the Solovki confessors headed by Archbishop Hilarion (Troitsky). In recent years, this boundary has again been clearly drawn by Archbishop Hermogenes, several priests, among them Nicholas Gainov and Dimitri Dudko, the laypeople of Vyatka led by Boris Talantov, the defenders of the Pochaev Lavra such as Theodosia Kuzminichna Varavva, and many others. This boundary has also been drawn by Solzhenitsyn in his appeal 'Do not live by the lie!' Not to live by the lie and to honour the memory of the holy martyrs and confessors of our Church - this is the boundary separating the true Tikhonites from 'the sergianist leaven of Herod', as wrote Boris Talantov, the rebukers of the present leaders of the patriarchate who died in prison. In our unceasing prayers for each other, in our love for the Lord Jesus, in our faithfulness to the ideal of the past and future Orthodox Russia, the faithful archpastors, pastors, monks and laymen on both sides of the iron curtain are united. Together they constitute the Holy Church of Russia, which is indivisible just as the seamless robe of Christ is indivisible."⁵⁵⁹

⁵⁵⁷ *Posev*, translated in *The Orthodox Word*, September-October, 1979.

⁵⁵⁸ Personal communication from Monks of Monastery Press, Montreal, January, 1977.

⁵⁵⁹ *Poslanie Tret'ego Vsezarubezhnogo Sobora Russkoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi Zagranitsei Pravoslavnomu russkomu narodu na rodine* (Epistle of the Third All-Emigration Council of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad to the Russian People in the Homeland), September 8/21, 1974.

This was a serious distortion: to place the confessors of the Catacomb Church on the same level as sergianist dissidents. A case could be made for considering that Boris Talantov was a true martyr, since he denounced the MP in terms identical to those employed by the Catacomb Church and may well have died out of communion with the MP. But Dudko and Solzhenitsyn did not share the faith of the True Church, and did not join it even after the fall of communism...

Fr. Seraphim Rose criticized Solzhenitsyn as follows: "Let us return to the belief of Solzhenitsyn and all the defenders of the Moscow Patriarchate that the betrayal of her hierarchs does not affect the Church's faithful. This view is based on an entirely false view of the nature of the Church which artificially separates the hierarchs from the believing people and allows 'church life as normal' to go on no matter what happens to the Church leaders. On the contrary, the whole history of the Church of Christ persuades us of the exact opposite. Who else was it but the Bishops of Rome who led the Church of the West into apostasy and schism and heresy? Is it the fault of ordinary believing Roman Catholics that they, the largest group of 'Christians' in the world, are today outside the Church of Christ, and that in order to return to the true Church they must not only reject the false doctrines of Rome, but also completely reform their religious mentality and unlearn the false piety which has been transmitted to them precisely by their bishops? Today, it is true, the Moscow Patriarchate allows Roman Catholics to receive its Sacraments and implicitly already teaches the ecumenist doctrine that these Catholics too are 'part of the Church'. But this fact only shows how far the Moscow Patriarchate has departed from the universal Orthodox tradition of the Church into an erroneous ecclesiology, and how correct the True Orthodox Church is in refusing to have communion with an ecclesiastical body which not only allows its policies to be dictated by atheists, but openly preaches the modern heresies of ecumenism and chiliasm."⁵⁶⁰

In 1976 the ROCOR Synod issued an Epistle to the Russian people which, after declaring unity with the Catacomb Church, went on to say to MP dissidents: "We also kiss the cross that you have taken upon yourselves, O pastors who have found in yourselves the courage and strength of spirit to be open reproachers of the weakness of spirit of your hierarchs, who have surrendered before the atheists... We know of your exploit, we pray for you and ask your prayers for our flock that is in the diaspora. Christ is in our midst! He is and shall be!"⁵⁶¹

"Christ is in our midst! He is and shall be!" are words that Orthodox priests exchange in the altar after the ordination of the Holy Gifts. Their use here implies the recognition of the dissidents as co-celebrants with ROCOR, members of the same Church. Clearly the influence of the dissidents was having a corrosive effect on the ecclesiology of ROCOR.

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⁵⁶⁰ Rose, "The Catacomb Tikhonite Church 1974", *The Orthodox Word*, 1974, pp. 241-242.

⁵⁶¹ *Pravoslavnaiia Rus'* (Orthodox Russia), 1976, № 20.

In February, 1976 the Greek Old Calendarist Matthewites broke communion with ROCOR, claiming that the Russians had broken their promise to give them a written confession that the new calendarists were graceless⁵⁶², and that Archbishop Anthony of Geneva was continuing to have communion with the new calendarists.⁵⁶³ This was true; and his ecumenist activities continued even after the break with the Matthewites. Thus at Pascha, 1976, he asked permission for pastoral reasons to serve with Russian clerics of the Patriarchate of Constantinople in Europe.⁵⁶⁴ In October he again concelebrated with several heretics at the funeral of Archbishop Nikodem of Great Britain. And in May, 1977 he travelled to Birmingham, England to concelebrate with the local Serbs.

Archbishop Anthony's ecumenist actions caused several priests and parishes to leave him for the Matthewites, including those of Fr. Basile Sakkas in Switzerland and of Hieromonk Cassian (Braun) in France, and a parish in England. Metropolitan Philaret expressed disapproval of Archbishop Anthony's canonical transgressions, but he was not in sufficient control of his Synod to obtain his

⁵⁶² The official statements of the ROCOR Synod were indeed weak from the Matthewite point of view, who regarded the matter as already decided long ago. Thus on September 12/25, 1974 the Synod declared: "Concerning the question of the presence or absence of grace among the new calendarists the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad does not consider herself or any other Local Church to have the right to make a conclusive decision, since a categorical evaluation in this question can be undertaken only by a properly convened, competent Ecumenical Council, with the obligatory participation of the free Church of Russia." (This was quoted by Metropolitan Philaret in his letter to Archbishop Andreas dated October 5, 1974 (ref. no. 3/50/760)). Again on September 18 / October 1, 1974 the ROCOR Council of Bishops declared: "Manifesting good will [towards the Orthodox Greeks], the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad has called and addressed separate groups of the Church of the Old Calendarists to find the path to make peace and attain fraternal unity. However, the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad has no canonical power over the Church jurisdictions in Greece and therefore cannot interfere in their life with decisions that would be obligatory in questions of their disagreements."

Although ROCOR officially refused to call the new calendarists graceless, there is evidence that Metropolitan Philaret's personal views were stricter and closer to those of the Greeks. Thus on September 20, 1975, he wrote to Metropolitan Epiphanius of Kition, the leader of the Old Calendarist Church of Cyprus, with whom he continued to have friendly relations even after the Matthewite Synod to which Epiphanius belonged had broken communion with ROCOR: "From the beginning our Russian Church has known that the calendar innovation was unacceptable, and has not dared to move this boundary set by patristic tradition, for the Ecclesiastical Calendar is a support of the life of the Church and as such is fortified by decrees of Holy Tradition.

"However, it is obvious to all that the calendar innovation caused a schism in the Greek Church in 1924, and the responsibility for the schism weighs exclusively on the innovators. This is the conclusion that will be reached by anyone studying the Patriarchal *Tomoi* (as that of 1583) and taking into account the wretched and self-evident fact of the schism and the frightful punishments, persecutions and blasphemies which those who have cleaved to the patristic piety of Holy Tradition have undergone.

"Thinking in this way, our Holy Synod has decreed that we 'flee' concelebrations with the new calendarist modernists. We do not concelebrate with them, nor do we give permission or a blessing to our clergy for such a concelebration. In order to assure you of the truth of what we say, we inform you that whenever a community in the diaspora is received into our Church, they are required to follow the patristic Calendar of the Orthodox Church..." (from the archives of the True Orthodox Church of Greece)

⁵⁶³ *Kyrix Gnision Orthodoxon* (Herald of the True Orthodox Christians), February, 1976, pp. 5-12.

⁵⁶⁴ Psarev, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

repentance.⁵⁶⁵

In the same critical year of 1976 the well-known Brotherhood of St. Herman of Alaska in Platina, California began to turn away from its previously zealot course to a markedly softer line in relation to the MP and World Orthodoxy.⁵⁶⁶ They were influenced in this direction partly by the “dissident fever” that was now raging through most of the Russian part of ROCOR, and partly by the “moderate” ecclesiology of the Greek Old Calendarist Metropolitan Cyprian of Fili. However, a still more important influence may have been a series of controversies – on evolution, on the soul after death, on Blessed Augustine of Hippo – conducted exclusively in the “convert” part of ROCOR between the Platina Brotherhood and the Greek-American monastery in Boston. In all these controversies, in the present writer’s opinion, Platina was right as against Boston. But the negative impression that the Platina monks formed of Boston as a result led them to error in the one area of controversy in which the Boston monastery was right – the canonical status of World Orthodoxy and the MP. Arguing that the Boston monastery’s “super-correctness” was leading them to abandon the “Royal Way” as regards the status of the World Orthodox, Platina came out strongly on the side of the liberal wing of ROCOR led by Archbishop Anthony and his idolisation of Fr. Dimitri and the other dissidents.

Another important issue was relations with the Serbian Church. The Serbs, as we have seen, had joined the WCC in 1965, their ecumenism extended to official acceptance of the canonicity of the Anglican Church⁵⁶⁷, and they were as fully under the thumb of the communists as the MP. In spite of this, Archbishop Anthony continued to serve with the Serbs, citing the pre-war hospitality of the Serbs to ROCOR in his justification.

In this connection Metropolitan Philaret wrote to him: “I consider it my duty to point out to you, Vladyka, that your assertion that we must thank the Serbian Church for her treatment of us, I fully accept, but only as regards her past – the

⁵⁶⁵ As he told the present writer in January, 1977, he had a gun at his head. However, he was able to remove Britain, where Archbishop Anthony’s ecumenism had elicited protests from the English Orthodox Parish of St. Michael, Guildford, to his own jurisdiction later that year.

⁵⁶⁶ See especially Fr. Seraphim Rose’s article, “The Royal Path” (*The Orthodox Word*, № 70, 1976), in which he wrote: “The Russian Church Outside of Russia has been placed, by God’s Providence, in a very favourable position for preserving the ‘royal path’ amidst the confusion of so much of 20th century Orthodoxy. Living in exile and poverty in a world that has not understood the suffering of her people, she has focused her attention on preserving unchanged the faith which unites her people, she has focused her attention on preserving unchanged the faith which unites her people, and so quite naturally she finds herself a stranger to the whole ecumenical mentality, which is based on religious indifference and self-satisfaction, material affluence, and soulless internationalism. On the other hand, she has been preserved from falling into extremism on the ‘right side’ (such as might be a declaration that the Mysteries of the Moscow Patriarchate are without grace)... If there seems to be a ‘logical contradiction’ here... it is a problem only for rationalists; those who approach church questions with the heart as well as the head have no trouble accepting this position...”

⁵⁶⁷ Thus George Deretich writes: “In Waukegan, Illinois (Feb. 7, 1980),... the pro-Belgrade Bishop Firmilian stated openly in court under oath that Episcopalian clergy are canonical priests recognized by his Orthodox Church” (*Treacherous Unity*, Acel Officeworks, 1998, p. 68).

glorious past of the Serbian Church. Yes, of course, we must keep the names of their Holinesses Patriarchs Demetrius and Barnabas in grateful memory for their precious support of the Church Abroad at that time when she had no place to lay her head.

“There is no denying that a certain honour is due the Serbian Church for her refusing to condemn our Church Abroad at the parasynagogue in Moscow in 1971, and also on later occasions when Moscow again raised the matter. But then, on the other hand, she did participate in the aforementioned parasynagogue, when it elected Pimen, and the Serbian hierarchs did not protest against this absolutely anti-canonical election, when he who had already been chosen and appointed by the God-hating regime was elected. Our Sobor of 1971 did not, and could not, recognize Pimen, whereas the Serbian Patriarchate recognized and does recognize him, addressing him as Patriarch, and is in full communion with him. And thus she opposes us directly, for we attempt at all times to explain to the “Free World” that the Soviet Patriarchate is not the genuine representative and head of the much-suffering Russian Church. But the Serbian Church recognizes her as such, and by so doing commits a grave sin against the Russian Church and the Russian Orthodox people.

“How can there be any talk here of a special gratitude to her? Oh, if the Serbian Church would, while recognizing our righteousness, likewise directly and openly, boldly recognize the unrighteousness of the Soviets! Well – then there would truly be something for us to thank her for! But now, as it is, while extending one hand to us, she extends her other hand to our opponents and the enemies of God and the Church. If it pleases you, having shut your eyes to this sad reality, to thank the Serbs for such ‘podvigs’ of theirs, then that is your affair, but I am not a participant in this expression of gratitude.

“How dangerous are compromises in matters of principle! They render people powerless in defence of the Truth. Why is it that the Serbian Patriarchate cannot resolve to sever communion with the Soviet hierarchy? Because she herself is travelling along the same dark and dangerous path of compromise with the God-hating communists. True, she has not progressed along that path to the extent that the Soviet hierarchy has, and she attempts to preach and defend the faith, but if the shades and nuances here are quite different, yet, in principle, the matter stands on one and the same level.”⁵⁶⁸

In 1979, in response to a series of protests by Fr. Dmitri against what he saw as excessive strictness on the part of ROCOR towards the MP, Archbishop Anthony of Geneva, breaking the rule imposed by Metropolitan Anastasy (and reasserted by Metropolitan Philaret) that ROCOR members should have no contact, “even of an everyday nature”, with Soviet church clergy, wrote to Dudko: “I hasten to console you that the part of the Russian Church which lives in freedom beyond the bounds of the homeland, has never officially considered the Moscow Patriarchate, which is recognised in the USSR, as graceless.... We have never dared to deny the

⁵⁶⁸ Letter of Metropolitan Philaret to Archbishop Anthony of Geneva, November 16/29, 1977.

grace-filled nature of the official church, for we believe that the sacraments carried out by her clergy are sacraments. Therefore our bishops received your clergy into the Church Abroad in their existing rank... On the other hand, the representatives of the Catacomb Church in Russia accuse us of not wanting to recognise the Moscow Patriarchate as graceless."⁵⁶⁹

However, in 1980, Fr. Dmitri was arrested, which was closely followed by the arrest of his disciples Victor Kapitanchuk and Lev Regelson. Then Dudko issued a recantation on Soviet television in which he confessed that his "so-called struggle with godlessness" was in fact "a struggle with Soviet power".⁵⁷⁰ Kapitanchuk and Regelson confessed to having "criminal ties" with foreign correspondents and of mixing religious activity with politics, while Kapitanchuk said that he had "inflicted damage on the Soviet state for which I am very sorry". Both men implicated others in their "crimes".

Metropolitan Philaret had been proved right – although many continued to justify Dudko and denounced those who "judged" him. But it was not a question of personal "judging", but of the correct discerning of the boundaries of the Church and the correct attitude to those outside it.

The metropolitan wrote that the tragedy had overtaken Dudko because his activity had taken place from within the MP – that is, "outside the True Church". And he continued: "What is the 'Soviet church'? Fr. Archimandrite Constantine has said often and insistently that the most terrible thing that the God-fighting authorities have done to Russia is the appearance of the 'Soviet church', which the Bolsheviks offered up to the people as the True Church, having driven the real Orthodox Church into the catacombs or the concentration camps. This false church has been twice anathematized. His Holiness Patriarch Tikhon and the All-Russian Church Council anathematised the communists and all their co-workers. This terrible anathema has not been lifted to this day and preserves its power, since it can be lifted only by an All-Russian Church Council, as being the canonically higher Church authority. And a terrible thing happened in 1927, when the leader of the Church, Metropolitan Sergius, by his shameful apostate declaration submitted the Russian Church to the Bolsheviks and declared that he was cooperating with them. In the most exact sense the expression of the prayer before confession was fulfilled: 'fallen under his own anathema'! For in 1918 the Church anathematised all the co-workers of communism, and in 1927 she herself entered into the company of these co-workers and began to praise the red God-fighting

⁵⁶⁹ *Vestnik Zapadno-Evropeskoj Eparkhii* (Herald of the Western European Diocese), 1979, № 14; *Posev* (Sowing), 1979, № 12.

⁵⁷⁰ In fact, before his death in 2004 Dudko became an open advocate of Stalinism and Putin's neo-Stalinism: "I hope so much for Vladimir Putin now. It seems to me that he is like Joseph Stalin. I treat Stalin with respect, and I think that he was a very wise leader. It is Stalin who established such a powerful country. Russia has never been that powerful since, and there was no tsar in Russia who was able to accomplish the things that Stalin did. He managed to overcome and sacrifice so much for the sake of the country's greatness. I hope that Putin will follow in Stalin's path..." (<http://english.pravda.ru/politics/2002/11/13/39433>; quoted by Nicholas Candela, "[paradosis] the wisdom of an MP priest", orthodox-tradition@yahoo.com, January 22, 2004).

authorities – to praise the red beast of which the Apocalypse speaks. And this is not all. When Metropolitan Sergius published his criminal declaration, the faithful children of the Church immediately separated from the Soviet church, and the Catacomb Church was created. And she in her turn anathematized the official church for her betrayal of Christ...

“We receive clergymen from Moscow not as ones possessing grace, but as ones receiving it by the very act of union. But to recognize the church of the evil-doers as the bearer and repository of grace – that we, of course, cannot do. For outside of Orthodoxy there is *no* grace; and the Soviet church has deprived itself of grace.”⁵⁷¹

Looking at this tragedy from a psychological point of view, we can see that Dudko’s vulnerability consisted, not so much in the fear of physical torture, as in the KGB’s ability to induce in him a feeling of false guilt, guilt that he had objectively harmed the Soviet State. This tragedy exposed an inescapable dilemma facing all the dissidents: that action aimed to restore the freedom of the Church was necessarily anti-soviet, insofar as the Soviet State and the Orthodox Church represented incompatible aims and ideologies. Therefore every committed campaigner for Church freedom sooner or later had to admit that he was working against Soviet power – if not by physical, at any rate by spiritual, means, and that he had to work outside the political and ecclesiastical institutions of Soviet power. So the failure of the dissidents was the natural consequence of the refusal to obey the Apostle’s command: “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers” (II Corinthians 6.14). They refused to obey Patriarch Tikhon’s adjuration to the faithful to have no communion at all with the communists, “the outcasts of humanity”. They tried to do good from within an accursed evil - the pact between Metropolitan Sergius and the Communists which, in the words of a samizdat document dating from the early 1970s, “tied the Church hand and foot by imposing on her a loyalty not only to the State, *but mainly to the communist ideology.*”⁵⁷²

November 9/22, 2016.

⁵⁷¹ “A Letter from Metropolitan Philaret (Voznesensky) to a Priest of the Church Abroad concerning Father Dimitri Dudko and the Moscow Patriarchate”, *Vertograd-Inform*, № 4, February, 1999, pp. 16-20. A few years earlier, on August 14/27, 1977, Metropolitan Philaret had told the present writer: “I advise you always to remain faithful to the anathema of the Catacomb Church against the Moscow Patriarchate.”

⁵⁷² Keston College *Archives* 12/92, № 8926 March 29, 1972, in *Orthodox Life*, September-October, 1974.

38. THE RISE AND FALL OF CLASSICAL GREEK DEMOCRACY

1. Democracy and the gods

Each of the main political systems is the reflection of a particular religious (or anti-religious) outlook on the world. Classical Greek democracy was no exception to this rule. It was the expression of a particularly *human* view of God or the gods. Thus J.M. Roberts writes: "Greek gods and goddesses, for all their supernatural standing and power, are remarkably human. They express the humanity-centred quality of later Greek civilization. Much as it owed to Egypt and the East, Greek mythology and art usually presents its gods as better, or worse, men and women, a world away from the monsters of Assyria and Babylonia, or from Shiva the many-armed. Whoever is responsible, this is a religious revolution; its converse was the implication that men could be godlike. This is already apparent in Homer; perhaps he did as much as anyone to order the Greek supernatural in this way and he does not give much space to popular cults. He presents gods taking sides in the Trojan war in postures all too human. They compete with one another; while Poseidon harries the hero of *The Odyssey*, Athena takes his part. A later Greek critic grumbled that Homer 'attributed to the gods everything that is disgraceful and blameworthy among men: theft, adultery and deceit'. It was a world which operated much like the actual world."⁵⁷³

If the gods were such uninspiring figures, it was hardly surprising that the kings (whether god-kings or not) should cease to inspire awe. Hence the trend, apparent from Homeric times, to *desacralise* kingship. For if in religion the universe was seen as "one great City of gods and men", differing from each other not in nature but in power, why should there be any greater differences in the city of man? Just as gods can be punished by other gods, and men like Heracles can become gods themselves, so in the politics of the city-state rulers can be removed from power. There is no "divine right" of kings because even the gods do not have such unambiguous rights over men.

As we pass from Homer to the fifth-century poets and dramatists, the same religious humanism, tending to place men on a par with the gods, is evident. Thus the conservative poet Pindar writes: "Single is the race, single / of men and gods: / From a single mother we both draw breath. / But a difference of power in everything / Keeps us apart." Although cosmic justice must always be satisfied, and the men who defy the laws of the gods are always punished for their pride (*hubris*), nevertheless, in the plays of Aeschylus, for example, the men who rebel (e.g. Prometheus), are sometimes treated with greater sympathy than the gods against whom they rebel, who are depicted like the tyrannical capitalists of nineteenth-century Marxism. Even the conservative

⁵⁷³ Roberts, *History of the World*, Oxford: Helicon Publishing, 1992, p. 139.

Sophocles puts a man-centred view of the universe into the mouth of his characters, as in the chorus in *Antigone*: “Many wonders there are, but none more wonderful / Than man, who rules the ocean.../ He is master of the ageless earth, to his own will bending / The immortal mother of gods.”

We see the same secularizing and humanizing tendency in the fifth-century historian Herodotus. As Simon Sebag Montefiore writes, “For Herodotus, pride always comes before a fall, but he emphasizes that such failures are not the punishment of the gods, but rather result from human mistakes. This rational approach, in which the gods did not intervene in the affairs of men, was a major innovation and formed the basis for the tradition of Western history.”⁵⁷⁴

In about 415 BC the Sicilian writer Euhemerus developed the theory that the gods originated from the elaboration of actual historical persons.⁵⁷⁵ This humanist tendency led, in the playwright Euripides, to open scepticism about the gods. Thus Queen Hecabe in *The Trojan Women* expresses scepticism about Zeus in very modern, almost Freudian tones: “You are past our finding out – whether you are the necessity of nature or the mind of human beings”. Euripides’ “gods and goddesses,” writes Michael Grant, “emerge as demonic psychological forces – which the application of human reason cannot possibly overcome – or as nasty seducers, or as figures of fun. Not surprisingly, the playwright was denounced as impious and atheistic, and it was true that under his scrutiny the plain man’s religion crumbled to pieces.”⁵⁷⁶

If the dramatists could take such liberties, in spite of the fact that their dramas were staged in the context of a religious festival, it is not to be wondered at that the philosophers went still further. Thus Protagoras, the earliest of the sophists, wrote: “I know nothing about the gods, whether they are or are not, or what their shapes are. For many things make certain knowledge impossible – the obscurity of the theme and the shortness of human life.” And again: “*Man is the measure of all things, of things that are, that they are; and of things that are not, that they are not.*” Protagoras did not question the moral foundations of society in a thorough-going way, preferring to think that men should obey the institutions of society, which had been given them by the gods.⁵⁷⁷ Thus he did not take the final step in the democratic argument, which consists in cutting the bond between human institutions (νομός), on the

⁵⁷⁴ Montefiore, *Titans of History*, London: Quercus, 2012, p. 33.

⁵⁷⁵ C.S. Lewis, “Religion without Dogma?” in *Faith, Christianity and the Church*, London: HarperCollins, 1002, p. 165, footnote.

⁵⁷⁶ Grant, *The Classical Greeks*, London: Phoenix, 1989, p. 130.

⁵⁷⁷ J.S. McClelland writes: “The Greeks did understand that one of the ways of getting round the problem of the vulnerability of a constitution on account of its age and its political bias was to pretend that it was very ancient indeed. That meant mystifying the origins of a constitution to the point where it had no origins at all. The way to do that was to make the constitution immortal by the simple expedient of making it the product of an immortal mind, and the only immortal minds were possessed by gods, or, as second-best, by supremely god-like men” (*A History of Western Political Thought*, Routledge: London and New York, 1996, p. 11).

one hand, and the Divine order of things (φυσικ), on the other – a step that was not taken unequivocally until the French revolution in the eighteenth century. Nevertheless, his thought shows that the movement towards democracy went hand in hand with religious scepticism.

It is in the context of this gradual loss of faith in the official “Olympian” religion that Athenian Democracy arose. But just as Athens was not the whole of Greece, so Democracy was not the only form of government to be observed among the Greek city-states. In Sicily and on the coast of Asia Minor Monarchy still flourished. And on mainland Europe mixed constitutions including elements of all three forms of government were also to be found, most notably in Sparta.⁵⁷⁸

2. Herodotus on Democracy

This diversity of state forms naturally led to a debate on which was the best; and we find one debate on this subject recorded by the “Father of History”, Herodotus. He placed it, surprisingly, in the court of the Persian King Darius. Was this merely a literary device (although Herodotus, who had already encountered this objection, insisted that he was telling the truth)? Or did this indicate that the Despotism of Persia tolerated a freer spirit of inquiry and debate than is generally supposed? We do not know.

In any case the debate – the first of its kind in western literature – is worth quoting at length:- “The first speaker was Otanes, and his theme was to recommend the establishment in Persia of popular government. ‘I think,’ he said, ‘that the time has passed for any one man amongst us to have absolute power. Monarchy is neither pleasant nor good. You know to what lengths the pride of power carried Cambyses, and you have personal experience of the effect of the same thing in the conduct of the Magus [who had rebelled against Cambyses]. How can one fit monarchy into any sound system of ethics, when it allows a man to do whatever he likes without any responsibility or control? Even the best of men raised to such a position would be bound to change for the worse – he could not possibly see things as he used to do. The typical vices of a monarch are envy and pride; envy, because it is a natural human weakness, and pride, because excessive wealth and power lead to the delusion that he is something more than a man. These two vices are the root cause of all wickedness: both lead to acts of savage and unnatural violence. Absolute power ought, by rights, to preclude envy on the principle that the man who possesses it has also at command everything he could wish for; but in fact it is not so, as the behaviour of kings to their subjects proves: they are jealous of the best of them merely for continuing to live, and take pleasure in the worst; and

⁵⁷⁸ Sparta has been seen as one of the earliest models of socialism in the western world. See Lev Karpinsky, “S ‘Sotsializmom’ napereves” (“In a horizontal position with socialism”), *Moskovskie Novosti* (Moscow News), N 21, May 27, 1990; Vladimir Rusak, *Svidetel'stvo obvinenia* (Witness for the Prosecution), Jordanville, N.Y.: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1989, part III, p. 102; Montefiore, *Titans*, pp. 27-31.

no one is readier than a king to listen to tale-bearers. A king, again, is the most inconsistent of men; show him reasonably respect, and he is angry because you do not abase yourself before his majesty; abase yourself, and he hates you for being a toady. But the worst of all remains to be said – he breaks up the structure of ancient tradition and law, forces women to serve his pleasure, and puts men to death without trial. Contrast this with the rule of the people: first, it has the finest of all names to describe it – equality under the law; and, secondly, the people in power do none of the things that monarchs do. Under a government of the people a magistrate is appointed by lot and is held responsible for his conduct in office, and all questions are put up for open debate. For these reasons I propose that we do away with the monarchy, and raise the people to power; for the state and the people are synonymous terms.”⁵⁷⁹

Otanes’ main thesis is true as regards Despotic power, but false as regards Autocratic power, as we shall see; for Autocracy’s rule over the people is not absolute in that it is wielded only in “symphony” with the Church, which serves as its conscience and restraining power. The theme of “equality under the law” is also familiar from modern Democracy; it was soon to be subjected to penetrating criticism by Plato and Aristotle. As for the assertion that “the people in power do none of the things that monarchs do”, this was to be disproved even sooner by the experience of Athenian Democracy in the war with Sparta.

“Otanes was followed by Megabyzus, who recommended the principle of oligarchy in the following words: ‘Insofar as Otanes spoke in favour of abolishing monarchy, I agree with him; but he is wrong in asking us to transfer political power to the people. The masses are a feckless lot – nowhere will you find more ignorance or irresponsibility or violence. It would be an intolerable thing to escape the murderous caprice of a king, only to be caught by the equally wanton brutality of the rabble. A king does at least act consciously and deliberately; but the mob does not. Indeed how should it, when it has never been taught what is right and proper, and has no knowledge of its own about such things? The masses handle affairs without thought; all they can do is to rush blindly into politics like a river in flood. As for the people, then, let them govern Persia’s enemies; but let us ourselves choose a certain number of the best men in the country, and give *them* political power. We personally shall be amongst them, and it is only natural to suppose that the best men will produce the best policy.’

“Darius was the third to speak. ‘I support,’ he said, ‘all Megabyzus’ remarks about the masses but I do not agree with what he said of oligarchy. Take the three forms of government we are considering – democracy, oligarchy, and monarchy – and suppose each of them to be the best of its kind; I maintain that the third is greatly preferable to the other two. One ruler: it is impossible to improve upon that – provided he is the best. His judgement will be in keeping

⁵⁷⁹ Herodotus, *History*, London: Penguin Books, III, 80.

with his character; his control of the people will be beyond reproach; his measures against enemies and traitors will be kept secret more easily than under other forms of government. In an oligarchy, the fact that a number of men are competing for distinction in the public service cannot but lead to violent personal feuds; each of them wants to get to the top, and to see his own proposals carried; so they quarrel. Personal quarrels lead to civil wars, and then to bloodshed; and from that state of affairs the only way out is a return to monarchy – a clear proof that monarchy is best. Again, in a democracy, malpractices are bound to occur; in this case, however, corrupt dealings in government services lead not to private feuds, but to close personal associations, the men responsible for them putting their heads together and mutually supporting one another. And so it goes on, until somebody or other comes forward as the people’s champion and breaks up the cliques which are out for their own interests. This wins him the admiration of the mob, and as a result he soon finds himself entrusted with absolute power – all of which is another proof that the best form of government is monarchy. To sum up: where did we get our freedom from, and who gave it us? Is it the result of democracy, or of oligarchy, or of monarchy? We were set free by one man, and therefore I propose that we should preserve that form of government, and, further, that we should refrain from changing ancient ways, which have served as well in the past. To do so would not profit us.”⁵⁸⁰

This to a western ear paradoxical argument that monarchy actually delivers freedom – freedom from civil war, especially, but freedom in other senses, too – actually has strong historical evidence in its favour. Several of the Greek kings were summoned to power by the people in order to deliver them from oppressive aristocratic rule. Darius himself freed the Jews from their captivity in Babylon. Augustus, the first Roman emperor, freed the Romans from civil war. So did St. Constantine, the first Christian Roman emperor, who also granted them religious freedom and the true faith. Riurik, the first Russian king, was summoned from abroad to deliver the Russians from the misery and oppression that their “freedom” had subjected them to. Tsar Nicolas II died trying to save his people from the worst of all despotisms, Communism...

Of course, these men were exceptional: it is easier to find examples of monarchs who enslaved their subjects rather than liberating them. So the problem of finding the *good* monarch – or, at any rate, of finding a monarchical type of government which is good for the people even if the monarch himself is bad – remains. But the argument in favour of monarchy as put into the mouth of an oriental despot by a Greek democratic historian also remains valid in its essential point. It should remind us that Greek historical and philosophical thought was more often critical of democracy than in favour of it.

[3. Democracy and the Peloponnesian War](#)

⁵⁸⁰ Herodotus, *History*, III, 81, 82.

The defeat of Athens in the Peloponnesian war, and the many negative phenomena that the war threw up, led not only to a slackening in the creative impulse that had created Periclean Athens, but also, eventually, to a questioning of the superiority of democracy over other forms of government.

The first and most obvious defect it revealed was that democracy tends to divide rather than unite men – at any rate so long as there are no stronger bonds uniting them than were to be found in Athens. The Greeks had united to defeat Persia early in the fifth century B.C., and this had provided the stimulus for the cultural efflorescence of Periclean Athens. But this was both the first and the last instance of such unity. For the next one hundred and fifty years, until Alexander the Great reimposed despotism on the city-states, the Greek city-states were almost continually at war with each other. Nor was this disunity manifest only *between* city-states: *within* them traitors were also frequent (the Athenian Alcibiades, for example).

Evidently, attachment to democracy does not necessarily go together with attachment to the nation, with patriotism and loyalty. This fact elicited Aristotle's famous distinction between behaviour that is characteristic of democracy and behaviour that is conducive to the survival of democracy. The same dilemma was to confront democracy in its struggle with communism in the twentieth century, when large numbers of citizens of the western democracies were prepared to work secretly (and not so secretly) for the triumph of a foreign power and the most evil despotism yet seen in history.

This element of destructive individualism is described by Roberts: "Greek democracy... cheerfully paid a larger price in destructiveness than would be welcomed today. There was a blatant competitiveness in Greek life apparent from the Homeric poems onwards. Greeks admired men who won and thought men should strive to win. The consequent release of human power was colossal, but also dangerous. The ideal expressed in the much-used word [αρετη] which we inadequately translate as 'virtue' illustrates this. When Greeks used it, they meant that people were able, strong, quick-witted, just as much as just, principled, or virtuous in a modern sense. Homer's hero, Odysseus, frequently behaved like a rogue, but he is brave and clever and he succeeds; he is therefore admirable. To show such quality was good; it did not matter that the social cost might sometimes be high. The Greek was concerned with 'face'; his culture taught him to avoid shame rather than guilt and the fear of shame was never far from the fear of public evidence of guilt. Some of the explanation of the bitterness of faction in Greek politics lies here; it was a price willingly paid."⁵⁸¹

Another defect of Athenian democracy was its tendency to identify the state with the assembly of free male citizens in separation from the family⁵⁸², whereas Aristotle saw the state as an organic outgrowth from the family - the

⁵⁸¹ Roberts, *op. cit.*, p. 157.

⁵⁸² Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Sovereignty: God, State, and Self*, New York: Basic Books, 2008, p. 8.

family writ large. This led to the emphasis on individualism and competitiveness we have already noted, and undermined the relations of hierarchy and obedience within society. Perhaps, therefore, it is not by chance that the first feminist work of literature was Aristophanes' comedy, *Lysistrata*.

Certainly, ancient democracy was not notably humane... The Athenians could be as cruel and imperialistic as any despot. Thus they slaughtered the inhabitants of the little island of Melos simply because they did not want to become part of the Athenian empire.⁵⁸³ All the Melian males of military age were slaughtered, and all the women and children were driven into slavery. Thus in the end the ideal of freedom that had given birth to Athenian Democracy proved weaker than Realpolitik and the concrete examples provided by the Olympian gods and the Dionysian frenzies.

The Melian episode demonstrates that even the most just and democratic of constitutions are powerless to prevent their citizens from descending to the depths of barbarism unless the egoism of human nature itself is overcome, which in turn depends on the truth of the religion that the citizens profess...

And there was another event that famously illustrated this point: the execution of Socrates. According to Socrates' most famous pupil, Plato, democracy had destroyed justice and truth when it executed the finest flower of Greek civilization. Indeed, the words that Plato puts into the mouth of Socrates during his trial make it clear that, for him, the democracy that condemned him was not only unjust but also *impious*, that is, opposed to God and the search for the truth to which he devoted his life: "If you say to me, 'Socrates, we let you go on condition that you no longer spend your life in this search, and that you give up philosophy, but if you are caught at it again you must die' - my reply is: 'Men of Athens, I honour and love you, but I shall obey God rather than men, and while I breathe, and have the strength, I shall never turn from philosophy, nor from warning and admonishing any of you I come across not to disgrace your citizenship of a great city renowned for its wisdom and strength, by giving your thought to reaping the largest possible harvest of wealth and honour and glory, and giving neither thought nor care that you may reach the best in judgement, truth, and the soul...'"⁵⁸⁴

The nobility of Socrates' character, and his determination to put God and the truth above all things, was a clear premonition of the Christianity of the Apostles. It is no wonder that Church writers such as St. Justin the Philosopher saw in him a "seed" of the Word Himself. The tragedy of Socrates' death, combined with the fact of the defeat of democratic Athens at the hands of Sparta in the Peloponnesian war, decisively influenced Plato against democracy and in favour of that ideal state which would place the most just of

⁵⁸³ Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, II, 37; V, 89, 91-97, London: Penguin books.

⁵⁸⁴ Brian Macarthur, *The Penguin Book of Historic Speeches*, London: Penguin, 1995, p. 9. See also Melissa Lane, "Was Socrates a Democrat?" *History Today*, vol. 52 (01), January, 2002, pp. 42-47.

its citizens, not in the place of execution and dishonour, but at the head of the corner of the whole state system.

4. Plato on Democracy

Greek philosophy, according to Clement of Alexandria, “was given to them for a time and in the first instance for the same reason as the Scriptures were given to the Jews. It was for the Greeks the same nurse towards Christ as the law was for the Jews”.⁵⁸⁵

The most famous Greek philosopher was, of course, Plato. Prompted by the failure of the Athenian state in the Peloponnesian War, he undertook the construction of the first systematic theory of the relationship of politics to religion. And his and his pupil Aristotle’s teaching is indeed a nurse, or preparation, for the Christian teaching on the state that we find in the Bible and the Holy Fathers...

According to Plato in *The Republic*, the end of the state is happiness, which is achieved if it produces justice, since justice is the condition of happiness. Democracy was not only not the ideal form of government according to this criterion: it was a long way from the ideal, being the penultimate stage in the degeneration of the state from the ideal to a meritocracy to an oligarchy to a democracy, and finally to a tyranny.

The process of degradation is approximately as follows. A meritocracy – the highest form of government yet found in Greece, and located, if anywhere, in Sparta – tends to be corrupted, not so much by power, as by money (Spartan discipline collapsed when exposed to luxury). This leads to a sharp division between the rich and the poor, as a result of which the poor rise up against the rich and bring in democracy, which is “feeble in every respect, and unable to do either any great good or any great evil.”⁵⁸⁶

For democracy’s great weakness is its lack of discipline: “You are not obliged to be in authority, however competent you may be, or to submit to authority, if you do not like it; you need not fight when your fellow-citizens are at war, nor remain at peace when they do, unless you want peace... A wonderfully pleasant life, surely – for the moment.”⁵⁸⁷ “For the moment” only, because a State founded on such indiscipline is inherently unstable. Indiscipline leads to excess, which in turn leads to the need to reimpose discipline through despotism, the worst of all evils. For Plato, in short, democracy is bad because it is unstable, and paves the way for the worst, which is despotism or tyranny.

Plato compares the democratic state to a ship: “Suppose the following to be the state of affairs on board a ship or ships. The captain is larger and stronger

⁵⁸⁵ Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis*.

⁵⁸⁶ Plato, *The Republic*, London: Penguin books, 1974, 488.

⁵⁸⁷ Plato, *The Republic*, 557.

than any of the crew, but a bit deaf and short-sighted, and similarly limited in seamanship. The crew are all quarrelling with each other about how to navigate the ship, each thinking he ought to be at the helm; they have never learned the art of navigation and cannot say that anyone ever taught it them, or that they spent any time studying it; indeed they say it can't be taught and are ready to murder anyone who says it can [i.e. Socrates, who recommended the study of wisdom]. They spend all their time milling round the captain and doing all they can to get him to give them the helm. If one faction is more successful than another, their rivals may kill them and throw them overboard, lay out the honest captain with drugs or drink or in some other way, take control of the ship, help themselves to what's on board, and turn the voyage into the sort of drunken pleasure-cruise you would expect. Finally, they reserve their admiration for the man who knows how to lend a hand in controlling the captain by force or fraud; they praise his seamanship and navigation and knowledge of the sea and condemn everyone else as useless. They have no idea that the true navigator must study the seasons of the year, the sky, the stars, the winds and all the other subjects appropriate to his profession if he is to be really fit to control a ship; and they think that it's quite impossible to acquire the professional skill needed for such control (whether or not they want it exercised) and that there's no such thing as an art of navigation. With all this going on aboard aren't the sailors on any such ship bound to regard the true navigator as a word-spinner and a star-gazer, of no use to them at all?"⁵⁸⁸

David Held comments on this metaphor, and summarises Plato's views on democracy, as follows: "The 'true navigator' denotes the minority who, equipped with the necessary skill and expertise, has the strongest claim to rule legitimately. For the people... conduct their affairs on impulse, sentiment and prejudice. They have neither the experience nor the knowledge for sound navigation, that is, political judgement. In addition, the only leaders they are capable of admiring are sycophants: 'politicians... are duly honoured.. [if] they profess themselves the people's friends' (*The Republic*, p. 376). All who 'mix with the crowd and want to be popular with it' can be directly 'compared... to the sailors' (p. 283). There can be no proper leadership in a democracy; leaders depend on popular favour and they will, accordingly, act to sustain their own popularity and their own positions. Political leadership is enfeebled by acquiescence to popular demands and by the basing of political strategy on what can be 'sold'. Careful judgements, difficult decisions, uncomfortable options, unpleasant truths will of necessity be generally avoided. Democracy marginalises the wise.

"The claims of liberty and political equality are, furthermore, inconsistent with the maintenance of authority, order and stability. When individuals are free to do as they like and demand equal rights irrespective of their capacities and contributions, the result in the short run will be the creation of an attractively diverse society. However, in the long run the effect is an indulgence of desire and a permissiveness that erodes respect for political and moral

⁵⁸⁸ Plato, *The Republic*, p. 282.

authority. The younger no longer fear and respect their teachers; they constantly challenge their elders and the latter 'ape the young' (*The Republic*, p. 383). In short, 'the minds of citizens become so sensitive that the least vestige of restraint is resented as intolerable, till finally... in their determination to have no master they disregard all laws...' (p. 384). 'Insolence' is called 'good breeding, licence liberty, extravagance generosity, and shamelessness courage' (p. 380). A false 'equality of pleasures' leads 'democratic man' to live from day to day. Accordingly, social cohesion is threatened, political life becomes more and more fragmented and politics becomes riddled with factional disputes. Intensive conflict between sectional interests inevitably follows as each faction presses for its own advantage rather than that of the state as a whole. A comprehensive commitment to the good of the community and social justice becomes impossible.

"This state of affairs inevitably leads to endless intrigue, manoeuvring and political instability: a politics of unbridled desire and ambition. All involved claim to represent the interests of the community, but all in fact represent themselves and a selfish lust for power. Those with resources, whether from wealth or a position of authority, will, Plato thought, inevitably find themselves under attack; and the conflict between rich and poor will become particularly acute. In these circumstances, the disintegration of democracy is, he contended, likely. 'Any extreme is likely to produce a violent reaction... so from an extreme of liberty one is likely to get an extreme of subjection' (*The Republic*, p. 385). In the struggle between factions, leaders are put forward to advance particular causes, and it is relatively easy for these popular leaders to demand 'a personal bodyguard' to preserve themselves against attack. With such assistance the popular champion is a short step from grasping 'the reins of state'. As democracy plunges into dissension and conflict, popular champions can be seen to offer clarity of vision, firm directions and the promise to quell all opposition. It becomes a tempting option to support the tyrant of one's own choice. But, of course, once possessed of state power tyrants have a habit of attending solely to themselves."⁵⁸⁹

Plato's solution was the elevation to leadership of a philosopher-king, who would neither be dominated by personal ambitions, like the conventional tyrant, nor swayed by demagogues and short-term, factional interests, like the Athenian democracy. This king would have to be a philosopher, since he would frame the laws in accordance, not with passion or factional interest, but with the idea of the eternal Good. His "executive branch" would be highly educated and disciplined guardians, who would not make bad mistakes since they would carry out the supremely wise intentions of the king and would be carefully screened from many of the temptations of life.

Plato had the insight to see that society could be held together in justice only by aiming at a goal higher than itself, the contemplation of the Good. He saw, in other words, that the problem of *politics* is soluble only in the *religious*

⁵⁸⁹ David Held, *Models of Democracy*, Oxford: Polity Press, 1987, pp. 29-31

domain. And while he was realistic enough to understand that the majority of men could not be religious in this sense, he hoped that at any rate one man could be trained to reach that level, and, having attained a position of supreme power in the state, spread that religious ideal downwards.⁵⁹⁰ Thus he wrote: "Until philosophers are kings, or the kings and princes of this world have the spirit and power of philosophy, and political greatness and wisdom meet in one, and those commoner natures who pursue either to the exclusion of the other are compelled to stand aside, cities will never have rest from their evils, - no, nor the human race, as I believe, - and then only will this our State have a possibility of life and behold the light of day."⁵⁹¹

This represents a major advance on all previous pagan philosophies. For while all the states of pagan antiquity were religious, they located the object of their worship *within* the political system, deifying the state itself, or, more usually, its ruler. But Plato rejected every form of man-worship, since it inevitably led to despotism. Contrary to what many of his critics who see him as the godfather of totalitarianism imply⁵⁹², he was fully aware of the fact that, as Lord Acton put it much later, "power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely"⁵⁹³. But he was also enough of a "Platonist", as it were, to know that the end of human society must *transcend* human society.

Having said that, one cannot deny that there are elements of utopianism in Plato's system. Thus his approach to statecraft presupposed either that existing kings could be educated in the Good (which Plato tried, but failed to do in Syracuse) or that there was a rational method of detecting the true lovers of wisdom and then promoting them to the height of power.

However, as Bertrand Russell noted, this is easier said than done: "Even if we supposed that there is such a thing as 'wisdom,' is there any form of constitution which will give the government to the wise? It is clear that majorities, like general councils, may err, and in fact have erred. Aristocracies are not always wise; kings are often foolish; Popes, in spite of infallibility, have committed grievous errors. Would anybody advocate entrusting the government to university graduates, or even to doctors of divinity? Or to men who, having been born poor, have made great fortunes?... It might be

⁵⁹⁰ "The true Philosopher-Ruler," writes McClelland, "is a reluctant ruler. His heart is set on the Good, and he accepts the burdens of rulership because the Good can only survive and prosper in a city which is ruled by just men. Rule by guardians is an attempt to universalize justice in so far as that is possible..." (McClelland, *op. cit.*, p. 36).

⁵⁹¹ Plato, *The Republic*, 473.

⁵⁹² See Sir Karl Popper, *The Open Society and its Enemies*, part I, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966.

⁵⁹³ Thus he wrote in *The Laws* (691): "If one ignores the law of proportion and gives too great power to anything, too large a sail to a vessel, too much food to the body, too much authority to the mind, everything is shipwrecked. The excess breaks out in the one case in disease, and in the other in injustice, the child of pride. I mean to say, my dear friends, that no human soul, in its youth and irresponsibility, will be able to sustain the temptation of arbitrary power - there is no one who will not, under such circumstances, become filled with folly, that worst of diseases, and be hated by his nearest and dearest friends."

suggested that men could be given political wisdom by a suitable training. But the question would arise: what is a suitable training? And this would turn out to be a party question. The problem of finding a collection of 'wise' men and leaving the government to them is thus an insoluble one..."⁵⁹⁴

As Metropolitan Anastasy (Gribanovsky) writes: "Society is always more willing to run after the fanatic or decisive opportunist than a great-souled dreamer who cannot convert words into deeds. The philosophers to whom Plato wished to entrust the rule of his ideal state would more likely be very pitiful in this situation and would inexorably lead the ship of state to shipwreck. Political power that is firm, but at the same time enlightened, rational and conscious of its responsibility, must be the object of desire of every country, but such happiness rarely falls to the lot of peoples and states."⁵⁹⁵

To be fair to Plato, he was quite aware of the difficulty of finding a man fit to be philosopher-king. He emphasised training in character as well as intellect, and acknowledged, as we have seen, that such a man, if found and elevated to power, could still be corrupted by his position. What his philosophy lacked was the idea that the Good Itself could come down to the human level and inspire Its chosen one with wisdom and justice.

The problem here was that the scepticism engendered by the all-too-human antics of the Olympian gods revealed its corrosive effect on Plato, as on all subsequent Greek philosophers. Greek religion recognised that the gods could come down to men and inspire them, but the gods who did this, like Dionysius, were hardly the wise, sober and rational beings who alone could inspire wise and sober statecraft. As for the enthusiasms of the Orphic rites, these took place only in a condition that was the exact opposite of sobriety and rationality. So Wisdom could not come from the gods.

But what if there was another divinity higher than these lechers and buffoons, a divinity that would incarnate the eternal ideas of the Good, the True and the Beautiful? Now Plato did indeed come to some such conception of the One God. But this was an impersonal God who did not interfere in the affairs of men. Man may attempt to reach the eternal ideas and God through a rigorous programme of intellectual training and ascetic endeavour. But that Divine Wisdom should Himself bow down the heavens and manifest Himself to men was an idea that had to await the coming of Christianity... So Plato turned to the most successful State known to him, Sparta, and constructed his utopia at least partly in its likeness. Thus society was to be divided into the common people, the soldiers and the guardians. All life, including personal and religious life, was to be subordinated to the needs of the State. In economics there was to be a thoroughgoing communism, with no private property, women and children were to be held in common, marriages arranged on

⁵⁹⁴ Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy*, London: Allen Unwin, 1946, pp. 127-128.

⁵⁹⁵ Gribanovsky, *Besedy s sobstoennym serdtsem* (Conversations with My Own Heart), Jordanville, NY: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1998, p. 40.

eugenic lines with compulsory abortion and infanticide of the unfit. There was to be a rigorous censorship of the literature and the arts, and the equivalent of the modern inquisition and concentration camps. Lying was to be the prerogative of the government, which would invent a religious myth according to which, as J.S. McClelland writes, "all men are children of the same mother who has produced men of gold, silver and bronze corresponding to the three different classes into which Plato divides his ideal community."⁵⁹⁶ This myth would reconcile each class to its place in society.

It is here that the charge that Plato is an intellectual ancestor of the totalitarian philosophies of the twentieth century is seen to have some weight. For truly, in trying to avert the failings of democracy, he veered strongly towards the despotism that he feared above all. Plato's path to heaven - the ideal state of the philosopher-king - was paved with good intentions. Nor was this ideal just a pipedream - he tried to introduce it into Syracuse. But it led just as surely to hell in the form of the despotism that all Greeks despised.

Plato's political ideal was put forward for the sake of "justice" - that is, in his conception, each man doing what he is best fitted to do, for the sake of the common good. But, being based on human reasoning and human efforts alone, it failed, like all such rationalist systems, fully to take into account the reality of *sin*, and therefore became the model for that supremely utopian and unjust system that we see in Soviet and Chinese communism. Moreover, it anticipated communism in its subordination of truth and religion to expediency, and in its approval of the lie for the sake of the survival of the State.

Justice is indeed the ideal of statecraft. But political justice must be understood in a religious context, as the nearest approximation on earth to *Divine Justice*. Thus St. Dionysius the Areopagite writes: "God is named Justice because He satisfies the needs of all things, dispensing due proportion, beauty and order, and defines the bounds of all orders and places each thing under its appropriate laws and orders according to that rule which is most truly just, and because he is the Cause of the independent activity of each. For the Divine Justice orders and assigns limits to all things and keeps all things distinct from and unmixed with one another and give to all beings that which belongs to each according to the dignity of each. And, to speak truly, all who censure the Divine Justice unknowingly confess themselves to be manifestly unjust. For they say that immortality should be in mortal creatures and perfection in the imperfect and self-motivation in the alter-motivated and sameness in the changeable and perfect power in the weak, and that the temporal should be eternal, things which naturally move immutable, temporal pleasures eternal, and to sum up, they assign the properties of one thing to another. They should know, however, that the Divine justice is essentially true Justice in that it gives to all things that which befits the particular dignity of each and preserves the nature of each in its own proper order and power."⁵⁹⁷

⁵⁹⁶ McClelland, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

⁵⁹⁷ St. Dionysius the Areopagite, *On the Divine Names*, VIII.

5. Aristotle on Democracy

Aristotle avoided the extremes of Plato, dismissing his communism on the grounds that it would lead to disputes and inefficiency. He agreed with him that the best constitution would be a monarchy ruled by the wisest of men. But since such men are rare at best, other alternatives had to be considered.

Aristotle divided political systems into three pairs of opposites: the three “good” forms of *monarchy*, *aristocracy* and *politeia*, and the three “bad” forms of *tyranny*, *oligarchy* and *democracy* (or what Polybius was later to call “ochlocracy”, “rule by the mob”).⁵⁹⁸ He appears to have favoured aristocracy, but at the age of forty-two he returned from Athens to his Macedonian homeland to teach King Philip’s thirteen-year-old son, Alexander, who became the most powerful monarch of the ancient world. Observing Macedonian politics may have influenced him to believe that there could be a good kind of monarchy. For King Philip had taken advantage of the perennial disunity of the Greek city-states to assume a *de facto* dominion over them. So monarchy at least had the advantage of creating a certain unity out of chaos...

“Monarchy, as the word implies,” wrote Aristotle, “is the constitution in which one man has authority over all. There are two forms of monarchy: kingship, which is limited by prescribed conditions, and tyranny, which is not limited by anything.”⁵⁹⁹ This distinction is similar to the later Christian distinction between *autocracy* that submits to God and His laws as revealed in the Church and *despotism* that submits to nobody...

Like Plato, Aristotle was highly critical of democracy. He defined it in terms of two basic principles, the first of which was *liberty*. “People constantly make this statement, implying that only in this constitution do men share in liberty; for every democracy, they say, has liberty for its aim. ‘Ruling and being ruled in turn,’ is one element in liberty, and the democratic idea of justice is in fact numerical liberty, not equality based on merit; and when this idea of what is just prevails, the multitude must be sovereign, and whatever the majority decides is final and constitutes justice. For, they say, there must be equality for each of the citizens. The result is that in democracies the poor have more sovereign power than the rich; for they are more numerous, and the decisions of the majority are sovereign. So this is one mark of liberty, one which all democrats make a definitive principle of their constitution.”

The second principle was *licence*, “to live as you like. For this, they say, is a function of being free, since its opposite, living not as you like, is the function of one enslaved.”⁶⁰⁰ The basic problem here, Aristotle argued, following Plato, was that the first principle conflicted with the second. *For licence must be*

⁵⁹⁸ McClelland, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

⁵⁹⁹ Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1366a.

⁶⁰⁰ Aristotle, *Politics*, London: Penguin books, 1981, p. 362.

restrained if liberty is to survive. Once again, history was the teacher: licence had led to Athens' defeat at the hands of the more disciplined Spartans. Not only must restraints be placed upon individual citizens so that they do not restrict each other's liberty. The people as a whole must give up some of its "rights" to a higher authority if the state is to acquire a consistent, rational direction. Not only liberty, but equality, too, must be curtailed – for the greater benefit of all. Aristotle pointed out that "the revolutionary state of mind is largely brought about by one-sided notions of justice – democrats thinking that men who are equally free should be equal in everything, oligarchs thinking that because men are unequal in wealth they should be unequal in everything."⁶⁰¹

What is most valuable in Aristotle's politics is that "in his eyes the end of the State and the end of the individual coincide, not in the sense that the individual should be entirely absorbed in the State but in the sense that the State will prosper when the individual citizens are good, when they attain their own proper ideal. The only real guarantee of the stability and prosperity of the State is the moral goodness and integrity of the citizens, while conversely, unless the State is good, the citizens will not become good."⁶⁰² In this respect Aristotle was faithful to the thought of Plato, who wrote: "Governments vary as the dispositions of men vary. Or do you suppose that political constitutions are made out of rocks or trees, and not out of the dispositions of their citizens which turn the scale and draw everything in their own direction?"⁶⁰³

This attitude was inherited by the Romans, who knew "that good laws make good men and good men make good laws. The good laws which were Rome's internal security, and the good arms which made her neighbours fear her, were the Roman character writ large. The Greeks might be very good at talking about the connection between good character and good government, but the Romans did not have to bother much about talking about it because they were its living proof."⁶⁰⁴

However, the close link that Aristotle postulated to exist between the kinds of government and the character of people led him to some dubious conclusions. Thus politeia existed in Greece, according to him, because the Greeks were a superior breed of men, capable of reason. Barbarians were

⁶⁰¹ Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Press, volume I, part II, p. 97.

⁶⁰² Copleston, *op. cit.*, pp. 98-99.

⁶⁰³ Plato, *The Republic*, 544.

⁶⁰⁴ McClelland, *op. cit.*, p. 84. Again, we find this characteristically Greek connection between good government and good character drawn by the French historian and Prime Minister, François Guizot, who wrote in his *History of France* (1822): "Instead of looking to the system or forms of government in order to understand the state of the people, it is the state of the people that must be examined first in order to know what must have been, what could have been its government... Society, its composition, the manner of life of individuals according to their social position, the relations of the different classes, the condition [*l'état*] of persons especially – that is the first question which demands attention from... the inquirer who seeks to understand how a people are governed." (quoted in Sidentop's introduction to Guizot's *History of Civilization in Europe*, London: Penguin Books, 1997).

inferior – which is why they were ruled by despots. Similarly, women could not take part in democratic government because the directive faculty of reason, while existing in them, was “inoperative”. And slaves also could not participate because they did not have the faculty of reason.⁶⁰⁵

A more fundamental criticism of Aristotle’s politics, voiced by later Christian theorists, was his view that “the state is teleologically autonomous: the polis has no ends outside itself. A polis ought to be self-sufficiently rule-bound for it to need no law except its own.”⁶⁰⁶ For Aristotle it was only in political life that man achieved the fulfilment of his potentialities – the good life was inconceivable outside the Greek city-state. Thus “he who is unable to live in society, or who has no need because he is sufficient for himself, must be either a beast or a god; he is no part of a polis.”⁶⁰⁷

This highlights the fundamental difference between all pagan theorising on politics (with the partial exception of Plato’s) and the Christian attitude. For the pagans the happiness of the state’s citizens understood in a purely secular sense, was the ultimate aim; the state did not exist for any higher purpose. For the Christian, on the other hand, political life is simply a means to an end that is other-worldly and transcends politics completely – salvation in the Kingdom of heaven.

This is not to say, however, that Aristotle’s politics was irreligious in a general sense. As M.V. Zyzykin points out, when Aristotle wrote that “the first duty of the State is concern over the gods”, he recognised that politics cannot be divorced from religion.⁶⁰⁸ Other ancient writers said the same, for example Lactantius in his work *On the Wrath of God*: “Only the fear of God keeps men together in society... With the removal of religion and justice we descend to the level of mute cattle deprived of reason, or to the savagery of wild beasts.” But Greek religion, as we have seen, was a very this-worldly affair, in which the gods were seen as simply particularly powerful players in human affairs. The gods had to be placated, otherwise humans would suffer; but the accent was always on happiness, eudaimonia, in this life. Even Plato, for all his idealism, subordinated religion to the needs of the state and the happiness of people in this life. And Aristotle, for all his philosophical belief in an “unmoved Mover”, was a less other-worldly thinker than Plato.

Classical Greek democracy, though less religious than the earlier, monarchical period of Greek history, was not as irreligious or individualistic as modern democracy, which, as Hugh Bowden writes, “is seen as a secular form of government and is an alternative to religious fundamentalism, taking its authority from the will of the human majority, not the word of god or gods. In Ancient Greece matters were very different... Within the city-state religious

⁶⁰⁵ McClelland, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

⁶⁰⁶ McClelland, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

⁶⁰⁷ Aristotle, *Politics*, I.

⁶⁰⁸ Zyzykin, *Patriarkh Nikon*, Warsaw, 1931, part I, p. 7.

rituals entered into all areas of life... There was no emphasis in the Greek world on the freedom of the individual, if that conflicted with obligations to larger groups... Religion was bound up with the political process. High political offices carried religious as well as civic and military duties. Thus the two kings of Sparta were generals and also priests of Zeus...

“Plato was no supporter of democracy, because he thought it allowed the wrong sort of people to have access to office. However, in the *Laws* he advocates the use of the lot as a means of selecting candidates for some offices, specifically because it is a method that puts the decision in the hands of the gods. Furthermore, where there are issues which Plato considers beyond his powers to legislate for, he suggests that these should be referred to Delphi. For Plato, then, the use of apparently random selection, and the consultation of oracles was a preferable alternative to popular decision-making, because the gods were more to be trusted than the people. This view was not limited to anti-democratic philosophers...

“Greek city-states took oracles seriously, and saw them as the mouthpieces of the gods who supported order and civilisation. Although it was the citizen assemblies that made decisions, they accepted the authority of the gods, and saw the working of the divine hand where we might see the action of chance...”⁶⁰⁹

[6. Alexander, the Stoics and the Demise of Democracy](#)

Classical Greek Democracy, undermined not only by the disunity, instability and licence highlighted by the critiques of Herodotus, Thucydides, Plato and Aristotle, but also by its narrow nationalism and pride in relation to the “barbarian” world, ended up by succumbing to that same barbarian world – first, the “Greek barbarism” of Macedon, and then the iron-clad savagery of Rome. And if the glittering civilization made possible by Classical Greek democracy eventually made captives of its captors culturally speaking, politically and morally speaking it had been decisively defeated. Its demise left civilized mankind dazzled by the brilliance of Greek civilization, but still thirsting for the ideal polity.

When the West turned again to democratic ideas in the early modern period, it was to the Greek classical writers that they turned for inspiration. Thus Marx and Engels turned to Aristotle’s description of democracy when they planned the Paris Commune of 1871⁶¹⁰, while Plato’s ideas about philosopher-kings and guardians, child-rearing, censorship and education found a strong echo in the “people’s democracies” of twentieth-century communism...

⁶⁰⁹ Bowden, “Greek Oracles and Greek Democracy”, *The Historian*, N 41, Spring, 1994, pp. 3,4,7,8.

⁶¹⁰ Held, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

In the intervening period, only two major ideas made a significant contribution to thinking on politics. One was *Christianity*. And the other was *Stoicism*, which extended the notion of *who* was entitled to equality and democracy beyond the narrow circle of free male Greeks to every human being.

Copleston has summarised the Stoic idea as follows: "Every man is naturally a social being, and to live in society is a dictate of reason. But reason is the common essential nature of all men: hence there is but one Law for all men and one Fatherland. The division of mankind into warring States is absurd: the wise man is a citizen, not of this or that particular State, but of the World. From this foundation it follows that all men have a claim to our goodwill, even slaves having their rights and even enemies having a right to our mercy and forgiveness."⁶¹¹

Another important element in Stoicism was *fate*. Stoicism took the idea of fate, and made a virtue of it. Since men cannot control their fate, virtue lies in accepting fate as the expression of the Divine Reason that runs through the whole universe. Moreover, virtue should be practised for its own sake, and not for any benefits it might bring, because fate may thwart our calculations. This attitude led to a more passive, obedient and dutiful approach to politics than had been fashionable in the Classical Greek period.

The political event that elicited this broadening in political thought was the rise of the Hellenistic empire of Alexander the Great. Alexander, writes Paul Johnson, "had created his empire as an ideal: he wanted to fuse the races and he 'ordered all men to regard the world as their country... good men as their kin, bad men as foreigners'. Isocrates argued that 'the designation 'Hellene' is no longer a matter of descent but of attitude'; he thought Greeks by education had better titles to citizenship than 'Greek by birth'."⁶¹²

Alexander's career is full of ironies. Setting out, in his expedition against the Persians, to free the Greek democratic city-states on the Eastern Aegean seaboard from tyranny, and to take final revenge on the Persians for their failed invasion of Greece in the fifth century, Alexander not only replaced Persian despotism with another, hardly less cruel one, but depopulated his homeland of Macedonia and destroyed democracy in its European heartland. Moreover, according to Arrian, "he would not have remained content with any of his conquests, not even if he had added the British Isles to Europe; he would always have reached beyond for something unknown, and if there had been no other competition, he would have competed against himself."⁶¹³

In spreading Greek civilisation throughout the East, Alexander betrayed its greatest ideal, the dignity of man, by making himself into a god (the son of

⁶¹¹ Copleston, *op. cit.*, p. 143.

⁶¹² Johnson, *A History of the Jews*, London, p. 101.

⁶¹³ Arrian, *Anabasis*, 7.1.

Ammon-Zeus)⁶¹⁴ and forcing his own Greek soldiers to perform an eastern-style act of proskynesis to their fellow man.⁶¹⁵ He married the daughter of Darius, proclaimed himself heir to the Persian “King of kings” and caused the satraps of Bithynia, Cappadocia and Armenia to pay homage to him as to a typical eastern despot.⁶¹⁶ Thus Alexander, like the deus ex machina of a Greek tragedy, brought the curtain down on Classical Greek civilisation, merging it with its great rival, the despotic civilisations of the East.

Alexander’s successor-kingdoms of the Ptolemies and Seleucids went still further in an orientalisising direction. Thus Roberts writes: “‘Soter’, as Ptolemy I was called, means ‘Saviour’. The Seleucids allowed themselves to be worshipped, but the Ptolemies outdid them; they took over the divine status and prestige of the Pharaohs (and practice, too, to the extent of marrying their sisters).”⁶¹⁷

Classical Greek civilisation began with the experience of liberation from Persian despotism; it ended with the admission that political liberation without *spiritual* liberation cannot last. It was born in the matrix of a religion whose gods were little more than super-powerful human beings, with all the vices and frailty of fallen humanity; it died as its philosophers sought to free themselves entirely from the bonds of the flesh and enter a heaven of eternal, incorruptible ideas, stoically doing their duty in the world of men but knowing that their true nature lay in the world of ideas. It was born in the conviction that despotism is hubris which is bound to be struck down by fate; it died as the result of its own hubris, swallowed up in the kind of despotism it had itself despised and in opposition to which it had defined itself.

And yet this death only went to demonstrate the truth of the scripture that unless a seed falls into the earth and dies it cannot bring forth good fruit (John 12.24). For, in the new political circumstances of empire, and through the new religious prism, first of Stoicism and then of Christianity, Greek political thought *did* bring forth fruit. As McClelland perceptively argues: “The case for Alexander is that he made certain political ideas possible which had never had a chance within the morally confining walls of the polis classically conceived. Prominent among these is the idea of a multi-racial state. The idea comes down to us not from any self-conscious ‘theory’ but from a story about a mutiny in Alexander’s army at Opis on the Tigris, and it is a story worth the re-telling. Discontent among the Macedonian veterans had come to a head for reasons we do not know, but their grievances were clear enough: non-Macedonians, that is Persians, had been let into the crack cavalry regiment, the Companions of Alexander, had been given commands which involved ordering Macedonians about, and had been granted the (Persian) favour of greeting Alexander ‘with

⁶¹⁴ “Only sex and sleep,” he said, “make me conscious that I am mortal”.

⁶¹⁵ E.E. Rice, *Alexander the Great*, Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 1997, pp. 63-65. At the same time, it must be remembered that Classical Greek religion’s confusion of gods and men implicitly raised the possibility of men becoming godlike.

⁶¹⁶ Roberts, op. cit., p. 173.

⁶¹⁷ Roberts, op. cit., p. 175.

a kiss'. The Macedonians formed up and stated their grievances, whereupon Alexander lost his temper, threatened to pension them off back to Macedonia, and distributed the vacant commands among the Persians. When both sides had simmered down, the soldiers came back to their allegiance, Alexander granted the Macedonians the favour of the kiss, and he promised to forget about the mutiny. But not quite. Alexander ordered up a feast to celebrate the reconciliation, and the religious honours were done by the priests of the Macedonians and the magi of the Persians. Alexander himself prayed for omonoia [unanimity] and concord, and persuaded 10,000 of his Macedonian veterans to marry their Asiatic concubines...

"The plea for omonoia has come to be recognised as a kind of turning point in the history of the way men thought about politics in the Greek world, and, by extension, in the western world in general. The ancient Greeks were racist in theory and practice in something like the modern sense. They divided the world, as Aristotle did, between Greeks and the rest, and their fundamental category of social explanation was race. Race determined at bottom how civilised a life a man was capable of living. The civilised life was, of course, only liveable in a properly organised city-state. Only barbarians could live in a nation (ethnos) or in something as inchoate and meaningless as an empire. The Greeks also seem to have had the modern racist's habit of stereotyping, which simply means going from the general to the particular: barbarians are uncivilised, therefore *this* barbarian is uncivilised. The race question was inevitably tied up with slavery, though it is by no means clear that the ancient Greeks had a 'bad conscience' about slavery, as some have claimed. From time to time, they may have felt badly about enslaving fellow Greeks, and that was probably the reason why thinkers like Aristotle troubled themselves with questions about who was most suitable for slavery and who the least. Low-born barbarians born into slavery were always at the top of the list of good slave material. Most Greeks probably believed that without ever thinking about it much.

"The Macedonians may have lacked the subtlety of the Hellenes, but Alexander was no fool. Whatever the Macedonians may have thought to themselves about the races of the East, Alexander would have been asking for trouble if he had arrogantly proclaimed Macedonian racial superiority over conquered peoples, and it would have caused a snigger or two back in Hellas. What better way for the conqueror of a multi-racial empire to conduct himself than in the name of human brotherhood? Imperialism then becomes a gathering-in of the nations rather than the imposition of one nation's will upon another and this thought follows from the empire-builder's real desire: secretly, he expects to be obeyed for love. This was Alexander's way of showing that he was not a tyrant..."⁶¹⁸

In Alexander's empire, therefore, something like a creative fusion of the despotic and democratic principles took place. It was an empire in form like

⁶¹⁸ McClelland, op. cit., pp. 76-77.

the pagan empires of old, with a god-king possessing in principle unlimited power. But the Greek idea of the godlike possibilities of ordinary men able to direct their own lives in rationality and freedom passed like a new, more humane leaven through the old despotic lump, bringing *rulers* to a more humble estimate of themselves, while exalting the idea that *the ruled* had of themselves.

Conversely, the eastern experience of many nations living in something like equality with each other under one rule - we remember the honour granted to the Jewish Prophet Daniel by the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar, and the Persian King Cyrus' command that the Jews be allowed to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the Temple - expanded the consciousness of the Greeks beyond the narrow horizons of the individual city-state or the one civilization of the Greeks to the universal community of all mankind (or, at any rate, of the *oikoumene*, the civilized world as they knew it), and from the worship of Athene of Athens or Diana of the Ephesians to the One God Who created *all* men, gave them *all* reason and freewill and brought them *all* together under one single dominion. And so, writes McClelland, "polis had given way to cosmopolis. Henceforward, men were going to have to stop asking themselves what it meant to be a citizen of a city, and begin to ask what it meant to be a citizen of the world..."⁶¹⁹

⁶¹⁹ McClelland, *op. cit.*, p. 82. Moreover, as Rolf Strootman writes, the empires of Alexander and his successors were the channel through which the idea of *universal empire* entered the Mediterranean world. "The conception of the whole (civilized) world as a single empire was continually propagated by Middle Eastern monarchies from the third millennium BCE. Undoubtedly it appealed to some common belief. People living in the Achaemenid, Seleucid, or Sasanian Middle East adhered to a certain kind of belief in a legitimate Great King whose existence was in some way connected with the divinely ordained order of the world. The presence of a world ruler at the center of civilization was believed to be an essential condition for peace, order, and prosperity.

"Essentially a religious concept already in pagan times, the ideal of world unity became extremely forceful when imperialism and monotheism joined hands. After Constantine, the Roman *imperator*, Byzantine *basileus*, or Arab *caliph* could claim to be the exclusive earthly representative of a sole universal deity. Thus, what had formerly been a somewhat indefinite distinction between a civilized, ordered world and a chaotic, barbaric periphery now became a clear-cut dualism of believers and unbelievers.

"Universalistic pretensions are a defining aspect of premodern tributary empires from China to the Americas... The significance of the Hellenistic empires lies in their intermediate position, in both time and space, between the ancient Near East and the Roman Mediterranean. The Macedonian rulers of the Hellenistic Age adopted and transformed the age-old traditions of empire of the Ancient Near East to create their own ideologies of empire. Alexander the Great and his principal successors, the Seleucids and Ptolemies, 'Hellenized' Eastern universalistic pretensions; they did so for the sake of their Greek subjects, on whose loyalty and cooperation their power for a large part rested. By converting Near Eastern royal ideology into Greek forms, adding Greek notions of belonging and unity, and actively encouraging current universalistic tendencies among the Greeks - Panhellenism, Stoic philosophy, religious syncretism - what was previously looked upon by the Greeks as oriental despotism became an intrinsic part of Hellenic polis culture. Macedonian imperialism thus shaped the ways in which the Greek and Hellenized poleis of the eastern Mediterranean later conceptualized and formalized their relationships with imperial authority under the Roman Empire. Conversely, the Hellenized variant of an empire characterized by an ideal of universal dominion provided the Roman Empire with an acceptable model for imperial unification in a world characterized

Thus the political odyssey of the Ancient Greek prepared the way, ultimately, for the reception by the whole Mediterranean world of “the King of kings and Lord of lords”, Jesus Christ, in Whom “is neither Greek nor Jew, neither circumcised nor uncircumcised, neither barbarian nor Scythian, neither slave nor freeman, but Christ is all, and in all” (Colossians 3.11).

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by a multitude of city-states.” (“Hellenistic Imperialism and the Ideal of World Unity”, in Claudia Rapp and H.A. Drake (eds.), *The City in the Classical and Post-Classical World Changing Contexts of Power and Identity*. Cambridge University Press, 38-39)

39. SEVEN THESES ON NAMES AND NAME-WORSHIPPING

- I. A person is referred to or is indicated by his name, but is not identical with his name. Peter is not the name "Peter". And God is not the name "God" or "Jesus" or "Wisdom" or anything similar. This is a linguistic fact independent of all theological speculation.
- II. In traditional societies, addresses or petitions were often made "in the name of" or "to the name of" kings or highly-placed individuals as a mark of respect. We find the same convention in Holy Scripture in relation to God, as in "Blessed be the name of the Lord", where it is the Lord Himself Who is being blessed.
- III. A special use of the word "name" is to be found in the Lord's Prayer, in the petition "Hallowed be Thy Name". In this case, as St. Maximus the Confessor explains, the Name of the Father is His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ; we petition the Father that His Son should be glorified and sanctified among men. Here the word "Name" does not simply indicate, but is to be identified with God – the Second Person of the Holy Trinity.
- IV. Another special use of the word "name" is to be found in *On the Divine Names* by St. Dionysius the Areopagite, where Divine Properties or Energies of God, such as Wisdom, Goodness, Justice, etc. are called "Names" of God. Here the word "Name" does not simply indicate, but is to be identified with God – not the Essence of God, nor with any of His Persons, but with His Divine, Uncreated Energies.
- V. The word "Jesus" is a created name like "Peter" and "Paul". It indicates or refers to Jesus Christ, the Word of God and Second Person of the Holy Trinity, but can also indicate or refer to simple human beings, such as Jesus (Joshua), the son of Nun, in the Old Testament, and to several people in more recent times. Therefore it cannot be said to be Jesus, the Son of God. It is neither a Divine Person, nor a Divine Energy, still less the Divine Essence (which cannot be named). It is simply a name used, in the context of the Christian faith, to refer to the Lord Jesus Christ.
- VI. The word "Jesus" has become holy through its association with the source of all holiness, God. Therefore the name of Jesus used with reverence and faith can work miracles and drive out demons; its holiness is the foundation of the Jesus Prayer, which sanctifies the souls and bodies of believers. The Grace of God rests on it and in it, but is not to be identified with it.
- VII. The name of Jesus is a *verbal icon* of Jesus, just as the icon of Christ is a *painted icon* of Jesus. Therefore we venerate it just as we venerate painted icons – but without the worship that is due to God alone. Therefore the worship (*latreia*) that the name-worshippers offer to the name of Jesus is heretical and idolatrous.

November 25 / December 8, 2016.

40. HEROD THE GREAT, FORERUNNER OF THE ANTICHRIST

Every Christmas we read of the murder of the 14,000 Innocents of Bethlehem at the hands of King Herod. And every Holy Week we read how Herod's son, Herod Antipas, the killer of St. John the Baptist, did nothing to save Him (as he could have done), but rather mocked Him and sent Him back to Pontius Pilate. So the name of Herod symbolizes more than any other the anti-Christ, he who opposes Christ and seeks His death. Moreover, as Antonio Pinero writes: "Herod the Great and his son became the New Testament's symbol of corrupt earthly authority precisely because of their vital importance in the geopolitics of the day, and the key role they played in the emergence of Rome as the uncontested power in the eastern Mediterranean."⁶²⁰ Let us see how this took place.

In the first century BC the shadow of Roman power, with which Judas Maccabaeus had maintained friendly relations, and Simon Maccabeus sought an alliance⁶²¹, began to fall across the Middle East, taking the place of the weakened Greek Kings of Syria and Egypt, the Seleucids and Ptolemys. In 64 the Roman general Pompey arrived in Antioch and deposed the last of the Seleucid kings. At this time the two sons of the Jewish King Alexander Jannaeus, Hyrcanus II and Aristobulus II, were fighting each other for the kingship and high priesthood, and they both appealed to Pompey for help. The Pharisees also sent a delegation to him; but they asked him to abolish the monarchy in Judaea, since they said it was contrary to their traditions. In 63 Pompey took the side of Hyrcanus, appointing him ethnarch; he captured Jerusalem and, to the horror of the Jews, entered the Holy of Holies.

Hyrcanus proved to be a weak ruler, and his power was effectively usurped by Antipater, an Idumaeen (Edomite) from the other side of the Jordan, who made himself indispensable to Pompey and Rome. As a reward, he was placed in charge of Judaea, with special responsibility for controlling disturbances and collecting taxes. In 47, after Julius Caesar had killed Pompey in Egypt, Antipater hastened to ingratiate himself with Caesar. As a reward, he was given Roman citizenship and was later appointed the first Roman Procurator of Judaea. Having secured friendship with Rome and peace within Judaea, Antipater appointed his Phasael as governor of Judaea and his other son, Herod, as governor of Galilee.

After the assassination of Julius Caesar in 44, Antipater sided with Cassius in the civil war with Mark Antony. This gave an opportunity to the anti-Roman Pharisees, who were always on the guard against contamination of the faith by Greek paganism and deeply resented Roman domination of the homeland. So in 43, Antipater was poisoned by them, and his son Herod was forced to flee to Rome.

⁶²⁰ Pinero, "Herod the Great", *National Geographic History*, November/December, 2016, p. 42.

⁶²¹ See I Maccabees 8, which contains a largely approbatory portrait of the Roman republic.

Meanwhile, Mark Antony had won his war against Cassius, and in 41 he confirmed Antipater's sons Herod and Phasaël in their positions. Civil war then broke out in Judaea. The nominal Hasmonaean king of the country, Hyrcanus, was overthrown by his nephew Antigonos with the help of the Parthians. Herod promptly fled to Rome. Thus when the Parthians were conquering Jerusalem in 37, Herod was in Rome being fêted by Antony and Octavian. In a triumphant procession they led him to the Capitol. "And there," as A. Paryaeu writes, "amid sacrifices to Jupiter of the Capitol that were impermissible for a Jew, and which caused deep consternation among the Jews, he was formally raised onto the Jewish throne."⁶²² Three years later, after a bloody civil war in which the Jews supported Antigonos, Herod was installed in Jerusalem with the aid of the Roman legions.

Now Herod was not only not of the line of David, but not even a Jew by race. Tom Mueller writes: "His mother was an ethnic Arab [from Nabataea], and his father was an Edomite, and though Herod was raised as a Jew, he lacked the social status of the powerful old families in Jerusalem who were eligible to serve as high priest, as the Hasmonaean kings had traditionally done. Many of his subjects considered Herod an outsider – a 'half Jew', as his early biographer, the Jewish soldier and aristocrat Flavius Josephus later wrote – and continued to fight for a Hasmonaean theocracy."⁶²³

Pious Jews inevitably wondered how the promises made by God to David about the eternity of his dynasty (Psalm 131.11-15) could be fulfilled now that the Davidic line appeared to have died out. Perhaps the time had come for the appearance of the Messiah, whose kingdom would be eternal. After all, the "seventy times seven" prophecy of Daniel (9.24-27) indicated that his coming would be in the first half of the first century AD.⁶²⁴ Moreover, had not the Patriarch Jacob, declared: "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be" (Genesis 49.10)? Now that the sceptre, in the form of the Jewish kingship, appeared to have departed from Judah, was it not time for the appearance of Shiloh, the Messiah?⁶²⁵

⁶²² Paryaeu, "Tsar Irod i ego Soobschiki: Istoria i Sovremennost'" ("King Herod and his Associates: History and Modernity"), *Suzdal'skie Eparkhial'nie Vedomosti* (Suzdal Diocesan News), N 3, January-February, 1998, pp. 31-32.

⁶²³ Mueller, "Herod: The Holy Land's Visionary Builder", *National Geographic Magazine*, December, 2008, p. 41.

⁶²⁴ Bishop Alexander (Mileant) of Argentina ("On the Threshold", *Orthodox America*, vol. XVIII, N 5 (161), January, 2000, p. 12) writes: "Daniel's prophecy so explicitly and synonymously points to Jesus Christ as the promised Messiah, that the Gemaric rabbi forbids his compatriots to calculate the dates of the Daniel septenaries, saying, 'Those who calculate the times will hear their bones rattle' (Sanhedrin 97)."

⁶²⁵ Bishop Alexander recounts a tradition from the Midrash "that when the members of the Sanhedrin learned that they had been deprived of the right to try criminal cases (in AD 30), they put on sackcloth and, tearing their hair, gathered and began to cry out: 'Woe to us, woe to us: it has been a great while since we had a king from Judah, and the promised Messiah is not yet come!' This occurred at the very beginning of Jesus Christ's ministry" (*ibid.*).

Herod tried to remedy the fault of his non-Jewish blood by marrying the Hasmonaean princess Mariamne, the grand-daughter of King Aristobulus and Hyrcanus II on her mother's side. But his Jewish faith was superficial at best, if not completely feigned.

Pinero writes that "Herod carefully cultivated his image as a sophisticate steeped in Greco-Roman culture. If the writers of the New Testament saw him as a tyrant, Herod saw himself as the paragon of refinement. He befriended leading Roman figures, showering them with invitations to his palaces in Jerusalem and Jericho. The succession of gentile nobles, philosophers, historians, poets, and playwrights flowing through the royal court rankled with the Pharisees and the Essenes, the principal Jewish sects concentrated in and around Jerusalem. In some ways, both groups were very different: The Pharisees represented the establishment, holding high religious office in the Temple, while the Essenes were an apocalyptic sect who wanted to see Judaism purified and reformed. Even so, both believed that the king was intentionally corrupting Jewish customs within his court.

"According to the historian Nicholas of Damascus, one of Herod's closest friends, the king neglected affairs of state and the study of Jewish law to spend his time studying philosophy, rhetoric, and the history of Greece and Rome. State affairs were delegated to those officials with a Greek education. When the king did carry out religious acts, his pious critics remained unconvinced. Herod knew that ruling Judaea was impossible without the consent of the influential Pharisees, whom he carefully courted with various concessions. He was able to keep them just about on side, but he would never win their total trust or loyalty.

"According to the historian Josephus, Herod's new cities irked the Jewish priestly class because their pagan monuments were insultingly close to Jerusalem. Built between 22 and 10 BC, Herod named Caesarea Maritima for his patron, Caesar Augustus. It was... the base of the Herodian fleet, which he placed entirely at the disposal of Rome.

"Caesarea's temples were dedicated to the goddess Roma, and to Augustus himself.⁶²⁶ Every five years, Herod organized gladiatorial fights, dedicated to Augustus and his wife Livia, and where foreign dancers almost outnumbered the guests. Magnificent prizes were awarded to the winners, and rumors of wild, orgiastic parties circulated. The Jewish authorities looked on the excess with deep disapproval. They saw gladiatorial fighting as fundamentally immoral, believing that all human life belonged to the Most High.

"If Caesarea - officially the Judaeian capital from 6 BC - could be written off as a city for pagans, the holy city of Jerusalem was also threatened by the

⁶²⁶ He also built a temple to Augustus at Sebaste, which is a Greek translation of "Augustus". (V.M.)

Romanizing instincts of their ruler. Tension focused on the Second Temple there, a building that symbolizes Herod's complex relationship with his faith.

"Begun in 20 BC, Herod's restoration program refaced the structure in white stone, and doubled the courtyard around it. Herod sought to exalt the Jewish faith, yet did so using Hellenic architects. The grandiose court was soon filled with moneylenders – an affront to pious Jews, who, according to Josephus and other Jewish writers of the time, were angered at the corrupt management of the Temple, an anger felt later by one Jesus of Nazareth: 'My house shall be called the house of prayer,' Jesus cries in the Gospel of Matthew, 'but ye have made it a den of thieves'.

"Perhaps the most spectacular religious scandal Herod the Great unleashed was the breaching of King David's tomb in Bethlehem. Rumors had long circulated that the tomb believed to be David's resting place held treasure. Having spent large sums of money on the building of Caesarea, and perhaps seeing himself as the descendant of King David, Herod, it was said, secretly accompanied workmen to rob the tomb. The historian Joseph recounts how, on entering, they found that nothing remained of the riches. According to his account, Herod's two guards were killed by 'a flame that burst out upon those that went in', and Herod fled the scene."⁶²⁷

Nevertheless, Palestine under Herod (Augustus made him procurator of Syria, too) became the most powerful Jewish kingdom since Solomon and the wonder of the East. Under Herod, the Jews, though under Roman dominion, reached the peak of their influence in the ancient world. Johnson writes: "The number of Jews, both born and converts, expanded everywhere, so that, according to one medieval tradition, there were at the time of the Claudian recensus in 48 AD some 6,944,000 Jews within the confines of the empire, plus what Josephus calls the 'myriads and myriads' in Babylonia and elsewhere beyond it. One calculation is that during the Herodian period there were about eight million Jews in the world, of whom 2,350,000 to 2,500,000 lived in Palestine, the Jews thus constituting about 10 per cent of the Roman empire."⁶²⁸

But of course the essence of the kingdom was quite different from that of David and Solomon. Apart from the fact that the real earthly ruler was Rome, and that outside Jerusalem itself Herod showed himself to be a thorough-going pagan (for example, he rebuilt the temple of Apollo in Rhodes), the whole direction of the usurper Herod's rule was to destroy the last remnants of the Jewish Church and monarchy. Thus he killed most of the Sanhedrin and all of the legitimate royal line of the Hasmonaeans, not excluding his own wife Mariamne and their sons Alexander and Aristobulus.

Metropolitan Moses of Toronto writes: "Without Roman rule, Herod would not have [had] a place in the Jewish kingdom. At a time when it seemed his

⁶²⁷ Pinero, *op. cit.*, pp. 44-46.

⁶²⁸ Johnson, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

rule was threatened he killed his father-in-law Hyrcanus. Later he arranged that his brother-in-law Aristobulus be made High Priest. Aristobulus was from the Hasmonean dynasty and a legitimate choice for high priest. For this reason he was extremely popular with the Jews and fearing his popularity, the tyrant Herod had him drowned in an 'accident.' From this point on, the high priests were not of the legitimate lineage and were put in place by the tyrant Herod, i.e., not according to the proper order.

"Shapiro, a modern Rabbi comments, 'As a result of Herod's interference and the ever-spreading Hellenistic influences among the Jewish upper classes, the Temple hierarchy became very corrupt. The Sadducees, a religious group of the wealthy, who collaborated with the Romans in order to keep their power base, now controlled the Temple, much to the chagrin of the mainstream Jewish majority, the Pharisees, and of the extreme religious minority, the Zealots.'

"This was the state of things 'in the fullness of time' when our Creator fulfilled His promises. These events were prophesied to take place when 'a ruler failed from the house and lineage of Judah.'"⁶²⁹

"The last years of the life of Herod," writes Paryaev, "were simply nightmarish. Feeling that his subjects profoundly hated him, haunted at night by visions of his slaughtered wife, sons and all the Hasmoneans, and conscious that his life, in spite of all its external successes and superficial splendour, was just a series of horrors, Herod finally lost his mental stability and was seized by some kind of furious madness."⁶³⁰

The final, most notorious product of his madness was his attempt to kill the Lord Jesus Christ and his slaughter of the 14,000 innocents of Bethlehem (it was his son, Herod Antipas, who killed John the Baptist).

Perhaps the clearest sign of the degeneration of the Jews under Herod was the behaviour of the Pharisees. It was they that had led the movement against Hellenizing influences in the first century BC, and were zealots of the purity of the law. But just as the Maccabee movement for renewal of the true faith degenerated into its opposite, so did that of the Pharisees. They even once sent a delegation to Rome asking for the establishment of a *republic* in Judaea under the sovereignty of Rome – a clear betrayal of the Israeli autocratic tradition.⁶³¹ Moreover, they supported Herod, and, like him, persecuted Christ, the True King of the Jews, leading to God's abandonment of the Jewish people.

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⁶²⁹ Metropolitan Moses, *Sermon on the Feast of the Entry of the Theotokos into the Temple*, 2013.

⁶³⁰ Paryaev, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

⁶³¹ Paryaev, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

Herod was, in fact, the closest type of the Antichrist in Old Testament history, closer than Pharaoh or Ahab or Nebuchadnezzar. Let us draw some comparisons...

Christ said to the Jews, referring to the Antichrist: "I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive" (John 5.43). In other words, Christ did not openly declare Himself to be the Christ, the Messiah that the Jews were waiting for, although that was, of course, the pure truth, but ascribed all glory and honour to His Father. The Antichrist, on the other hand, will lyingly declare himself to be the Christ, ascribing all glory to himself alone.⁶³²

Now Herod did not proclaim himself to be the Messiah, the Son of David – one of the few crimes he was not guilty of. But as we have seen, he usurped the throne of David, raided his tomb and rebuilt the Temple of Solomon, thereby claiming (falsely) his descent from them. Moreover, seeing that he had no problem in ascribing divine honours to a mere mortal, Augustus, we can be little doubt that if he had had Augustus' universal power, he would have attempted some such act of self-deification. In this way Herod prefigured the Antichrist; for just as Christ God entered the Second Temple, which Herod had rebuilt, so the Antichrist will enter the Third Temple, "so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God" (II Thessalonians 2.4). In other ways, too, Herod was a true type of the Antichrist. Thus just as the Antichrist will persecute the last generations of Christians who refuse to worship him as God, so did Herod persecute the first generations of Christians, making the Innocents of Bethlehem into the first Christian martyrs. Moreover, just as Christ was forced to flee into Egypt from Herod's persecution for three and a half years, so the Antichrist will reign as a persecutor of Christians for three and a half years, forcing them to flee into the wilderness...

But perhaps the most significant parallel between Herod and the Antichrist for our age is the now-typical combination of an outer mask of true piety with "the abomination of desolation" inside. Probably the Antichrist will be more successful in hiding his hypocrisy even than our generation of Orthodox leaders is; and he will certainly be more successful than Herod was. But in his cunning he will earn the name of "fox" that Christ gave to Herod Antipas – while displaying all the ferocious cruelty of the beast of the Apocalypse...

*December 1/14, 2016.
St. Philaret of New York.*

⁶³² See the interpretations on this passage of St. John of Damascus and Blessed Theophylact.

41. TWO KINDS OF HOPE

This year, 2016/17, the feast of the Holy Ancestors of Christ, the Sunday before Nativity, coincides with New Year's Day in the West. This coincidence gives food for thought about a quality that both feasts, both the holy and the secular, express. That quality is *hope*, the second of the holy trinity of virtues, faith, hope and love, and the one that is spoken and written about least.

Just as there is true faith and false faith, and true love and false love, so there is true hope and false hope. True hope is based on reality: false hope *defies* reality. The hope of the Ancestors of Christ was based on the promise of the Messiah, the Redeemer of the world. Being based on reality, on the promises of the Truth Himself, it was duly fulfilled in the birth of the Redeemer on Christmas Day, which brings ineffable joy not only to the Ancestors of Christ, but also to all those that believe in Him and honour them. The first of those ancestors, who comes at the head of the genealogy in today's Gospel from Matthew, is Abraham, of whom the Lord said: "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My Day, and he saw it and was glad" (John 8.56). That is, he was filled with hope; and since that hope was true, and was based on the reality of God's promise, he rejoiced with a true and boundless joy even before it was fulfilled.

The hope of the New Year revellers, however, is a vain hope, being based on a lie. That lie is the idea that this, new year will be better than the old one, that it will bring joy where the last year brought woe. Is there any reason to believe that? None at all. We don't have to have the gift of prophecy to see that the world is hurtling down a path that leads to unprecedented global disaster, and that none of the wise men of this world have any idea how to avert it.

But let us suppose that my doomsaying is wrong, and that 2017 turns out to be fractionally better in some respects than 2016. Is that really a cause for joy? Is that really the fulfillment of hope?

In no way, because every new year, every new day, brings us closer to the old enemy that is ever new – death. As that grim realist, Macbeth, said:

*Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day
To the last syllable of recorded time,
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death.*

So what is the use of celebrating another tomorrow, which may or may not bring some minor alleviation in our present woe, but only brings us closer to dusty death?

Our civilization is characterized by its faith in "dusty death". Our wise men believe that we all came out of a tiny mass of superheated dust some 14 billion years ago, and that we are all destined to return to that dust – which by that

time will have cooled down to some infinitesimally low temperature. For them, there is no God, no immortal soul, no hope, only dust – which came, God only knows where from.

But it is contrary to human nature that is formed in God's image to live without hope. And so modern man supplements his hopeless faith in dust and death by living it up for one fleeting moment in the year. Midnight strikes, the corks pop and the champagne fizzes. "Eat, drink and merry, for tomorrow we die!" Let us hope against hope! Our faith tells us that there is no hope. But let us hope nevertheless, for without hope we will die!

It is strange that midnight should be the hour of rejoicing. It is at midnight that the thief comes, catching the foolish sleeping in their beds. "The Bridegroom comes in the middle of the night..." But today's revelers have lost all lost all knowledge of Christian symbolism, and all fear of the reality behind the symbols. Just as their vain hope contradicts their false faith, so they choose to cast off all inhibitions at just the moment when the Church tells us to watch and pray...

There is a Christian couple whose feast we celebrate today – the Holy Martyr Boniface and Righteous Aglais of Rome. She was rich (he was one of her slaves), and they lived in sin. But they also believed in Christ, and one day Aglais ordered Boniface to go to the East, where Christians were being martyred for the faith, and buy some bodies of the martyrs and bring them back to Rome for her to venerate. As Boniface was preparing to set out on his journey, he said to his mistress: "My lady, what if I cannot find a martyr such as you desire? What if my companies return to you my body after it has been tortured for Christ?" He was speaking in jest, but God listened to his words with seriousness and decided to bring them to pass. Boniface went to the East, was tortured and martyred for the faith, and his body was brought back to his mistress as holy relics. She built a chapel over his body and reformed her life. "Her remains," writes St. Demetrius of Rostov, "were laid to rest beside those of the holy martyr Boniface, and thus the saints were united forever. Having undergone a wondrous transformation of life, they were both granted a blessed repose: the sins of one were washed away with his blood; the other was cleansed of defilement by her tears and asceticism."⁶³³

It is surely no coincidence that the Church chants hymns to these saints on the very day that countless revelers are returning from their New Year celebrations, having defiled their souls and bodies with drunkenness and lust. There is hope even for the hopeless, the believers in dust. And even those who party when midnight strikes can return to God before the Midnight of the whole world descends, through the prayers of Saints Boniface and Aglais!

But for that they must cast off their false faith and hope and acquire the true faith and hope of the Ancestors of Christ. Many hundreds of years before the

⁶³³ St. Demetrius, *The Great Collection of the Lives of the Saints*, volume IV: December, p. 363.

Coming of Christ Abraham believed in Him, hoped in Him and rejoiced in spirit. There was nothing around him to confirm that hope; the whole world was sunk in paganism; he had only the word of God to sustain him. Nor did any of the later Ancestors of Christ have anything outside them to fill them with hope. As the great day prophesied by the Prophets of God drew closer, the world grew still more frenzied in debauchery and faithlessness. Even the people of Israel, God's chosen people, were losing faith in their calling and hope in their coming Messiah. Only a tiny remnant of true believers was left. But the night is darkest just before the dawn. And it was at that point that the Sun of righteousness, the Dayspring from on high, arose in the heart of the humble Virgin, the daughter of Abraham, the father of the faithful.

We are in a not dissimilar situation today. As they waited for the First Coming of Christ, so we wait for the Second while the flock of the True People of God grows ever smaller. And around us, too, is a thick darkness of unbelief and hopelessness. But there is a major difference between us and the Old Testament righteous. While they had only the word of God to sustain them, we have both the word of God and the sight of their immense patience, their endurance to the end – not to mention two thousand years of Christian sanctity.

So let us honour all the Ancestors of Christ who created that life-giving chain that linked mankind spiritually and bodily to the Incarnate God, who refused to lose faith and hope in Him when all those around them were in the darkness of false faith and hope. Although we live in a similar age of hopelessness, their podvig is far greater than ours, for we have seen the fulfillment of their hope. For we have seen that *Christ is born*, and together with them we cry out: "Glorify Him!"

*December 19 / January 1 2016/17.
Holy Martyr Boniface and Righteous Aglais.*

42. TIME AND THE QUESTION OF GRACE

At some time in the 1980s a high-ranking member of the Russian Church Abroad was asked: "Does the Moscow Patriarchate have the grace of sacraments?" The reply was: "In the beginning – no. But God so loves the Russian people that in time, gradually, grace returned to it."

This reply reflects the mind-set of many Russian True Orthodox today, whether they consciously formulate the matter in this way or not. The consensus of the Holy Martyrs of Russia is sacred to our Church, so nobody dares to gainsay that consensus – which was that the Moscow Patriarchate has no grace. Nevertheless, many in fact still think that the MP *has* grace – and are prepared to break communion with the Russian True Orthodox Church on the basis, not only that the Holy New Martyrs were wrong, but also that the several recent conciliar decisions from the time of St. Philaret of New York onwards (in 1983, 1998, 2001, 2008 and 2016) which confirmed the judgement of the New Martyrs were also wrong.

However, there is another way that the rebels can justify themselves while supposedly remaining loyal to the confession of faith of the Martyrs. They could say, imitating the ROCOR member quoted above: "The New Martyrs were right – in their time the Moscow Patriarchate had no grace. But God so loves the Russian people that in time, gradually, grace returned to it, and so we are now right in affirming that there *are* true sacraments in the Moscow Patriarchate."

Several questions arise in relation to this "confession". First, how can grace return to a church *gradually*? Is it not the case that at any given moment in any given church, the Holy Spirit descends on the bread and wine during the liturgy and transforms them into the Body and Blood of Christ – or He does not descend at all?

Secondly, why should the Russian people be so privileged and so holy that their false church, which bowed down to the Antichrist, can become true *just like that* – without repentance, without seeking union with the True Church, without any change for the better in this period, but with clear signs of having become *much worse*? St. John of Kronstadt certainly did not think this. Moreover, in 1905 he declared that it was *perfectly possible for the whole of the Russian Church to fall away*, following the example of ancient Local Churches like the Carthaginian.

Thirdly, if this gradual change has taken place, why does not the MP acknowledge the fact? After all, if it is the True Church, it must have the grace of discerning where the Church is and is not, in time as well as space. Why, instead, does it consider that the MP throughout its history since Metropolitan Sergius has been the True Church, while the Catacomb Church and ROCOR have been schismatic and graceless?

It is obvious that this theory – that a church can fall away from grace and truth, and then gradually, without offering repentance or anything of the sort, return to God – is false...

Is time in any way relevant to our judgements concerning the MP? Yes, in one very important respect. *As the false church falls deeper and deeper into heresy and apostasy (since 1961, for example, the MP has fallen into ecumenism as well as sergianism), and more and more saints who confess its falsehood are gathered into the Heavenly Granary, and more and more conciliar decisions of the True Church confirming its falsehood and gracelessness are made, there is less and less excuse for rejecting the judgement of the True Church and disobeying her decrees.*

There are some people who say that it was excusable to think that the MP has grace until its participation in the 1983 Vancouver General Assembly of the World Council of Churches, which resulted in ROCOR's conciliar anathematization of the heresy of ecumenism, which struck both the MP and all the ecumenist "Orthodox". Well, let us suppose that this is so. Surely the corollary of this argument is that *after 1983 there is no such excuse...*

And since there is no excuse for holding this false belief – which is in fact a kind of ecumenism – God has shown his wrath against those who hold it in a frightening way – *by driving them out of the Church.* The first "chistka" (purge) came in 2000-2007, when two-thirds of ROCOR's flock outside Russia announced their intention to join the MP, led by the KGB Agent "Patriarch" Alexis of Moscow, and then formally joined it. Then, last year, a group of clergy of the Omsk-Siberian diocese of RTOC broke communion with their lawful hierarch, Archbishop Tikhon of Omsk and Siberia, for publicly upholding the saving truth that the MP is outside the Church.

Let us note another change that has taken place over time. Those who believe that the MP has grace no longer hide their false belief, but make a great show of it, and virtually accuse those who hold to the faith of the Holy New Martyrs of heresy. They proclaim that they supposedly experienced grace when they were in the MP, and expect us to place this experience of theirs higher than the judgement of the Holy New Martyrs and St. Philaret! Why, then, did they leave that supposedly grace-filled MP and join the True Church?! And now they want to leave the truly grace-filled haven of the True Church and go – where?

A famous man once said that when the facts change, he changes his judgements – but not otherwise. The fundamental facts about the MP have not changed; nor has the judgement of the True Church. Therefore let us remain faithful to her to the end, remembering the words of St. Athanasius the Great: "We walk in step, not with the times, but with God".

December 24 / January 6, 2016.