

ESSAYS ON TRUE ORTHODOX CHRISTIANITY

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1. THE ORIGINS OF TRUE STATEHOOD

The earliest period of man's history saw three terrible moral falls with global consequences: that of Adam and Eve, that of Cain and his descendants, and that of Nimrod and the tower-builders. Each crime was followed by a fitting and catastrophic punishment: that of Adam by the death of him and all his descendants, that of Cain and his descendants by the universal Flood, and that of Nimrod by the scattering of the tower-builders around the world. And yet a tiny but holy remnant was preserved in each case: that of Seth and his descendants, that of Noah and his descendants, and that of Abraham and his descendants...

1. Abraham.

The deification of the ruler of the City of Man in the person of Nimrod, and the building of the tower of Babel at his command, was, of course, a direct challenge to the truly Divine Ruler of the City of God. "However," writes Archpriest Lev Lebedev, "not all of humanity agreed to take part in the building of the tower. Our Russian *Tale of Burning Years* (The Chronicle of Nestor), relying on the chronicle of George Armatoll, says that righteous Heber ('from him came the Hebrews') refused to take part in the undertaking. And the Armenian and some other chronicles add that certain Japhethites also refused, because of which a war took place between them and Nimrod."¹

It is from this tiny remnant, descendants of Shem and Japheth, that a new beginning was made according to a new principle that was racial as well as religious - although, as we shall see, this racial principle admitted of many exceptions and was always intended to be only a preparation for the readmittance of all nations into the Church. This new beginning was made with Abraham, a descendant of Noah's first son Shem and Shem's great-grandson Eber, from which we derive the word 'Hebrew'. Abraham was therefore the father of the Hebrews. And yet he was not the father of the Hebrews only, even in a purely genetic sense. His first son Ishmael is traditionally considered to be the father of the Arabs. And his grandson through Isaac, Esau, was the father of the Edomites. In the Apostle Paul's allegorical interpretation, Isaac represents the Church, and Ishmael - the unbelieving Jews enslaved to the Law (Galatians 3.16).

God commanded Abraham to depart from Babylonia and go to an unknown country, where he would live "in tents, while he looked forward to a city founded, designed and built by God" (Hebrews 11.10). For the worshippers of God, who wish to be at peace with heaven, cannot co-exist in peace with the worshippers of man, who seek to "quarrel with heaven"; better to be stateless than citizens of such a state. They must build their own state that is not founded on the worship of man, but of God. Abraham did not build that state - that was

¹ Lebedev, "The Universal Babylon", *Pravoslavnaia Zhizn'*, 53, N 5 (640), May, 2003, p. 16.

the work of Moses and David. But he did build the nation, and receive the faith, that animated that state, the kingdom of Israel.

Abraham's story, recounted in chapters 12 to 22 of Genesis, is that of a man who obeys no man or state or institution; his only king was God. Like every true son of God, he was free of men, and obeyed them "only lest we offend them" (Matthew 17.27). So truly independent was he that we read of no priest or king to whom he deferred.

The only exception to this was Melchizedek, the mysterious king-priest of Shalem, who blessed him on his return from the slaughter of the Babylonian kings. However, Melchizedek was the exception that proved the rule; for he was more like God than man, being both the first and the last man in the history of the People of God lawfully to combine the roles of king and priest². Indeed, he was the first recorded true king and "priest of the Most High God", who was called "Possessor of heaven and earth" (Genesis 14.18). This title shows, according to St. Paul (Hebrews 7.3), that he was the type, not of any merely human king, but of Christ God, the Supreme King and Chief High Priest.³ Like Christ in His Divine generation, he was "without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remaining a priest continually" (Hebrews 7.3). Again like Christ at the Last Supper, Melchizedek offers Abraham bread and wine, which is why Christ is called "a priest after the order of Melchizedek" (Hebrews 7.17). His offering is a figure of Christ's offering of His Body and Blood under the appearance of bread and wine.⁴ So in being blessed by Melchizedek, the "king of peace" Abraham is blessed by Christ Himself, the true King of Peace.

The proverbial faith of Abraham, which merited for him the title "father of the faithful", was manifested, first, in his leaving Ur and setting out unquestioningly for the Promised Land. Nor was this simply a physical departure from the land of his fathers: it also involved breaking with their pagan beliefs. Even his father "served other gods" (Joshua 24.2).

Secondly, it was manifested in his believing God's promise that he would be a father of nations, in spite of the fact that he was very old and his wife was barren.

² Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow, *Zapiski rukovodstvuiuschaia k osnovatel'nomu razumeniu Knigi Bytia* (Notes Leading to a Fundamental Understanding of the Book of Genesis), Moscow, 1817, p. 78. Exceptions may be found in the history of the tiny kingdom of Montenegro in the Ottoman period.

³ Melchisedek's combining the roles of king and priest may also signify the Divine origin of both offices. See Protopriest Valentine Asmus, "O monarchii i nashem k nej otnoshenii" ("On Monarchy and our Relationship to It"), *Radonezh*, N 2 (46), January, 1997, p. 4.

⁴ In fact, Mar Jacob considered it to be no figure of the Eucharist but the Eucharist itself: "None, before the Cross, entered this order of spiritual ministration, except this man alone. Beholding the just Abraham worthy of communion with him, he separated part of his oblation and took it out to him to mingle him therewith. He bore forward bread and wine, but Body and Blood went forth, to make the Father of the nations a partaker of the Lord's Mysteries." ("A Homily on Melchizedek", *The True Vine*, Summer, 1989, no. 2, p. 44)

And thirdly and most strikingly, it was manifested in his continuing to believe in this promise even after God ordered him to kill Isaac.

Metropolitan Philaret writes: "The journey of Abram from the land of his birth to the promised land is an image of the journey of *self-abnegation*, by which man must pass from the condition of damaged nature to the condition of Grace.

"Every believer has the same commandment from God as the father of the faithful - to leave all and renounce himself. 'He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me,' says the Lord (Matthew 10.37).

"Every believer is also promised 'the blessing of Abraham in Jesus Christ' (Galatians 3.14). 'There is no one who would leave home, or brothers, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for My sake and the Gospel's, who would not receive now, in this time and with persecutions, one hundred times more houses and brothers and sisters (and fathers) and mothers and children, and in the age to come eternal life' (Mark 10.29,30).

"The believer who leaves his own will does God's with the same unlimited obedience with which Abram 'went, as the Lord told him'. God speaks to us in nature, in the Holy Scriptures, in the conscience, in the adventures of life ruled by His Providence. 'To go, as the Lord tells' is the rule in which is included the whole path of those seeking the coming heavenly city.

"Like Abram, the believer comes closer to God to the extent that he leaves himself behind; and like Abram, he thanks Him for His gifts of Grace. He will receive them only so as to return them to their origin with faithfulness: and wherever and whenever he receives them, he offers them as a sacrifice to God."⁵

Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac is cited by the Apostle James as the paragon "work of faith", whereby "faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made manifest" (James 2.22). Moreover, it is the clearest Old Testament prefiguring of the central act of the New, in which "God so loved the world that He gave His Only-Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3.16). And it merited for Abraham the first clear foreshadowing of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity - the visitation of the three angels speaking as one God at the oak of Mamre (Genesis 18).

St. Gregory Palamas takes Abraham's heroic work of faith as his main illustration of the difference between philosophical or scientific knowledge and the super-rational knowledge of faith: "I believe that our holy faith is, in a certain manner, a vision of our heart which goes beyond all sensation and all thought, for it transcends the mental powers of our soul. I mean by 'faith', not the Orthodox confession, but being unshakably established upon it and upon the promises of God. For how through faith do we see those things which are promised for that

⁵ St. Philaret, *Zapiski*.

unending age which is to come? By the senses? But faith is 'the basis of things hoped for' (Hebrews 11.1); and there is no way in which that which is to come and is hoped for may be seen by the senses; which is why the Apostle added: 'the proof of things not seen'. Is there, then, some mental power which will see the things hoped for? But how could there be if they 'have not gone up into the heart of man' (I Corinthians 2.9)? What, then? Do we not see through faith the things that have been promised by God, since they transcend all sensual and mental activity? But all those who from the beginning of time sought the heavenly fatherland through works died, according to the Apostle, 'without having obtained the promises' (Hebrews 11.39), but saw and greeted them from afar. There is, then, both a vision and an understanding of the heart beyond all mental activity... Faith is this supra-mental vision, while the enjoyment of that which is believed in is a vision surpassing that vision...

"But let us dwell a little longer on faith and on the Divine and joyous contemplation which it procures for Christians: faith, the vehicle of the power of the Gospel, the life of the Apostles, the justification of Abraham, from which all righteousness begins, in which it ends, and by which 'every righteous man shall live' (Romans 1.7), while he who withdraws from it falls away from the Divine goodwill, for 'without faith it is impossible to please God' (Hebrews 11.6); faith, which ever frees our race from every deception and establishes us in the truth and the truth in us, from which no-one will separate us, even if he takes us for madmen, we who through the true faith have gone out into an ecstasy beyond reasoning, witnessing both by word and deed that we are not 'being carried away by every wind of doctrine' (Ephesians 4.14), but possess that unique knowledge of the truth of the Christians and profess the most simple, most Divine and truly unerring contemplation. Let us then leave the future for the time being, let us consider the supra-mental contemplation which faith gives of those things which have happened from the beginning: 'It is by faith that we recognize that the ages were formed by the word of God, so that those things which are seen did not come to be from those which appear' (Hebrews 11.3). What mind could take in that all this which has come to be has come from that which is absolutely non-existent, and that by a word alone? For that which is accessible to the mental powers does not at all transcend them. Thus the wise men of the Greeks, understanding that no corruptible thing passes into non-existence, and no existent thing comes out of non-existence, believed that the world was without beginning or end. But the faith, surpassing the conceptions which come from a contemplation of created things, united us to the Word Who is above all and to the simple, unfabricated truth; and we have understood better than by a proof that all things were created, not only out of non-existence, but also by the word of God alone. What is this faith? Is it a natural or supernatural power? Supernatural, certainly. For 'no-one can come unto the Father except through the Son' (Matthew 11.27; John 10.9), Who has placed us above ourselves and turned us to unity with the Father Who gathers us together. Thus Paul 'received grace for obedience to the Faith' (Romans 1.5). Thus 'if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved' (Romans 10.9). Thus those who have not seen and believed are more blessed than those who have seen and believed in Him Who lives after death and is the Leader of eternal life (John 20.29; Acts 3.15).

For through the supercosmic eyes of faith they have seen and venerated those things which the eye has not believed it can see and which reason cannot conceive.

"This is the victory which has conquered the world, even our faith' (I John 5.4). Paradoxical though it may be to say so, this faith is that which, in different ways and at different times, re-established the world which had previously fallen. Then it transformed it into a more Divine state, placing it above the heavens, and making a heaven out of the earth. What preserved the seeds of the second world? Was it not the faith of Noah? What made Abram Abraham and the father of many nations, like the sand and the stars in number? Was it not faith in the promises which at that time were incomprehensible? For he held his only-begotten heir ready for slaughter and, O wonder!, never ceased to believe that through him he would have many children. What, then? Did not the old man appear to be a fool to those who see things by reason? But the final issue showed, through the grace of God, that his faith was not folly but a knowledge surpassing all reasoning."⁶

Thus the new beginning for the Church which God created in Abraham He created in the faith of Abraham, which is the faith in Christ. That Abraham's faith was precisely faith in *Christ* was witnessed by the Lord Himself when He said: "Abraham rejoiced to see My Day: he saw it, and was glad" (John 8.56). Indeed, Abraham's whole life is a model of the Christian life of faith demonstrated by works performed for God's sake. Purified and strengthened through a series of trials, in each of which he is called to obey God by performing a work of faith, in Abraham we see "faith working together with his works, and by works faith being made perfect" (James 2.22). These works of faith include: *exile from his native land* (Chaldea), *separation from his relatives* (Lot), *struggle against the enemies of the faith* (the four kings headed by the king of Babylon), *struggle against his fallen desires* (Pharaoh, Hagar), *reception of the sacraments* (circumcision as a figure of baptism, and bread and wine as a figure of the Eucharist), *charity* (rescuing his brother Lot and his household, the hospitality given to the Angels at the Oak of Mamre) and, finally, *the complete sacrifice of the heart to God* (the sacrifice of Isaac). The supreme demonstration of Abraham's faith was his belief that "God was able to raise [Isaac] from the dead" (Hebrews 11.19), which was a type of the Resurrection of Christ.

Since the foundation of the Church is the faith of Abraham, for Isaac Her God is "the God of Abraham", while for Jacob He was "the God of Abraham and Isaac", and for all succeeding generations He is "the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob", or, more simply, "the God of our fathers". Thus our faith is a historical faith; we distinguish it from other faiths as being the faith of our fathers, and our God is distinguished from other gods as being the God of our fathers, and in particular the God of our father Abraham. And that is why we preserve the faith of our fathers in all its details; for as the Scripture says: "Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set" (Proverbs 22.28).

As we have seen, Abraham believed in God's promise that from his seed would come *the Seed*, in Whom all the nations of the world would be blessed

⁶ St. Gregory, *Triads*.

(Genesis 12.3). St. Paul explains that this Seed is Christ the Messiah and Saviour of the world, Jesus Christ (Galatians 3.16). In other words, as St. Theophan the Recluse writes, "the blessing given to him for his faith would be spread to all peoples, but not because of Abraham himself or all of his descendants, but because of One of his descendants - *his Seed*, Who is Christ; through Him all the tribes of the earth would receive the blessing."⁷ Thus while Abraham is the father of the Jewish race, the chosen people of the Old Testament, the new beginning that God made in Abraham related not only to the Jews but to all peoples of all ages. In fact, the nation which Abraham founded was not defined genetically, but by faith; it was a nation of believers, of those who believe in Christ; for, as St. Paul says, "they which are of the faith, they are the children of Abraham" (Galatians 3.7) - which faith the majority of the Jews of Christ's time did not share (John 8.33-58).

God's promises to Abraham and his descendants, known as *the Abrahamic Covenant*, prefigure the whole future history of the relationship between the City of God and the City of Man. They are so important that they are proclaimed in at least eight different versions, or "drafts" (Genesis 12.1-3, 12.7, 12.13,14-17, 14.18-20, 15.1-19, 16.10-12, 17.1-22, 22.17-18), not to speak of their repetition to his son Isaac and his grandson Jacob. Each successive draft makes the Covenant a little more precise and far-reaching, in response to Abraham's gradual increase in spiritual stature.

The promises relate to the two peoples who descend from the two sons of Abraham, Isaac and Ishmael. Isaac is the true heir of Abraham, the freeborn son of Sarah, who inherits the promises and blessings given to Abraham in full measure, being also a man of faith of whom it is also said that in his Seed, Christ, all the nations of the earth shall be blessed (Genesis 26.3-4). Ishmael is the son of a slave, Hagar, and does not inherit those blessings, although he does receive the promise that his heirs will be strong and numerous.

Now according to the popular conception, Isaac is the ancestor of the Jews, and Ishmael - of the Arab peoples. Certainly, the description of Ishmael's race as "wild" and warlike that is given by the Angel to Hagar (Genesis 16.10-12) appears to correspond closely, as St. Philaret of Moscow points out, to the character and life-style of the Arabs until Mohammed, who were constantly fighting and lived "in the presence of their brethren" - that is, near, or to the east of, the descendants of Abraham from his other concubine, Hetturah - the Ammonites, Moabites and Idumeans.⁸

A similar interpretation appears to stand true for the next generation, to Isaac's sons Jacob and Esau, who are said to correspond to the Jews (Jacob), on the one hand, and the Idumeans (Esau), on the other. This fits very well with the Lord's words to Isaac's wife Rebecca, that "two nations are in thy womb...",

⁷ St. Theophan, *Tolkovanie na Poslanie k Galatam* (Interpretation of the Epistle to the Galatians), 3.16.

⁸ St. Philaret, *Zapiski*, part 2, p. 98.

and the one people shall be stronger than the other people, and the elder [Esau] shall serve the younger [Jacob]" (Genesis 25.23); for the Jews, from Jacob to David to the Hasmonean kings, almost always showed themselves to be stronger than the Idumeans and often held them in bondage. It was only towards the Coming of Christ that an Idumean, Herod the Great, reversed the relationship by killing the Hasmoneans and becoming the first non-Jewish king of Israel – the event which, according to the prophecy of Jacob, would usher in the reign of the Messiah (Genesis 49.10).

But to return to the spiritual interpretation of the Apostle Paul: the two peoples – or two covenants, as he calls them – represent, not racial, but *spiritual* categories: "Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise, which things are symbolic. For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar – for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all." (Galatians 4.22-26).

In other words, Isaac stands for *the Christians*, both Jewish and Gentile, while Ishmael stands for *the Jews who reject Christ*. For the Christians, – and this includes the Jews before Christ who believed in His Coming, – become through faith in Christ the freeborn heirs of the promises made to Abraham and Isaac, whereas the Jews, by remaining slaves to the Law of Moses and refusing to believe in Christ, show themselves to be the children of the bondwoman, and therefore cannot inherit the promises together with the Christians. Moreover, it can be said of the Jews, as of the men of Ishmael's race, that ever since they rejected Christ they have become "wild", with their hands against all, and the hands of all against them, always striving for "freedom" but remaining voluntarily in slavery to the Law (and to their own *kahal*).⁹ It may therefore be that the age-old phenomenon of mutual enmity between the Jews and the Gentiles, of anti-semitism and anti-Gentilism, is prophesied in these verses.

That Isaac is the ancestor of Christ and the Christians is indicated also by his choice of wife, Rebecca, who signifies the Bride of Christ, the Church. Rebecca is freeborn, being of the family of Abraham, and is an even closer image of the Church than Sarah; for she is Isaac's only wife as the Church is Christ's only Bride. Moreover, the Holy Fathers see in the story of the wooing of Rebecca a parable of Christ's wooing of the Church, in which Eleazar, signifying the Holy Spirit, conveyed Isaac's proposal to her at the well, which signifies Baptism, and gave her gifts of precious jewels, signifying the gifts of the Holy Spirit bestowed at Chrismation.¹⁰

⁹ St. Philaret, *Zapiski*, p. 100.

¹⁰ St. Ambrose of Milan, *On Isaac, or the Soul*.

Ishmael, on the other hand, receives a wife from outside the holy family – from Egypt. And she is chosen for him, not by a trusted member of the family, but by his rejected mother, the slave-woman Hagar.

The relationship between Isaac and Ishmael is almost exactly mirrored in the relationship between Isaac's two sons, Jacob and Esau. Thus St. Philaret comments on the verse: "The Lord hath chosen Jacob unto Himself, Israel for His own possession" (Psalm 134.4), as follows: "This election refers in the first place to the person of Jacob, and then to his descendants, and finally and most of all to his spirit of faith: for 'not all [coming from Israel] are of Israel' (Romans 9.6). The two latter elections, that is, the election of the race of Israel, and the election of the spiritual Israel, are included in the first, that is, in the personal election of Jacob: the one prophetically, and the other figuratively.

"The reality of this prefigurement in Holy Scripture is revealed from the fact that the Apostle Paul, while reasoning about the rejection of the carnal, and the election of the spiritual Israel, produces in explanation the example of Jacob and Esau (Romans 9), and also from the fact that the same Apostle, in warning the believing Jews against the works of the flesh, threatens them with the rejection of Esau (Hebrews 12.16, 17).

"And so Jacob is an image, in the first place, of the spiritual Israel, or the Christian Church in general, and consequently Esau, on the contrary, is an image of the carnal Israel.

"Esau and Jacob are twins, of whom the smaller overcomes the larger: in the same day the spiritual Israel was born together with the carnal, but, growing up in secret, is finally revealed and acquires ascendancy over him.

"Isaac destines his blessing first of all to Esau, but then gives it to Jacob: in the same way the carnal Israel is given the promises from the Heavenly Father, but they are fulfilled in the spiritual [Israel].

"While Esau looks for a hunting catch in order to merit his father's blessing, Jacob, on the instructions of his mother, to whom God has revealed his destinies, puts on the garments of the first-born and seizes it before him. While the carnal Israel supposes that by the external works of the law it will acquire the earthly blessing of God, the spiritual Israel, with Grace leading it, having put on the garments of the merits and righteousness of the First-Born of all creation, 'is blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ' (Ephesians 1.3).

"The sword of battle and continuing slavery is given to the rejected Esau as his inheritance. And for the carnal Israel, from the time of its rejection, there remained only the sword of rebellion, inner enslavement and external humiliation.

“The rejected Esau seeks the death of Jacob; but he withdraws and is saved. The rejected old Israel rises up to destroy the new; but God hides it in the secret of His habitation, and then exalts it in strength and glory...”¹¹

As for the wives of Jacob, they also, like Isaac and Ishmael, and Jacob and Esau, signify the spiritual Israel of the Church and the carnal Israel of the non-believing Jews. Thus Leah, whom Jacob married first, signifies with her weak eyes and fertile womb the weak faith of the carnal Israel and its abundant offspring. (It is precisely blindness that “shall befall Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles shall come in” (Romans 11.25)). But Rachel, whom he married later but loved first and most strongly, signifies the New Testament Church, which the Lord loved first but married later. For the Church of the Gentiles, that of Enoch and Noah and Abraham before his circumcision, existed before that of Moses and David and the Old Testament Prophets. Moreover, Rachel brought forth her children in pain because the New Testament Church brought forth her first children in the blood of martyrdom, and is destined to inherit spiritual blessedness only through suffering - “we must through many tribulations enter the Kingdom of God” (Acts 14.22).

Christ recognized that the unbelieving Jews were from a genetic, physical point of view, the children of Abraham, saying: “I know that you are Abraham’s seed” (John 8.37). And yet only a few moments later He denied them this honour, saying: “If ye were Abraham’s children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill Me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God. This did not Abraham. Ye do the deeds of your father... Ye are of your father, the devil” (John 8.39-41, 44). Ultimately, therefore, it is not physical, genetic descent that constitutes sonship from Abraham, but faith, the faith of Christ, and the good works that demonstrate that faith.

Thus only Christians belong to the chosen people. As St. Justin the Martyr writes in the second century A.D.: “The seed is divided after Jacob and comes down through Judah and Phares and Jesse to David. Now this is surely a sign that some of you Jews are surely the children of Abraham, and that you will share in the inheritance of Christ; but... a greater part of your people... drink of bitter and godless doctrine while you spurn the word of God.”¹²

2. Joseph.

The distinguishing mark of the Hebrew nation and state was its claim, quite contrary to the claims of the Babylonian and Egyptian despotisms, that its origin and end lay outside itself, in the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. It took its origin, as we have seen, from a direct call by God to Abraham to leave his homeland, the Sumerian city of Ur, and go into a land which God had

¹¹ St. Philaret, *Zapiski*, part 3, pp. 27-28.

¹² St. Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho*, 34.

promised him. The God of Abraham was different from the false gods of polytheism in several ways.

First, He revealed Himself as completely transcendent to the material world, being worshipped neither in idols nor in men nor in the material world as a whole, but rather as the spiritual, immaterial Creator of all things, visible and invisible. Secondly, He did not reveal Himself to all, nor could anyone acquire faith in Him by his own efforts, but He revealed Himself only to those with whom He chose to enter into communion - Abraham, first of all. Thirdly, He was a jealous God Who required that His followers worship Him alone, as being the only true God. This was contrary to the custom in the pagan world, where ecumenism was the vogue - that is, all the gods, whoever they were and wherever they were worshipped, were considered true.

The nation of the Hebrews, therefore, was founded on an exclusively religious - and religiously exclusive - principle. In Ur, on the other hand, and in the other proto-communist states of the ancient world, the governing principle of life was not religion, still less the nation, but the state. Or rather, its governing principle was a *religion of the state* as incarnate in its ruler; for everything, including religious worship, was subordinated to the needs of the state, and to the will of the leader of the state, the god-king.

But Israel was founded upon a rejection of this idolatry of the state and its leader, and an exclusive subordination to the will of the God of Abraham, Who could in no way be identified with any man or state or material thing whatsoever. It followed that the criterion for membership of the nation of the Hebrews was neither race (for the Hebrews were not clearly distinguished racially from the other Semitic tribes of the Fertile Crescent, at any rate at the beginning, and God promised not only to multiply Abraham's seed, but also that "in thy seed shall *all* the nations of the earth be blessed" (*Genesis* 22.18)), nor citizenship of a certain state (for they had no such citizenship at the beginning), nor residence in a particular geographical region (for it was not until 500 years after Abraham that the Hebrews conquered Palestine). The foundation of the nation, and criterion of its membership, was *faith*, faith in the God Who revealed Himself to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob - and acceptance of the rite of circumcision. At the same time, the very exclusivity of this faith meant that Israel was chosen above all other nations to be the Lord's: "in the division of the nations of the whole earth, He set a ruler over every people; but Israel is the Lord's portion." (*Wisdom of Sirach* 17.17).

Some half a millenium later, in the time of Moses, the Hebrews were again living under another absolutist regime - this time, Pharaonic Egypt. And God again called them out of the despotism - this time, through Moses. He called them to leave Egypt and return to the promised land.

The Early Kingdom of Egypt was founded in about 3000 BC, with the earliest of the pyramids being built between 2700 and 2400 BC. This is consistent with the date of the Flood according to the Septuagint text of the Bible that is

accepted by the Orthodox Church: 3289 BC. Egypt therefore represents, with Babylon, the oldest urban civilization in world history since the Flood.

Now all the major States of antiquity were absolutist monarchies, or despotisms. The defining characteristic of such a State is the concentration of all power, secular and religious, in the hands of one man. In pagan societies this is combined with worship of the ruler as a god. Insofar as the worship of a created being is a blasphemous lie and places the state under the control of “the father of lies”, Satan, such a state can be called a *satanocracy*. Israel was the opposite of this State system insofar as it worshipped no man as God, and had no ruler but God; and as such it can be called a *theocracy*.

However, pure theocracy is an extreme rarity and cannot in practice be sustained for long: the only true theocracy in history has been the Church of Christ – which is not, and cannot be, a State like other States, since its essence and heart is not of this world, being in essence the kingdom that is not of this world. If, therefore, the people of God are to have a State organization, a system of government that comes as close as possible to rule by God must be devised. The form of government that is closest to theocracy is what Lev Alexandrovich Tikhomirov called “delegated theocracy” – that is, *autocracy*, whose essence consists in a division of powers between a king and a high priest, with both recognizing the supreme lordship of the One True God.

The very first, embryonic example of autocracy is to be found, paradoxically, in Egypt – the Egypt of the time of Joseph. For the formal ruler of Egypt, Pharaoh, had placed virtually all power in the hands of Joseph, a servant of the True God. As Joseph himself said: “God has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and ruler throughout all the land of Egypt” (Genesis 45.8). The Egyptians also, following Joseph’s example, showed great honour to his father, Jacob. This honour was particularly manifest at the burial of Jacob, when “all Pharaoh’s servants and the palace dignitaries, joined by all the dignitaries of the land of Egypt” (Genesis 50.7), went up with Joseph and his family to bury the patriarch in Canaan.

The relationship between father and son in Egypt was similar to that of the “symphony of powers” in Byzantium; for just as Joseph recognized the spiritual leadership of his father Jacob, so Jacob recognized the royal dignity of his son in his bowing down to his cross-like staff. As the Church says: “Israel, foreseeing the future, did reverence to the top of Joseph’s staff [Genesis 47.31], revealing how in times to come the most glorious Cross should be the safeguard of royal power.”¹³

It follows, according to St. Ignaty Brianchaninov, that it was the Hebrew Joseph, and not any of the pagan Pharaohs, who was “the founder of autocratic

¹³ *Menaion*, September 14, Exaltation of the Cross, Mattins, Canon, Canticle 7, troparion.

(or monarchical) rule in Egypt”¹⁴, transforming it from patriarchal simplicity to a fully organized state with permanent citizenship and a land tax, which Joseph instituted to prepare for the years of famine, and which lasted, essentially, for hundreds of years. Records show that there were dramatic fluctuations in the level of Nile flooding, and therefore of the harvest yield, during the reigns of the 19th- and early 18th-century BC Pharaohs. One of those Pharaohs was Senwosret III, in whose time, as Ian Wilson writes, “uniquely in all Egyptian history, the great estates formerly owned by Egypt’s nobles passed to the monarchy. They did so in circumstances that are far from clear, unless the Biblical Joseph story might just happen to hold the key: ‘So Joseph gained possession of all the farmland in Egypt for Pharaoh, every Egyptian having sold his field because the famine was too much for them; thus the land passed over to Pharaoh’ (Genesis 47.20). So could Senwosret III or Amenemhet III, or both, have had an Asiatic chancellor called Joseph, who manipulated the circumstances of a prolonged national famine to centralise power in the monarchy’s favour?”¹⁵

Of course, Egypt remained a pagan country, and on Jacob’s and Joseph’s deaths the embryonic “symphony of powers” that existed between them and Pharaoh disappeared, being replaced by the absolutist despotism of the Pharaoh “who knew not Joseph” (Exodus 1.8) and hated Israel. It was in the fire of conflict with this absolutist ruler that the first real autocracy based on a symphony with the One True God, Israel, came into being.

3. Moses.

The new, God-pleasing kind of kingdom, which we have called *autocracy*, would emerge after a long process lasting hundreds of years. Its embryonic beginning was created under the leadership of Moses, of whom the Church sings: “Thou, O Moses, didst preserve the order of sacrifice precious to God, and the kingdom and the priesthood.”¹⁶ This embryonic state finally acquired a territorial base and stability in Israel under Kings Saul and David...

The first battle between Church and State in history was Abraham’s battle with the Babylonian kings. The second took place between the people of God led by Moses, on the one hand, and the Egyptian Pharaoh, on the other. For Egypt was another totalitarian society that rose up against the True God; its apex was the cult of the Pharaoh, the god-king who was identified with one or another of the gods associated with the sun. The book of *Exodus* tells us how he was defeated in the first “war of national liberation” in history. (However, the

¹⁴ St. Ignaty, “Iosif. Sviaschennaia povest’ iz knigi Bytia” (Joseph. A Holy Tale from the Book of Genesis), *Polnoe Sobranie Tvorenij* (Complete Collection of Works), volume II, Moscow, 2001, p. 37.

¹⁵ Wilson, *The Bible is History*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1999, p. 37.

¹⁶ *Menaion*, September 4, Mattins, canon, Ode 7, troparion.

Egyptians did not record the fact of his defeat, since gods, according to the Egyptian conception, could not fail.)¹⁷

At the beginning of the Exodus, God revealed His name for the first time in the vision of the Burning Bush to Moses on Mount Horeb. The bush that burned without being consumed was a type, or forefiguring, of the Incarnation of Christ from the Mother of God, whose flesh was not consumed by the fire of the Divinity that was in her. God sent Moses to the people of Israel to announce to them their coming deliverance from slavery through the Exodus, and when Moses asked for God's name so that he could identify Who it was said sending him, "God said unto Moses, 'I AM THAT I AM', and He said: 'Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, "I AM hath sent me unto you'." (Exodus 3.13). Up to that point, God had referred to Himself only as "God Almighty" or "the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" - that is, without a specific allusion to the Second Person of the Trinity or His role in the salvation of mankind. But now that salvation was being brought to the Hebrews it was necessary to point to *the Saviour*, that is, Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, by the name by which He is known in the Old Testament - Jehovah, "I AM THAT I AM", or "He Who Exists" (in the Greek translation of the Septuagint). For it is the unanimous witness of the Holy Fathers that Jesus Christ the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, is indeed Jehovah, "He Who Exists" from all eternity, Who saved the Israelites from Egypt and later the whole of humanity from sin, death and the devil on the Cross.

This is confirmed a little later, when "God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, 'And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty; but by the name JEHOVAH was I not known to them. And I have established My covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, wherein they were strangers.'" (Exodus 3.2-3).

The name "He Who Exists" points to the complete independence of God from everything created. For He does not exist in dependence on any other existing thing, which is the case of every other being, but is *absolute being, being itself*. This was in sharp distinction from pagan religion - of which Egyptian religion was the most developed kind in that period - which could never conceive of God as wholly independent of created beings, but always identified God or the gods with a part or the whole of created being. The name also points, according to Archbishop Theophan of Poltava, to *the fullness of life*, which cannot be identified with any created condition, but only with the life of God Himself.¹⁸ Being absolute being and the fullness of life, God wishes to save

¹⁷ Graham Phillips has recently claimed to have discovered traces of this defeat in Egyptian archaeology. According to his theory, the Pharaoh of Moses' time was Smenkhkare, whose tomb was plundered and desecrated by his brother and successor, the famous Tutankhamun, in punishment for his failure to avert the catastrophe of the ten plagues of Egypt (*Act of God*, London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1998). However, in favour of the traditional ascription to Rameses II is the fact that Rameses' body was found filled with seawater - which is consistent with his having been drowned in the Red Sea while pursuing the Israelites.

¹⁸ Theophan, *Tetragramma*, St. Petersburg, 1905, p. 61.

mankind from the false life that identifies itself with created being. Thus God manifests Himself as *the Saviour* for the first time in the Exodus from Egypt.

Now Egyptian religion was a very complicated mixture of creature-worship and ancestor-worship. Thus Diodorus Siculus writes: "The gods, they say, had been originally mortal men, but gained their immortality on account of wisdom and public benefits to mankind, some of them having also become kings; and some have the same names, when interpreted, with the heavenly deities... Helios [Re], they say, was the first king of the Egyptians, having the same name with the celestial luminary [the sun]..."¹⁹

"Although Egypt had a pantheon of gods," writes Phillips, "the principal deity was the sun god Re (also called Ra), for whose worship a massive religious centre had grown up at Heliopolis, some fifty kilometres to the north of Memphis. It was believed that Re had once ruled over Egypt personally but, wearied by the affairs of mankind, had retired to the heavens, leaving the pharaohs to rule in his stead. Called 'the son of Re', the pharaoh was considered a half-human, half-divine being, through whose body Re himself could manifest."²⁰ However, as the falcon god Horus was the protector of Egypt, the king was also seen as his personification. By the Third Dynasty, therefore, Re and Horus had been assimilated as one god: Re-Herakhte. Depicted as a human male with a falcon's head, this composite deity was considered both the god of the sun and the god of Egypt, and his incarnation on earth was the pharaoh himself. Only the king could expect an individual eternity with the gods, everyone else could only hope to participate in this vicariously, through their contribution to his well-being."²¹

The Egyptian Pharaoh was, according to John Bright, "no viceroy ruling by divine election, nor was he a man who had been deified: he was god – Horus visible among his people. In theory, all Egypt was his property, all her resources at the disposal of his projects"²² – and these, of course, were on the most massive scale. "The system was an absolutism under which no Egyptian was in theory free,... the lot of the peasant must have been unbelievably hard."²³ Thus according to Herodotus, the largest of the pyramids, that of Pharaoh Khufu, was built on the labour of 100,000 slaves. It is far larger than any of the cathedrals or temples built by any other religion in any other country, and it has recently been discovered to contain the largest boat found anywhere in the world.²⁴

Pharaoh was the mediator between heaven and earth. Without him, it was believed, the world would descend into chaos; he guaranteed that the sun

¹⁹ Quoted in Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospel*, II, 1.

²⁰ Thus a typical letter to a pharaoh began: "To my king, my lord, my sun-god" (Bernhard W. Anderson, *The Living World of the Old Testament*, London: Longman, 1967, p. 45, note).

²¹ Phillips, *op. cit.*, pp. 35-36.

²² Bright, *A History of Israel*, London: SCM Press, 1980, p. 39.

²³ Bright, *op. cit.*, pp. 39, 40.

²⁴ Barbara Watterson, *Ancient Egypt*, Stroud: Sutton Publishing Company, 1998, pp. 18-19.

shone, the Nile inundated the land and the crops grew. As Silverman writes: "The king's identification with the supreme earthly and solar deities of the Egyptian pantheon suggests that the king in death embodied the duality that characterized the ancient Egyptian cosmos. The deified ruler represented both continuous regeneration (Osiris) and the daily cycle of rebirth (as Re). In their understanding of the cosmos, the ancient Egyptians were accustomed to each of their deities possessing a multiplicity of associations and roles. It was a natural extension of this concept for them to view the deified Pharaoh in a similar way".²⁵

All the dead Pharaohs (with the exception of the "disgraced" Hatshepsut and the "heretic" Akhenaton) were worshipped in rites involving food offerings and prayers. Even some non-royal ancestors were worshipped; they were called "able spirits of Re" because it was thought that they interceded for the living with the sun god. The pyramids and the tombs in the Valley of the Kings were all built, at colossal cost and effort, with only one religious aim: to ensure the Pharaoh's happiness in the life after death.

Now for four hundred years after Joseph, the Hebrews lived as slaves of the Egyptian pharaohs. But they were rescued from slavery by a Hebrew who had been brought up in Pharaoh's family, having acquired an Egyptian education - Moses. The story of the Exodus of the Hebrews from Egypt under Moses' leadership is the foundation story of the Hebrew people.

During the life of Moses, a fourth element besides faith, sacrifices and circumcision was added to the life of Israel: the law. The law was necessary for several reasons. First, by the time of Moses, the Israelites were no longer an extended family of a few hundred people, as in the time of Abraham and the Patriarchs, which could be governed by the father of the family without the need of any written instructions or governmental bureaucracy. Since their migration to Egypt in the time of Joseph, they had multiplied and become a nation of four hundred thousand people, which no one man could rule unaided. Secondly, the sojourn of the Israelites in Egypt had introduced them again to the lures of the pagan world, and a law was required to protect them from these lures. And thirdly, in order to escape from Egypt, pass through the desert and conquer the Promised Land in the face of many enemies, a quasi-military organization and discipline was required.

And so the law was given by God to Moses on Mount Sinai. Its God-giveness was vital. It meant, as Paul Johnson points out, that "the Israelites were creating a new kind of society. Josephus later used the word 'theocracy'. This he defined as 'placing all sovereignty in the hands of God'... The Israelites might have magistrates of one kind or another but their rule was vicarious since God made the law and constantly intervened to ensure it was obeyed. The fact that God ruled meant that in practice his law ruled. And since all were equally subject to the law, the system was the first to embody the double merits of the

²⁵ David P. Silverman, *Ancient Egypt*, London: Piatkus, 1998, pp. 18-19.

rule of law and equality before the law. Philo called it 'democracy', which he described as 'the most law-abiding and best of constitutions'. But by democracy he did not mean rule by all the people; he defined it as a form of government which 'honours equality and has law and justice for its rulers'. He might have called the Jewish system, more accurately, 'democratic theocracy', because in essence that is what it was."²⁶

But there was no democracy in the modern sense. Although every man in Israel was equal under the law of God, which was also the law of Israel, there were no elections, every attempt to rebel against Moses' leadership was fiercely punished (Numbers 16), and there was no way in which the people could alter the law to suit themselves, which is surely the essence of democracy in the modern sense. Even when, at Jethro's suggestion, lower-level magistrates and leaders were appointed, they were appointed by Moses, not by any kind of popular vote (Deuteronomy 1).

One of the major characteristics of the Mosaic law, notes Johnson, is that "there is no distinction between the religious and the secular – all are one – or between civil, criminal and moral law. This indivisibility had important practical consequences. In Mosaic legal theory, all breaches of the law offend God. All crimes are sins, just as all sins are crimes. Offences are absolute wrongs, beyond the power of man unaided to pardon or expunge. Making restitution to the offended mortal is not enough; God requires expiation, too, and this may involve drastic punishment. Most law-codes of the ancient Near East are property-orientated, people themselves being forms of property whose value can be assessed. The Mosaic code is God-oriented. For instance, in other codes, a husband may pardon an adulterous wife and her lover. The Mosaic code, by contrast, insists both must be put to death...

"In Mosaic theology, man is made in God's image, and so his life is not just valuable, it is sacred. To kill a man is an offence against God so grievous that the ultimate punishment, the forfeiture of life, must follow; money is not enough. The horrific fact of execution thus underscores the sanctity of human life. Under Mosaic law, then, many men and women met their deaths whom the secular codes of surrounding societies would have simply permitted to compensate their victims or their victims' families.

"But the converse is also true, as a result of the same axiom. Whereas other codes provided the death penalty for offences against property, such as looting during a fire, breaking into a house, serious trespass by night, or theft of a wife, in the Mosaic law no property offence is capital. Human life is too sacred where the rights of property alone are violated. It also repudiates vicarious punishment: the offences of parents must not be punished by the execution of sons or daughters, or the husband's crime by the surrender of the wife to prostitution... Moreover, not only is human life sacred, the human person

²⁶ Johnson, *A History of the Jews*, London: Phoenix, 1995, 1998, pp. 40-41.

(being in God's image) is precious... Physical cruelty [in punishment] is kept to the minimum."²⁷

A major part of the Mosaic law concerned a priesthood and what we would now call the Church with its rites and festivals. The priesthood was entrusted to Moses' brother Aaron and one of the twelve tribes of Israel, that of the Levites. As St. Cyril of Alexandria writes: "Moses and Aaron... were for the ancients a fine forefigure of Christ... Emmanuel, Who, by a most wise dispensation, is in one and the same Person both Law-Giver and First Priest... In Moses we should see Christ as Law-Giver, and in Aaron - as First Priest."²⁸

Thus already in the time of Moses we have the beginnings of a separation between Church and State, and of what the Byzantines called the "symphony" between the two powers, as represented by Moses and Aaron.

That the Levites constituted the beginnings of what we would now call the clergy of the Church was indicated by Patriarch Nikon of Moscow in his polemic against the attempts of the tsar to confiscate church lands: "Have you not heard that God said that any outsider who comes close to the sacred things will be given up to death? By outsider here is understood not only he who is a stranger to Israel from the pagans, but everyone who is not of the tribe of Levi, like Kore, Dathan and Abiram, whom God did not choose, and whom, the impious ones, a flame devoured; and King Uzziah laid his hand on the ark to support it, and God struck him and he died (II Kings 6.6,7)."²⁹

As Moses lay dying on Mount Pisgah in Moab (modern-day Jordan) he stretched out his eyes over the Promised Land on the other side of the Jordan (which not he, but his Joshua (Jesus) was destined to enter and occupy), and prophesied to Israel: "When thou shalt beget children, and children's children, and ye shall have been long in the land, and shall do that which is evil in the sight of the Lord thy God, to provoke Him to anger, I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that ye shall soon perish from off the land whereunto you go over Jordan to possess it; ye shall not prolong your days upon it, but shall be utterly destroyed. And the Lord shall scatter you among the peoples, and ye shall be left few in number among the nations, whither the Lord shall lead you away. And from thence ye shall seek the Lord thy God, and thou shalt find Him, because thou shalt search after Him with all thy heart and soul when thou are in tribulation and all these things are come upon thee. In the latter days thou shalt return to the Lord thy God, and hearken unto His voice: for the Lord thy God is a merciful God, He will not fail thee, neither destroy thee, not forget the covenant of thy fathers which He sware unto them" (Deuteronomy 4.25-31).

²⁷ Johnson, *op. cit.*, pp. 33, 34.

²⁸ St. Cyril, in Vyacheslav Manyagin, *Apologia Groznogo Tsaria* (Apology for the Awesome Tsar), Moscow, 2004, p. 167.

²⁹ Nikon, in M.V. Zyzykin, *Patriarkh Nikon* (Patriarch Nikon), Warsaw: Synodal Typography, 1931, part II, p. 36.

Here the great prophet and God-seer lays out in summary form the whole history of the Jews after they would have been “long in the land”: their falling away from God, followed by their expulsion from the land (first in the exile to Babylon, then more terribly and long-lastingly in the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans and the dispersal of the Jews all over the world), and finally their conversion to God “in the last days”. The last part of the prophecy has yet to be fulfilled, although it is confirmed by several Old and New Testament prophets and apostles. But the first two parts have been confirmed with exactitude, providing yet another testimony that the central thread of human history, that illumines all the rest of it, consists in the history of Israel – both the Old Testament Jews and the “new” Jews, “the Israel of God, the Church of Christ” (Galatians 6.16).

4. Saul and David.

We have seen that under Moses there was the beginning of a separation of Church and State in Israel. However, it is important to realize that there was no radical separation of powers in the modern sense. Israel was a theocratic state ruled directly by God, Who revealed His will through His chosen servants Moses and Aaron. The Church, the State and the People were not three different entities or organizations, but three different aspects of a single organism, the whole of which was subject to God alone. That is why it was so important that the leader should be chosen by God. In the time of the judges, this seems always to have been the case; for when an emergency arose God sent His Spirit upon a man chosen by Him (cf. Judges 6.34), and the people, recognizing this, then elected him as their judge (cf. Judges 11.11). And if there was no emergency, or if the people were not worthy of a God-chosen leader, then God did not send His Spirit and no judge was elected. In those circumstances "every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judges 21.25) - in other words, there was anarchy. The lesson was clear: if theocracy is removed, then sooner or later there will be anarchy - that is, no government at all.

The unity of Israel was therefore religious, not political - or rather, it was religio-political. It was created by the history of deliverance from the satanocracy of Egypt and maintained by a continuing allegiance and obedience to God - the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God Who appeared to Moses and Joshua and the Judges, - as their only King.

Neither Abraham nor Moses was a king. Rather it was said to Abraham by God: "Kings will come *from* you" (Genesis 17.6; cf. 17.16, 35.2). And Moses was a lawgiver, a priest and prophet rather than a king. Early Israel was therefore not a kingdom - or rather, it was a kingdom whose king was God alone. As Tikhomirov writes: "According to the law of Moses, no State was established at that time, but the nation was just organized on tribal principles, with a common worship of God. The Lord was recognized as the Master of Israel in a moral sense, as of a spiritual union, that is, as a Church."³⁰

Ancient Israel, in other words, was a Theocracy, ruled not by a king or priest, but by God Himself. And strictly speaking the People of God remained a Theocracy, without a formal State structure, until the time of the Prophet Samuel, who anointed the first King of Israel, Saul. Early Israel before the kings had rulers, but these rulers were neither hereditary monarchs nor were they elected to serve the will of the people. They were charismatic leaders, called judges, who were elected because they served the will of God alone.

And they were elected by God, not the people, who simply had to follow the man God had elected, as when He said to Gideon: "Go in this thy might, and

³⁰ Tikhomirov, *Monarkhicheskaia Gosudarstvennost'* (Monarchical Statehood), Moscow, 1997, p. 126.

thou shalt save Israel from the Midianites: have I not sent thee?" (Judges 6.14). That is why, when the people offered to make Gideon and his descendants kings in a kind of hereditary dynasty, he refused, saying: "I shall not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you: the Lord shall rule over you" (Judges 8.23).

Nevertheless, it was God's plan that Israel should have a "delegated theocracy", a king who would be in all things obedient to Himself. But the fulfillment of that plan would have to wait until the Israelites had permanently settled a *land*. For "a king is an advantage to a *land with cultivated fields*" (Ecclesiastes 5.8).

However, to ensure that such a king would be a true autocrat, and not a pagan-style despot, the Lord laid down certain conditions to the people through Moses: "When thou shalt come unto the land which the Lord thy God shall choose, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein, and shalt say, 'I will set a king over me, like as all the nations that are about me', thou shalt surely set a king over thee whom the Lord thy God shall choose: one from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is not thy brother... And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests, the Levites. And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them: that his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand, or to the left: to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he, and his children, in the midst of Israel" (Deuteronomy 17.14-15,18-20).

Thus God blessed the institution of the monarchy, but stipulated three conditions if His blessing was to rest on it. First, the people must itself desire to have a king placed over it. Secondly, the king must be someone "whom the Lord thy God shall choose"; a true king is chosen by God, not by man. Such a man will always be a "brother", that is a member of the People of God, of the Church: if he is not, then God has not chosen him. Thirdly, he will govern in accordance with the Law of God, which he will strive to fulfil in all its parts.

In the period from Moses to Saul, the people were ruled by the Judges, many of whom, like Joshua, Jephtha and Gideon, were truly God-fearing, charismatic leaders. However, towards the end of the period, since "there was no king in Israel; everyone did what seemed right to him" (Judges 21.25), and barbaric acts, such as that which almost led to the near-extinction of the tribe of Benjamin, are recorded. In their desperation at the mounting anarchy, the people called on God through the Prophet Samuel to give them a king. God fulfilled their request, but since the people's motivation in seeking a king was not pure, He gave them at first a king who brought them more harm than good. For while Saul was a mighty man of war and temporarily expanded the frontiers of Israel, he persecuted true piety, as represented by the future King

David and the prophet Gad, and he disobeyed the Church, as represented by the Judge and Prophet Samuel and the high priests Abiathar and Ahimelech.

Some democrats have argued that the Holy Scriptures do not approve of kingship. This is not true: kingship as such is never condemned in Holy Scripture. Rather, it is considered the norm of political leadership, as we see in the following passages: "Blessed are thou, O land, when thou hast a king from a noble family" (Ecclesiastes 10.17); "The heart of the king is in the hand of God: He turns it wherever He wills (Proverbs 21.1); "He sends kings upon thrones, and girds their loins with a girdle" (Job 12.18); "He appoints kings and removes them" (Daniel 2.21); "Thou, O king, art a king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given a powerful and honourable and strong kingdom in every place where the children of men dwell" (Daniel 2.37-38); "Listen, therefore, O kings, and understand...; for your dominion was given you from the Lord, and your sovereignty from the Most High" (Wisdom 6.1,3).

The tragedy of the story of the first Israelite king, Saul, did not consist in the fact that the Israelites sought a king for themselves - as we have seen, God did not condemn kingship as such. After all, the sacrament of kingly anointing, which was performed for the first time by the Prophet Samuel on Saul, gave the earthly king the grace to serve the Heavenly King as his true Sovereign. The tragedy consisted in the fact that the Israelites sought a king "like [those of] the other nations around" them (Deuteronomy 17.14), - in other words, a pagan-style king who would satisfy the people's notions of kingship rather than God's, - and that this desire amounted to apostasy in the eyes of the Lord, the only true King of Israel.

Thus the Lord said to Samuel: "Listen to the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should rule over them... Now therefore listen to their voice. However, protest solemnly to them, and show them the manner of the king that shall reign over them" (I Kings (I Samuel) 8.4-9). And then Samuel painted for them the image of a harsh, totalitarian ruler of the kind that was common in the Ancient World. These kings, as well as having total political control over their subjects, were often worshipped by them as gods; so that "kingship" as understood in the Ancient World meant both the loss of political freedom and alienation from the true and living God.

God allowed the introduction of this despotic kind of kingship into Israel because the religious principle had grown weak. For the history of the kings begins with the corruption of the priests, the sons of Eli, who were in possession of the ark at the time of its capture. Thus for the kings' subsequent oppression of the people both the priests and the people bore responsibility.

However, God in His mercy did not always send such totalitarian rulers upon His people, and the best of the kings, such as David, Josiah and Hezekiah, were in obedience to the King of kings and Lord of lords. Nevertheless, since kingship was introduced into Israel from a desire to imitate the pagans, it was

a retrograde step. It represented the introduction of a second, worldly principle of allegiance into what had been a society bound together by religious bonds alone, a schism in the soul of the nation which, although seemingly inevitable in the context of the times, meant the loss for ever of that pristine simplicity which had characterised Israel up to then.

And yet everything seemed to go well at first. Samuel anointed Saul, saying: "The Lord anoints thee as ruler of His inheritance of Israel, and you will rule over the people of the Lord and save them from out of the hand of their enemies" (I Kings 10.1). Filled with the Spirit of the Lord, Saul defeated the enemies of Israel, the Ammonites and the Philistines. But the schism which had been introduced into the life of the nation began to express itself also in the life of their king, with tragic consequences.

First, before a major battle with the Philistines, the king grew impatient when Samuel the priest delayed his coming to perform a sacrifice. So he performed the sacrifice himself without waiting for Samuel. For this sin, the sin of the invasion of the Church's sphere by the State, Samuel prophesied that the kingdom would be taken away from Saul and given to a man after God's heart. "For now the Lord would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. But now your kingdom shall not continue. The Lord has sought for Himself a man after His own heart" (I Kings 13.13-14). That man, of course, was David, who, by becoming the ancestor of Christ, would become the founder of an eternal Kingdom.

The example of Saul was quoted by Patriarch Nikon of Moscow: "Listen to what happened to Saul, the first king of Israel. The Word of God said to Samuel: 'I have repented that I sent Saul to the kingdom, for he has ceased to follow Me.' What did Saul do that God should reject him? He, it is said, 'did not follow My counsels' (I Kings 15.10-28)... This is the Word of God, and not the word of man: 'I made you ruler over the tribes of Israel and anointed you to the kingdom of Israel, and not to offer sacrifices and whole-burnt offerings,' teaching for all future times that the priesthood is higher than the kingdom, and that he who wishes for more loses that which is his own."³¹

Saul's second sin was to spare Agag, the king of the Amalekites, together with the best of his livestock, instead of killing them all, as God had commanded. His excuse was: "because I listened to the voice of the people" (I Kings 15.20). In other words, he abdicated his God-given authority and *became, spiritually speaking, a democrat*, listening to the people rather than to God. And so Samuel said: "Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, the Lord also shall reject thee from being king over Israel" (I Kings 15.23)... It was no accident therefore, that it was an Amalekite who killed Saul at Mount Gilboa and brought his crown to David...

³¹ Zyzykin, op. cit., part II, p. 17.

To modern readers Saul's sin might seem small. However, it must be understood in the context of the previous history of Israel, in which neither Moses nor any of the judges (except, perhaps, Samson), had disobeyed the Lord. That is why Samuel said to Saul: "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness as iniquity and idolatry" (I Kings 15.22-23). For even a king can rebel, even a king is in obedience - to the King of kings. Only the absolutist despot feels that there is nobody above him, that there is no law that he, too, must obey. His power is absolute; whereas the power of the autocrat is limited, if not by man and the laws of men, at any rate by the law of God, whose independent guardian and teacher is the priesthood of the Church.

To emphasize the truth that disobedience to God "is as the sin of witchcraft", Saul then falls into the most serious sin of consulting a witch on the eve of his last battle against the Philistines. Thus he asked the witch of Endor to summon the soul of Samuel from Hades, although he himself had passed laws condemning necromancy. It did him no good: the next day, at Gilboa, he lost the battle and his life...³² "So Saul died," according to the chronicler, "because of his transgression which he committed against the Lord... by seeking advice from a ghost... Therefore He slew him and gave the kingdom to David..." (I Chronicles 10.13, 14).

The falling away of Saul led directly to the first major schism in the history of the State of Israel. For after Saul's death, the northern tribes (Ephraim, first of all) supported the claim of Saul's surviving son to the throne, while the southern tribes (Judah and Benjamin) supported David. Although David suppressed this rebellion, and although, for David's sake, the Lord did not allow a schism during the reign of his son Solomon, it erupted again and became permanent after Solomon's death...

David was anointed for the first time by the Prophet Samuel when he was still a young man. But he had to prove himself as a great warrior and faithful to the will of God over many years in disgrace and in exile before the people finally saw in him God's choice: "Then came all the tribes of Israel to David unto Hebron and spake, saying, Behold, we are thy bone and thy flesh. Also in time past, when Saul was king over us, thou wast he that leddest out and brightest in Israel, and the Lord said to thee, 'Thou shalt feed My people Israel, and thou shalt be a captain over Israel. So all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron before the Lord, and they anointed David king over Israel'" (II Samuel 5.1-3).

The greatness of David lay in the fact that he represented the true autocrat, who both closed the political schism that had opened up between north and south, and closed the schism that was just beginning to open up between the sacred and the profane, the Church and the State. Indeed, according to the

³² See St. Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Witch of Endor: A Letter to Bishop Theodosius*, translated in *Living Orthodoxy*, #124, vol. XXI, N 4, July-August, 2000, pp. 24-26.

author of the two books of Chronicles, it was David's solicitude for the Church and her liturgical worship that was the most important fact about him. As Patrick Henry Reardon points out, nineteen chapters are devoted to David, and of these nineteen "the Chronicler allotted no fewer than 11 - over half - to describe the king's solicitude for Israel's proper worship (I Chronicles 13; 15-16 and 22-29). This material includes the transfer of the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem, the organization of the priestly and Levitical ministries, preparations for the sacred music, and David's lengthy instructions to Solomon with respect to the temple.

"According to the Chronicler, David not only made all the arrangements for the consecration of the temple and the organization of the worship (I Chronicles 28.19), he did so by the Lord's own command (II Chronicles 29.15). Even the musical instruments used in the worship are credited to David (II Chronicles 29.17; cf. Nehemiah 12.36)."³³ Thus when the Lord tells David to "feed My people Israel", this feeding is spiritual as well as material - a responsibility accepted by all later Christian autocrats.

"Like Gideon," notes Paul Johnson, David "grasped that [Israel] was indeed a theocracy and not a normal state. Hence the king could never be an absolute ruler on the usual oriental pattern. Nor, indeed, could the state, however governed, be absolute either. It was inherent in Israelite law even at this stage that, although everyone had responsibilities and duties to society as a whole, society - or its representative, the king, or the state - could under no circumstances possess unlimited authority over the individual. Only God could do that. The Jews, unlike the Greeks and later the Romans, did not recognize such concepts as city, state, community as abstracts with legal personalities and rights and privileges. You could commit sins against man, and of course against God; and these sins were crimes; but there was no such thing as a crime/sin against the state.

"This raises a central dilemma about Israelite, later Judaic, religion and its relationship with temporal power. The dilemma can be stated quite simply: could the two institutions coexist, without one fatally weakening the other?"³⁴

The reign of David proved that State and Church could not only coexist, but also strengthen each other. In a certain sense, the anointed king in the Israelite kingdom could be said to have had the primacy over the priesthood. Thus David appears to have ordered the building of the temple without any prompting from a priest, and Solomon removed the High Priest Abiathar for political rebellion (I Kings 2.26-27).

Thus there were two spheres, "the king's matters" and "the Lord's matters". If the king ventured to enter "the Lord's matters", that is, the sphere of Divine worship in the temple, he would be punished. We see this clearly in the case of

³³ Reardon, *Chronicles of History and Worship*, Ben Lomond, Ca.: Conciliar Press, 2006, p. 12.

³⁴ Johnson, *A History of the Jews*, London: Phoenix, 1995, 1998, p. 57.

King Uzziah, who was punished with leprosy for presuming to burn incense before the Lord...

The central act of David's reign was his conquest of Jerusalem and establishment of the city of David on Zion as the capital and heart of the Israelite kingdom. This was, on the one hand, an important political act, strengthening the centralizing power of the State; for as the last part of the Holy Land to be conquered, Jerusalem did not belong to any of the twelve tribes, which meant that its ruler, David, was elevated above all the tribes, and above all earthly and factional interests. But, on the other hand, it was also an important religious act; for by establishing his capital in Jerusalem, David linked his kingship with the mysterious figure of Melchizedek, both priest and king, who had blessed Abraham at Salem, that is, Jerusalem. Thus David could be seen as following in the footsteps of Abraham in receiving the blessing of the priest-king in his own city.

Moreover, by bringing the Ark of the Covenant, the chief sanctum of the priesthood, to a permanent resting-place in Zion, David showed that the Church and the priesthood would find rest and protection on earth only under the aegis of the Jewish autocracy. As John Bright writes: "The significance of this action cannot be overestimated. It was David's aim to make Jerusalem the religious as well as the political capital of the realm. Through the Ark he sought to link the newly created state to Israel's ancient order as its legitimate successor, and to advertise the state as the patron and protector of the sacral institutions of the past. David showed himself far wiser than Saul. Where Saul had neglected the Ark and driven its priesthood from him, David established both Ark and priesthood in the official national shrine."³⁵

The Ark was a symbol of the Church; and it is significant that the birth of the Church, at Pentecost, took place on Zion, beside David's tomb (Acts 2). For David prefigured Christ not only in His role as anointed King of the Jews, Who inherited "the throne of His father David" and made it eternal (Luke 1.32-33), but also as Sender of the Spirit and establisher of the New Testament Church. For just as David brought the wanderings of the Ark to an end by giving it a permanent resting-place in Zion, so Christ sent the Spirit into the upper room in Zion, giving the Church a firm, visible beginning on earth.

Only it was not given to David to complete the third act that was to complete this symbolism, the building of the Temple to house the Ark. That was reserved for his son Solomon, who consecrated the Temple on the feast of Tabernacles, the feast signifying the end of the wanderings of the children of Israel in the desert and the ingathering of the harvest fruits. Such was the splendour of Solomon's reign that he also became a type of Christ, and of Christ in His relationship to the Church. As the Queen of Sheba said to him: "Happy are thy mn, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that

³⁵ Bright, *A History of Israel*, London: SCM Press, 1980, pp. 200-201.

hear thy wisdom. Blessed be the Lord thy God, which delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel" (I Kings 10.8-9).

5. Solomon.

The reigns of David and Solomon are especially important for the history of the people of God for three main reasons.

First, in them the Israelite kingdom attained its greatest strength, subduing its enemies and reaching its geographical integrity as that had been promised to Abraham: "from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates" (Genesis 15.18). Secondly, the covenant which the Lord had sworn to the Family Church in the persons of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and to the Pilgrim Church in the persons of Moses and Joshua, He now renewed with the State Church in the persons of David and Solomon. The unconditional element of this covenant - the part which the Lord promised to fulfil whatever happened - was the promise of the Coming of Christ: the Seed seen by Abraham, the Prophet seen by Moses, and now the King seen by David; for "thine house and thy kingdom," He said to David, "shall be established for ever before thee; thy throne shall be established for ever" (II Samuel 7.16; cf. Luke 1.32-33). And thirdly, the worship of the Old Testament Church reached its maturity and most magnificent development in the building of the Temple and the establishment of all the Temple services.

The importance of Solomon's Temple as a figure of the New Testament Church can be seen in the many resemblances between the two, from the details of the priests' vestments and the use of the Psalter to the offering of incense and the frescoes on the walls. Even the structure of the Temple building, with its sanctuary, nave and narthex and two aisles, recalls the structure of the Christian basilica. But there is this very important difference, that whereas the nave of the Temple was entered only by the priests, and the sanctuary only by the high-priest once a year, while all the services were conducted in the courtyard, the New Testament Church allows all Christians to enter the Church, inasmuch as they are "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people" (I Peter 2.9), for whom Christ the Great High-Priest has made "a new and living way" into the holy of holies (Hebrews 10.19-22).

The consecration of the Temple by Solomon may be seen the high point of the Old Testament, from which the rest of the Old Testament is a long and uneven, but inexorable fall until the Coming of Christ at its lowest point. The union of the kingship with the priesthood in the only major city of Israel not belonging to any of the tribes - for Jerusalem had been a Jebusite city until David and his men conquered it, - represented that ideal symphony of Church and State which was not to be recovered in its full glory until the Emperor Justinian consecrated the Great Church of the Holy Wisdom (*Hagia Sophia*) in Constantinople over 1500 years later. And when the Jews looked forward to the Messiah-King who was to restore their fortunes and usher in the Kingdom of God on earth, the image they conceived was compounded of the warlike

prowess of David and the peaceful splendour of Solomon.

But in Solomon himself lay the seeds of that corruption which was to bring everything down in ruins. For this lover of wisdom whom God loved was not wise enough to heed the words inscribed in the Mosaic law: "When thou art come unto the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein, and shalt say, I will set a king over me, like as all the nations that are about me; Thou shalt set him as king over thee, whom the Lord thy God shall choose: one from among thy brethren shalt thou set over thee; thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is not thy brother. But he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses: forasmuch as the Lord hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way. Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away; neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold." (Deuteronomy 17.14-17).

Now Solomon was, of course, a legitimate king, a "brother" and not a "stranger" - that is, a member of the household of the faith. He was a king, moreover, whom God had chosen, giving him the great gift of wisdom. However, he "multiplied horses to himself", many of whom came from Egypt. (Archaeologists have discovered the remains of his huge stables.) And he "multiplied wives to himself", many of whom again came from Egypt and "turned his heart away" from the living God to idolatry. Finally, he "multiplied to himself silver and gold" on a vast scale. Thus with uncanny precision did the prophecy pinpoint the weaknesses of Solomon.

Of course, David had many of these faults. He, too, had many wives - some, like Solomon's mother Bathsheba, acquired unlawfully. And by the end of his reign he had amassed fabulous wealth. But David's wives, unlike Solomon's, did not draw him away from the True Faith; and his wealth was not amassed to be spent on his own pleasures, but was handed over *en masse* near the end of his life towards the building of the Temple. And therefore for his sake - here we see the great intercessory power of the saints - God promised that the kingdom would not be divided in the reign of his son (I Kings 11.12).

Whereas David prefigures Christ as the Founder of the Church in Zion, Solomon, through his relationship with foreign rulers in Egypt, Tyre and Sheba, and his expansion of Israel to its greatest geographical extent and splendour, prefigures the Lord's sending out of the apostles into the Gentile world and the expansion of the Church throughout the *oikoumene*. Thus David sang of his son as the type of Him Whom "all the kings of the earth shall worship, and all the nations shall serve" (Psalms 71.11). Moreover, at the very moment of the consecration of the Temple, the wise Solomon looks forward to that time when the Jewish Temple-worship will be abrogated and the true worship of God will not be concentrated in Jerusalem or any single place, but the true worshippers will worship Him "in spirit and in truth" (John 4. 21-23): "for will God indeed dwell on earth? Behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee: how much less this house that I have built" (I Kings 8.27).

As St. Philaret demonstrates, the Israelite Autocracy is a model of God-given government for all nations in all times: “It is in the family that we must seek the beginnings and first model of authority and submission, which are later opened out in the large family which is the State. The father is... the first master... but since the authority of the father was not created by the father himself and was not given to him by the son, but came into being with man from Him Who created man, it is revealed that the deepest source and the highest principle of the first power, and consequently of every later power among men, is in God – the Creator of man. From Him ‘every family in heaven and on earth is named’ (Ephesians 3.15). Later, when sons of sons became a people and peoples, and from the family there grew the State, which was too vast for the natural authority of a father, God gave this authority a new artificial image and a new name in the person of the King, and thus by His wisdom kings rule (Proverbs 8.15). In the times of ignorance, when people had forgotten their Creator... God, together with His other mysteries, also presented the mystery of the origin of the powers that be before the eyes of the world, even in a sensory image, in the form of the Hebrew people whom He had chosen for Himself; that is: in the Patriarch Abraham He miraculously renewed the ability to be a father and gradually produced from him a tribe, a people and a kingdom; He Himself guided the patriarchs of this tribe; He Himself raised judges and leaders for this people; He Himself ruled over this kingdom (I Kings 8.7). Finally, He Himself enthroned kings over them, continuing to work miraculous signs over the kings, too. The Highest rules over the kingdom of men and gives it to whom He wills. ‘The Kingdom is the Lord’s and He Himself is sovereign of the nations’ (Psalms 21.29). ‘The power of the earth is in the hand of the Lord, and in due time He will set over it one that is profitable’ (Sirach 10.4).’

“A non-Russian would perhaps ask me now: why do I look on that which was established by God for one people (the Hebrews) and promised to one King (David) as on a general law for Kings and peoples? I would have no difficulty in replying: because the law proceeding from the goodness and wisdom of God is without doubt the perfect law; and why not suggest the perfect law for all? Or are you thinking of inventing a law which would be more perfect than the law proceeding from the goodness and wisdom of God?”

“As heaven is indisputably better than the earth, and the heavenly than the earthly, it is similarly indisputable that the best on earth must be recognized to be that which was built on it in the image of the heavenly, as was said to the God-seer Moses: ‘Look thou that thou make them after their pattern, which was showed thee in the mount’ (Exodus 25.40). Accordingly God established a King on earth in accordance with the image of His single rule in the heavens; He arranged for an autocratic King on earth in the image of His heavenly omnipotence; and ... He placed an hereditary King on earth in the image of His royal immutability. Let us not go into the sphere of the speculations and controversies in which certain people – who trust in their own wisdom more than others – work on the invention... of better, as they suppose, principles for

the transfiguration of human societies... But so far they have not in any place or time created such a quiet and peaceful life... They can shake ancient States, but they cannot create anything firm... They languish under the fatherly and reasonable authority of the King and introduce the blind and cruel power of the mob and the interminable disputes of those who seek power. They deceive people in affirming that they will lead them to liberty; in actual fact they are drawing them from lawful freedom to self-will, so as later to subject them to oppression with full right. Rather than their self-made theorizing they should study the royal truth from the history of the peoples and kingdoms... which was written, not out of human passion, but by the holy prophets of God, that is – from the history of the people of God which was from of old chosen and ruled by God. This history shows that the best and most useful for human societies is done not by people, but by a person, not by many, but by one. Thus: What government gave the Hebrew people statehood and the law? One man – Moses. What government dealt with the conquest of the promised land and the distribution of the tribes of the Hebrew people on it? One man – Joshua the son of Nun. During the time of the Judges one man saved the whole people from enemies and evils. But since the power was not uninterrupted, but was cut off with the death of each judge, with each cutting off of one-man rule the people descended into chaos, piety diminished, and idol-worship and immorality spread; then there followed woes and enslavement to other peoples. And in explanation of these disorders and woes in the people the sacred chronicler says that ‘in those days there was no king in Israel; every man did what was pleasing in his own eyes’ (Judges 21.25). Again there appeared one man, Samuel, who was fully empowered by the strength of prayer and the prophetic gift; and the people was protected from enemies, the disorders ceased, and piety triumphed. Then, to establish uninterrupted one-man rule, God established a King in His people. And such kings as David, Joshaphat, Hezekiah and Josiah present images of how successfully an autocratic Majesty can and must serve for the glorification of the Heavenly King in the earthly kingdom of men, and together with that – for the strengthening and preservation of true prosperity in his people... And during the times of the new grace the All-seeing Providence of God deigned to call the one man Constantine, and in Russia the one man Vladimir, who in apostolic manner enlightened their pagan kingdoms with the light of the faith of Christ and thereby established unshakeable foundations for their might. Blessed is that people and State in which, in a single, universal, all-moving focus there stands, as the sun in the universe, a King, who freely limits his unlimited autocracy by the will of the Heavenly King, and by the wisdom that comes from God.”³⁶

January 13/26, 2019.

³⁶ St. Philaret, in S. Fomin & T. Fomina, *Rossia pered Vtorym Prishestvoiem* (Russia before the Second Coming), Moscow, 1994, vol. I, pp. 320-321.

2. THE ROOT DOGMA OF PROTESTANTISM

What is the root dogma of Protestantism, more fundamental than its well-known teachings on Holy Scripture, on faith and work, and on the Church? We can find the answer to this question, not so much in any printed works of the Reformers, as in their most famous historical encounter.

Luther's printed works spread rapidly, and in 1521 he was summoned to appear before the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V at the Imperial Diet in Worms. "Already excommunicated by Leo X," writes Bridget Heal, "Luther faced condemnation by the pope's secular counterpart, the most powerful monarch in Christendom. Even more than the posting of the *Ninety-Five Theses*, Luther's appearance at the Rhineland city was a defining moment in the Reformation. Luther and his companions spent ten days travelling west from Wittenberg and were greeted enthusiastically along the way. When the reformer arrived at Worms, 2,000 people supposedly gathered in the streets, testimony to the public interest Luther had awoken. On April 17th, as he went to the Diet, people climbed onto rooftops in their eagerness to see him; his arrival was described in terms that consciously echoes the story of Christ's entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. Clothed in a simple black cassock, he stood alone before the assembled might and splendour of the Empire. He was presented with a pile of books and was asked whether they were his and whether he would retract what he had written. He requested an adjournment and when he appeared again the following day, he delivered an extraordinarily courageous speech, refusing to recant and concluding that 'unless I am convinced by the testimony of scriptures I have quoted and by clear reason... I am bound by the scriptures and my conscience is captive to the Word of God.' According to the account of events published by his supporters shortly afterwards, he added: 'I cannot do otherwise, here I stand, may God help me. Amen.

"The events at Worms propelled his message far beyond those concerned with theology and the reform of the German church. His defiance of the emperor and of the secular and ecclesiastical estates of the Empire became, even during his own lifetime, legendary. It made him into a hero..."³⁷

Luther's reported words – "Here I stand, so help me God, I can do no other" – represent the essence of his creed and of his revolutionary challenge to the whole of Western Christendom. For by placing his individual conscience above every authority, whether secular or ecclesiastical, he undermined all authority, replacing it with the most individualist kind of anarchism. Of course, he also appealed to Scripture, to the Word of God. But this was a diversion: by making every unaided individual believer the interpreter of Scripture, he effectively undermined scriptural authority also. Scripture, the written word of God, was

³⁷ Heal, "Martin Luther and the German Reformation", *History Today*, March, 2017, pp. 34-35.

only a seeming authority, a fig-leaf to hide the real authority, the believer's self-will. The only authority left was the naked ego...

This is what we may call Protestant rationalism; it was born in the soil of Catholic rationalism, which consisted in placing the mind of one man, the Pope, above the Catholic consciousness of the Church, the Mind of Christ. Protestantism rejected Papism, but did not reject its underlying principle. Thus instead of placing the mind of *one* man above the Church, it placed the mind of *every* man, every believer, above it. As Luther himself declared: "In matters of faith each Christian is for himself Pope and Church."³⁸ And so Protestantism, as New Hieromartyr Archbishop Hilarion (Troitsky) put it, "placed a papal tiara on every German professor and, with its countless number of popes, completely destroyed the concept of the Church, substituting faith with the reason of each separate personality."³⁹

As Frank Furedi writes, "His defiant stand, would eventually provide legitimation for disobeying all forms of authority...."

"Did Luther really hurl the legendary words - 'Here I stand, so help me God, I can do no other' - at his accusers? In a sense it does not matter. Luther did not merely assert the authority of individual conscience to justify his own actions: he advanced a compelling case for the value of people being able to act in accordance with the dictates of their conscience. In so doing his argument implicitly called into question the right of external authority to exercise power over the inner life of people.

"The distinction that Luther drew about the nature of authority represented an important step in the conceptualisation of a new limit on its exercise. His *Treatise on Good Works* (1520) asserted that 'the power of the temporal authority, whether it does right or wrong, cannot harm the soul'. This idealisation of the soul and its protected status from external authority encouraged European culture to devote greater interest in individual conscience and eventually to endow the self with moral authority.

"In helping to free the inner person from the power of external authority, Luther's theology contributed to the weakening of the very concept of external authority, *including that of divine authority* [my italics - V.M.] The freeing of the inner person from the power of external authority restricted the exercise of absolute authority in all its forms."⁴⁰

The Russian Slavophile Ivan Vasilievich Kireyevsky compared Western rationalism, both Catholic and Protestant, with the Orthodox love of wisdom as follows: "The main trait distinguishing Orthodox Christianity from the Latin

³⁸ *Martin Luthers Werke Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, Weimar, 1885, 405, 35. Quoted by Deacon John Whiteford in ORTHODOX@LISTSERV.INDIANA.EDU, September 6, 1999.

³⁹ Archbishop Hilarion, *Christianity or the Church?*, Jordanville: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1971, p. 28.

⁴⁰ Furedi, "The Invention of Individual Freedom", *History Today*, April, 2017, p. 7.

confession and the Protestant teaching of the faith in their influence on the intellectual and moral development of man consists in the fact that the Orthodox Church strictly adheres to the boundary between Divine Revelation and human reason, that it preserves without any change the dogmas of Revelation as they have existed from the first days of Christianity and have been confirmed by the Ecumenical Councils, not allowing the hand of man to touch their holiness or allowing human reason to modify their meaning and expression in accordance with its temporary systems. But at the same time the Orthodox Church does not restrict reason in its natural activity and in its free striving to search out the truths not communicated to it by Revelation; but it does not give to any rational system or plausible view of science the status of infallible truth, ascribing to them an identical inviolability and holiness to that possessed by Divine Revelation.

“The Latin church, on the contrary, does not know any firm boundaries between human reason and Divine Revelation. It ascribes to its visible head or to a local council the right to introduce a new dogma into the number of those revealed and confirmed by the Ecumenical Councils; to some systems of human reason it ascribes the exceptional right of ascendancy over others, and in this way, even if it does not directly destroy the revealed dogmas, it changes their meaning, while it restricts human reason in the freedom of its natural activity and limits its sacred right and duty to seek from a rapprochement between human truths and Divine truths, natural truths and revealed ones.

“The Protestant teachings of the faith are based on the same annihilation of the boundary between human reason and Divine revelation, with this difference from the Latin teaching, however, that they do not raise any human point of view or systematic mental construction to the level of Divine Revelation, thereby restricting the activity of reason; but, on the contrary, they give human reason ascendancy over the Divine dogmas, changing them or annihilating them in accordance with the personal reasoning of man...

“It is natural that the follower of the Protestant confession, recognizing reason to be the chief foundation of truth, should in accordance with the measure of his education more and more submit his faith itself to his personal reasoning, until the concepts of natural reason take the place for him of all the Traditions of Divine Revelation and the Holy Apostolic Church.

“[However,] where only pure Divine Revelation is recognized to be higher than reason – Revelation which man cannot alter in accordance with his own reasonings, but with which he can only bring his reasoning into agreement, - there, naturally, the more educated a man or a people is, the more its concepts will be penetrated with the teaching of the faith, for the truth is one and the striving to find this oneness amidst the variety of the cognitive and productive actions of the mind is the constant law of all development. But in order to bring the truths of reason into agreement with the truth of Revelation that is above reason a dual activity of reason is necessary. It is not enough to arrange one’s rational concepts in accordance with the postulates of faith, to choose those that

agree with them and exclude those that contradict them, and thereby purify them of all contradiction: it is also necessary to raise the very mode of rational activity to the level at which reason can sympathise with faith and where both spheres merge into one seamless contemplation of the truth. Such is the aim determining the direction of the mental development of the Orthodox Christian, and the inner consciousness of this sought-after region of mental activity is constantly present in every movement of his reason, the breathing of his mental life..."⁴¹

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What gives the Protestants this boldness, this extreme self-confidence in the infallibility of their own conscience and their own reasoning? The answer lies in another characteristic and fundamental doctrine of Protestantism, *predestination*. It was their belief that they were elect and saved that gave the Reformers the boldness – more exactly, the extreme folly – to raise their minds above all established authority.

“Predestination,” wrote Christopher Hill, “is at the heart of Protestantism. Luther saw that it was the only guarantee of the Covenant. ‘For if you doubt, or disdain to know that God foreknows and wills all things, not contingently but necessarily and immutably, how can you believe confidently, trust to and depend upon his promises?’ Without predestination, ‘Christian faith is utterly destroyed, and the promises of God and the whole Gospel entirely fall to the ground for the greatest and only consolation of Christians in their adversities is the knowing that God lies not, but does all things immutably, and that his will cannot be resisted, changed or hindered’. *Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott*. Luther declared that he would not have wanted free will, even if it could have been granted to him: only God can make salvation *certain*, for some it not for all. Indeed, the whole point for Luther lies in the *uniqueness* of the elect. Once touched with divine grace they are differentiated from the mass of humanity: their consciousness of salvation will make them work consciously to glorify God. The psychological effects of this *conscious* segregation of a group from the mass is enormous.

“Calvin went a step further and boldly proclaimed that God was useless to humanity unless he had knowable purposes which we can trust and with which we can cooperate. ‘What avails it, in short, to know a God with whom we have nothing to do... How can the idea of God enter your mind without instantly giving rise to the thought that since you are his workmanship, you are bound, by the very law of creation, to submit to his authority?’ ‘Ignorance of Providence is the greatest of all miseries, and the knowledge of it the highest happiness.’ Faith gives us ‘sure certainty and complete security of mind’, of a sort that is self-evident to those who possess it and inexplicable to those who do not.

⁴¹ Kireyevsky, “Indifferentizm” (“Indifferentism”), in *Razum na puti k istine* (Reason on the Path to Truth), Moscow, 2002, pp. 88-91.

“Men have often commented on the apparent paradox of a predestinarian theological system producing in its adherents an emphasis on effort, on moral energy. One explanation that has been offered is that, for the Calvinist, faith revealed itself in works, and that therefore the only way in which an individual could be assured of his own salvation was by scrutinizing his behaviour carefully night and day to see where he did in fact bring forth works worthy of salvation...

“But I am not entirely convinced that this is the sole explanation. It is highly sophisticated. Most of the evidence for it among the preachers comes from the later seventeenth century, when for other reasons works were being emphasized once more. I believe that the resolution of the paradox is psychologically simpler, if philosophically more complex. Salvation, consciousness of election, consisted of the turning of the heart towards God. A man knew that he was saved because he felt, at some stage of his life, an inner satisfaction, a glow, which told him that he was in direct communion with God. Cromwell was said to have died happy when assured that grace once known could never be lost: for once he had been in a state of grace. We are not dealing here with the mystical ecstasy of a recluse: we are dealing rather with the conscience of the average gentleman, merchant or artisan. What gave him consciousness of election was not the painful scrutiny of his works, for the preachers never tired of telling him that none could keep the commandment, that ‘we cannot cooperate with any grace of God’ unless there is ‘a special spirit infused’. It was the sense of elation and power that justified him and his worldly activities, that gave him self-confidence in a world of economic uncertainty and political hostility. The elect were those who thought they were elect, because they had an inner faith which made them feel free, whatever their external difficulties.

“Philosophically, the argument is circular. But Calvinism did not exist primarily as a philosophical system. It gave courage and confidence to a group of those who believed themselves to be God’s elect. It justified them, in this world and the next... ‘Men, who have assurance that they are to inherit heaven, have a way of presently taking possession of the earth.’”⁴²

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“But is not conscience truly infallible?” one may object. “Is it not, as the expression goes, ‘the eye of God in the soul of man’? And as such, will it not always indicate to us the truth?”

Conscience is indeed the eye of God in the soul of man. And if a man’s soul is purified to reflect the light of God, then his conscience will always reveal to him the truth. But the tragedy of the human condition is that man’s soul is very often – usually – not purified from the passions that hinder the pure light of

⁴² Hill, *God’s Englishman*, London: Penguin, 1970, pp. 211-213.

God from entering the soul; so that when a man thinks he is following his conscience and God he is in fact following the fallen desires of his heart, of which the prophet says: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it? (Jeremiah17.9).

That is why Holy Scripture itself forbids the individual interpretation of Scripture: as St. Peter says, "No Scripture is of any private interpretation" (II Peter 1.20). Our understanding of Scripture, as of all theological subjects, must be tested and corrected in accordance with the conciliar mind of the Church, "the pillar and ground of the truth" (I Timothy 3.15), to which alone is given the promise of infallibility. The holy apostles and Fathers of the Church were unanimous in their understanding of the faith because they were free from passion and trained in obedience to the Mind of Christ as manifested in the Church. The Protestants, by contrast, have split into a myriad of warring sects precisely because each individual Protestant is permitted to understand the faith in his own way with no conciliar authority to guide and correct him. They have made gods of their minds, with the result that they have fallen into the abyss of idolatry. Thinking to see clearly with the eye of their darkened consciences, they have fallen into a pit from which it is very difficult to escape until they recognize their blindness. For, as the Lord said: "The lamp of the body 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).

January 24 / February 6, 2019.

3. CHINA AFTER MAO

Mao died in September, 1976. "Even before he died," writes Frank Dikötter, "large parts of the countryside had already abandoned the planned economy. It was to be one of the most enduring legacies of a decade of chaos and entrenched fear. No communist party would have tolerated organised confrontation, but cadres in the countryside were defenceless against a myriad of daily acts of quiet defiance and endless subterfuge, as people tried to sap the economic dominance of the state and replace it with their own initiative and ingenuity.

"Deng Xiaoping, assuming the reins of power a few years after the death of Mao, briefly tried to resurrect the planned economy. In April 1979 he even demanded that the villagers who had left the collectives rejoin the people's communes. But soon he realised that he had little choice but to go with the flow. By 1980, tens of thousands of local decisions had placed 40 percent of Anhui production teams, 50 percent of Guizhou teams and 60 percent of Gansu teams under household contracts. The people's communes, backbone of the collectivised economy, were dissolved in 1982.

"Not only did the vast majority of people in the countryside push for greater economic opportunities, but they also escaped from the ideological shackles imposed by decades of Maosim. Engless campaigns of thought reform during the Mao era produced widespread scepticism even among party members themselves. The very ideology of the party was gone and its legitimacy lay in tatters. But political freedoms were not to follow. The leaders now lived in fear of their own people, terrified of allowing them to speak again, determined to suppress their political aspirations..."⁴³

Deng Xiaoping also faced the major problem of an impending population explosion. In Moscow in 1957 Mao had declared that he was not afraid of nuclear war because China had such a large population that the loss several hundred millions in a war would be quite tolerable. "I'm not afraid of nuclear war," he said. "There are 2.7 billion people in the world; it doesn't matter if some are killed. China has a population of 600 million; even if half of them are killed, there are still 300 million people left. I'm not afraid of anyone." However, "by 1976," as Isobel Hilton writes, Mao was dead and China's population had leapt from just over 500 million in 1949 to 970 million. In 1979, concerned that population expansion might outpace economic development, the Party swung rapidly in the other direction, introducing a coercive 'one child' policy."⁴⁴ But such a drastic solution to the problem was bound to create another, no less serious problem in later years: a drastic imbalance in the proportion of males to females.

⁴³ Dikötter, "The Cultural Revolution: A People's History", *History Today*, September, 2016, p. 19.

⁴⁴ Hilton, "Will China's Demography be its Downfall?", *Unherd*, June 15, 2018.

Another problem faced by Deng Xiaoping concerned economic policy and its political effects. As Naomi Klein writes, the government “was obsessed with avoiding a repeat of what had just happened in Poland, where workers had been allowed to form an independent movement that challenged the party’s monopoly hold on power. It was not that China’s leaders were committed to protecting the state-owned factories and farm communes that formed the foundation of the Communist state. In fact, Deng was enthusiastically committed to a corporate-based economy – so committed that, in 1980, his government invited Milton Friedman to come to China and tutor hundreds of top-level civil servants, professors and party economists in the fundamentals of free-market theory. ‘All were invited guests, who had to show a ticket of invitation to attend,’ Friedman recalled of his audiences in Beijing and Shanghai. His central message was ‘how much better ordinary people lived in capitalist than in communist countries’. The example he held up was Hong Kong, a zeon of pure capitalism that Friedman had long admired for its ‘dynamic, innovative character that has been produced by personal liberty, free trade, low taxes, and minimal government intervention.’ He claimed that Hong Kong, despite having no democracy, was freer than the United States, since its government participated less in the economy.

“Friedman’s definition of freedom, in which political freedoms were incidental, even unnecessary, compared with the freedom of unrestricted commerce, conformed nicely with the vision taking shape in the Chinese Politburo. The party wanted to open the economy to private ownership and consumerism while maintaining its own grip on power – a plan that ensured that once the assets of the state were auctioned off, party officials and their relatives would snap up the best deals and be first in line for the biggest profits. According to this version of ‘transition’, the same people who controlled the state under Communism would control it under capitalism, while enjoying a substantial upgrade in lifestyle. The model the Chinese government intended to emulate was not the United States but something much closer to Chile under Pinochet: free markets combined with authoritarian political control, enforced by iron-fisted repression.

“From the start Deng clearly understood that repression would be crucial. Under Mao, the Chinese state had exerted brutal control over the people, dispensing with opponents and sending dissidents for re-education. But Mao’s repression took place in the name of the workers and against the bourgeoisie; now the party was going to launch its own counterrevolution and ask workers to give up many of their benefits and security so that a minority could collect huge profits. It was not going to be an easy task. So, in 1983, as Deng opened up the country to foreign investment and reduced protections for workers, he also ordered the creation of the 400,000-strong People’s Armed Police, a new, roving riot squad charged with quashing all signs of ‘economic crimes’ (i.e., strikes and protests). According to the China historian Maurice Meisner, ‘The People’s Armed Police kept American helicopters and electric cattle prods in its arsenal.’ And ‘several units were sent to Poland for anti-riot training’ –

where they studied the tactics that had been used against Solidarity during Poland's period of martial law.

"Many of Deng's reforms were successful and popular – farmers had more control over their lives,⁴⁵ and commerce returned to the cities. But in the late eighties, Deng began introducing measures that were distinctly unpopular, particularly among workers in the cities – price controls were lifted, sending prices soaring; job security was eliminated, creating waves of unemployment; and deep inequalities were opening up between the winners and losers in the new China. By 1988, the party was confronting a powerful backlash and was forced to reverse some of its price deregulation. Outrage was also mounting in the face of the party's defiant corruption and nepotism. Many Chinese citizens wanted more freedom in the market, but 'reform' increasingly looked like code for party officials turning into business tycoons, as many illegally took possession of the assets they had previously managed as bureaucrats.

"With the free-market experiment in peril, Milton Friedman was once again invited to pay a visit to China – much as the Chicago Boys and the piranhas had enlisted his help in 1973, when their program had sparked an internal revolt in Chile. A high-profile visit from the world-famous guru of capitalism was just the boost China's 'reformers' needed.

"When Friedman and his wife, Rose, arrived in Shanghai in September 1988, they were dazzled by how quickly mainland China was beginning to look and feel like Hong Kong. Despite the rage simmering at the grass roots, everything they saw served to confirm 'out faith in the power of free markets'. Friedman described this moment as 'the most hopeful period of the Chinese experiment'.

"In the presence of official state media, Friedman met for two hours with Zhao Ziyang, general secretary of the Communist Party, as well as with Jiang Zemin, then party secretary of the Shanghai Committee and the future Chinese president. Friedman's message to Jiang echoed the advice he had given to Pinochet when the Chilean project was on the skids: don't bow to the pressure and don't blink. 'I emphasized the importance of privatization and free markets, and of liberalizing at one fell stroke,' Friedman recalled. In a memo to the general secretary of the Communist Party, Friedman stressed that more, not less, shock therapy was needed. 'China's initial steps of reform have been dramatically successful. China can make further dramatic progress by placing still further reliance on free private markets.' ...

⁴⁵ According to J.M. Roberts, China's rulers "were helped by the persistence of the old Chinese social disciplines, by the relief felt by millions that the cultural revolution had been left behind, and by the policy (contrary to that of Marxism as still expounded in Moscow until 1980) that economic rewards should flow through the system to the peasant. This built up rural purchasing power, and made for contentment in the countryside. There was a major swing of power away from the rural communes, which in many places practically ceased to be relevant, and by 1985 the family farm was back as the dominant form of rural production over much of China." (*History of the World*, Oxford: Helicon, 1992, p. 911). (V.M.)

“Friedman’s trip did not have the desired results. The pictures in the official papers of the professor offering his blessing to party bureaucrats did not succeed in bringing the public onside. In subsequent months, protests grew more determined and radical. The most visible symbols of the opposition were the demonstrations by student strikers in Tiananmen Square. These historic protests were almost universally portrayed in the international media as a clash between modern, idealistic students who wanted Western-style democratic freedoms and old-guard authoritarians who wanted to protect the Communist state. Recently, another analysis of the meaning of Tiananmen has emerged, one that challenges the mainstream version while putting Friedmanism at the heart of the story. This alternative narrative is being advanced by, among others, Wang Hui, one of the organizers of the 1989 protests, and now a leading Chinese intellectual of what is known as China’s ‘New Left’. In his 2003 book, *China’s New Order*, Wang explains that the protesters spanned a huge range of Chinese society – not just elite university students but also factory workers, small entrepreneurs and teachers. What ignited the protests, he recalls, was popular discontent in the face of Deng’s ‘revolutionary’ economic changes which were lowering wages, raising prices and causing ‘a crisis of layoffs and unemployment’. According to Wang, ‘These changes were the catalyst for the 1989 social mobilization’.

“The demonstrations were not against economic reform per se; they were against the specific Friedmanite nature of the reforms – their speed, ruthlessness and the fact that the process was highly antidemocratic. Wang says that the protesters’ call for elections and free speech were intimately connected to this economic dissent. What drove the demand for democracy was the fact that the party was pushing through changes that were revolutionary in scope, entirely without popular consent. There was, he writes, ‘a general request for democratic means to supervise the fairness of the reform process and the reorganization of social benefits.’”⁴⁶

J.M. Roberts takes up the story: “Posters and rallies began to champion calls for greater ‘democracy’. The regime’s leadership was alarmed, refusing to recognize the [newly formed and unofficial Student] Union which, it was feared, might be the harbinger of a new Red Guards movement. There were demonstrations in many cities and as the seventieth anniversary of the May 4th Movement approached the student activists invoked its memory so as to give a broad patriotic colour to their campaign. They were not able to arouse much support in the countryside, or in the southern cities, but, encouraged by the obviously sympathetic attitude of the general secretary of the CCP, Zhao Ziyang, began a mass hunger strike. It won widespread popular sympathy and support in Peking. It started only shortly before Mr. Gorbachev arrived in the capital; his state visit, instead of providing further reassuring evidence of China’s international standing, only served to remind people of what was going on in the USSR as a result of policies of liberalization. This cut both ways, encouraging the would-be reformers and frightening the conservatives. By this

⁴⁶ Klein, *The Shock Doctrine*, London: Penguin, 2007, pp. 184-188.

time the most senior members of the government, including Deng Xiaoping, seem to have been thoroughly alarmed. Widespread disorder might be in the offing; they believed China faced a major crisis. Some feared a new cultural revolution if things got out of control (and Deng Xiaoping's own son, they could have remarked, was still a cripple as a result of the injuries inflicted on him by Red Guards). On 20 May martial law was declared.

“There were signs for a moment that the government might not be able to impose its will, but the army's reliability was soon assured. The repression which followed was ruthless. The student leaders had move the focus of their efforts to an encampment in Peking in Tiananmen Square, where, thirty years before, Mao had proclaimed the foundation of the People's Republic. From one of the gates of the old Forbidden City a huge portrait of him looked down on the symbol of the protesters: a plastic figure of a 'Goddess of Democracy', deliberately evocative of New York's Statue of Liberty. On 2 June the first military units entered the suburbs of Peking on their way to the square. There was resistance with extemporized weapons and barricades. They forced their way through. On 4 June the students and a few sympathizers were overcome by rifle-fire, teargas, and a brutal crushing of the encampment under the treads of tanks which swept into the square. Killing went on for some days, mass arrests followed (perhaps as many as ten thousand in all). Much of what happened took place before the eyes of the world, thanks to the presence of film-crews in Peking which had for days familiarized television audiences with the demonstrators' encampment. Foreign disapproval was almost universal...”⁴⁷

“For Deng and the rest of the Politburo, the free-market possibilities were now limitless. Just as Pinochet's terror had cleared the streets for revolutionary change, so Tiananmen paved the way for a radical transformation free from fear of rebellion. If life grew harder for peasants and workers, they would either have to accept it quietly or face the wrath of the army and the secret police. And so, with the public in a state of raw terror, Deng rammed through his most sweeping reforms yet.

“Before Tiananmen, he had been forced to ease off some of the more painful measures: three months after the massacre, he brought them back; and he implemented several of Friedman's other recommendations, including price deregulation. For Wang Hui, there is an obvious reason why 'market reforms that had failed to be implemented in the late 1980s just happened to have been completed in the post-1989 environment'; the reason, he writes, 'is that the violence of 1989 served to check the social upheaval brought about by this process, and the new pricing system finally took shape.' The shock of the massacre, in other words, made shock therapy possible.

⁴⁷ Roberts, *History of the World*, Oxford: Helicon, 1992, pp. 911-912. About 2000 were killed in Peking, unknown numbers in other cities.

“In the three years immediately following the bloodbath, China was cracked open to foreign investment, with special export zones constructed throughout the country. As he announced these new initiatives, Deng reminded the country that ‘if necessary, every possible means will be adopted to eliminate any turmoil in the future as soon as it has appeared. Martial law, or even more severe methods, may be introduced.’

“It was the wave of reforms that turned China into the sweatshop of the world, the preferred location for contract factories for virtually every multinational on the planet. No country offered more lucrative conditions than China: low taxes and tariffs, corruptible officials and, most of all, a plentiful low-wage workforce that, for many years, would be unwilling to risk demanding decent salaries or the most basic workplace protections for fear of the most violent reprisals.

“For foreign investors and the party, it has been a win-win arrangement. According to a 2006 study, 80 percent of China’s billionaires (calculated in Chinese yuan) are the children of Communist Party officials. Roughly twenty-nine hundred of these party scions – known as ‘the princelings’ – control \$260 billion. It is a mirror of the corporatist state first pioneered in Chile under Pinochet: a revolving door between corporate and political elites who combine their power to eliminate workers as an organised political force. Today, the collaborative arrangement can be seen in the way that foreign multinational media and technology companies help the Chinese state to spy on its citizens, and to make sure that when students do Web searches or phrases like ‘Tiananmen Square Massacre’, or even ‘democracy’, no documents turn up. ‘The creation of today’s market society was not the result of a sequence of spontaneous events,’ writes Wang Hui, ‘but rather of state interference and violence’.”⁴⁸

“Chinese society,” writes Andrew J. Nathan, “fell into a deep anomie after June 4. Numbed, people everywhere turned away from politics. The sensitive intellectual class, and especially the young students with their exuberant idealism, entered the 1990s with nothing like the admirable social engagement they had shown in the 1980s. The campuses were tranquil, and China seemed shrouded in a dour mist that harboured a spiritual emptiness. Money ruled everything, morals died, corruption burgeoned, bribes were bartered, and when all this became known on the campuses it turned students thoroughly off politics...”⁴⁹

The impact abroad was even greater. As Misha Glenny writes, “The world economy has never experienced a change comparable to the release of 1.25 billion people’s energy that followed China’s renewed reforms in 1991. From accounting for less than 1 per cent of global trade in 1990, China had become the world’s third-largest trader by 2004, outstripping Japan and only lagging

⁴⁸ Klein, *op. cit.*, pp. 189-190.

⁴⁹ Nathan, “The Tiananmen Papers”, *Foreign Affairs*, January / February, 2001, p. 48.

behind the entire European Union and the United States. Analysts at the World Trade Organization predicted that its 6.7 per cent of global trade in that year would top 10 per cent within a decade. In its 2007 Trade Policy Review of China, it also pointed out that in the course this ten-year expansion, the country would need to create yet another 100 million jobs. China's economies of scale mean that it can already compete in any industrial sector, and before long in most service sectors, too."⁵⁰

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The Tiananmen massacre had another importance consequence: a turn in government rhetoric towards nationalist modes of expression. As Graham Allison writes, Deng Xiaoping complained to a visiting dignitary that Western talk of "human rights, freedom, and democracy is designed only to safeguard the interests of the strong, rich countries, which take advantage of their strength to bully weak countries, and which pursue hegemony and practice power politics..."⁵¹ Even before the final decision to clear the Square, expressed a typically Communist, but at the same time characteristically Chinese nationalist approach to the situation, going back to the Opium war of 1842: "The causes of this incident have to do with the global context. The Western world, especially the United States, has thrown its entire propaganda machine into agitation work and has given a lot of encouragement and assistance to the so-called democrats or opposition in China - people who are in fact the scum of the Chinese nation. This is the root of the chaotic situation we face today... Some Western countries use things like 'human rights', or like saying the socialist system is irrational or illegal, to criticize us, but what they're really after is our sovereignty. Those Western countries that play power politics have no right at all to talk about human rights!

"Look how many people around the world they've robbed of human rights! And look how many Chinese people they've hurt the human rights of since they invaded China during the Opium war!...

"Two conditions are indispensable for our developmental goals: a stable environment at home and a peaceful environment abroad. We don't care what others say about us. The only thing we really care about is a good environment for developing ourselves. So long as history eventually proves the superiority of the Chinese socialist system, that's enough. We can't bother about the social systems of other countries. Imagine for a moment what could happen if China falls into turmoil. If it happens now, it'd be far worse than the Cultural Revolution.

"Once civil war got started, blood would flow like a river, and where would human rights be then? In a civil war, each power would dominate a locality,

⁵⁰ Glenny, *McMafia*, London: Vintage, 2009, p. 380.

⁵¹ Allison, "China vs. America", *Foreign Affairs*, September/October, 2017, p. 85.

production would fall, communications would be cut off, and refugees would flow out of China not in millions or tens of millions but in hundreds of millions.

“First hit by this flood of refugees would be Pacific Asia, which is currently the most promising region of the world. This would be disaster on a global scale. So China mustn’t make a mess of itself. And this is not just to be responsible to ourselves, but to consider the whole world and all of humanity as well...”

The Friedmanite economic revolution, he said – but also the Communist Party’s monopoly of power: “No one can keep China’s reform and opening from going forward. Why is that? It’s simple. Without reform and opening our development stops and our economy slides downhill. Living standards decline if we turn back. The momentum of reform cannot be stopped. We must insist on this point at all times.

“Some people say we allow only economic reform and not political reform, but that’s not true. We do allow political reform, but on one condition: that the Four Basic Principles are upheld. [The Four Basic Principles are Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong thought, socialism, the people’s democratic dictatorship, and leadership by the Chinese Communist Party.]...

“We can’t handle chaos while we’re busy with construction. If today we have a big demonstration and tomorrow a great airing of views and a bunch of wall posters, we won’t have any energy left to get anything done. That’s why we have to insist on clearing the Square.”⁵²

“In the aftermath of the massacre,” as Maria Chang writes, “the government sought to regain control by instigating a campaign of national unity in which young people were singled out for ‘patriotic education’. Calling the democracy movement a ‘counter-revolutionary rebellion’ that had the ‘black hands’ of foreign enemies behind it, the party urged the people to unite under its leadership or China would descend into chaos. In September 1994, the Patriotic Education Campaign was expanded to include the entire populace, followed by the publication in November 1995 of *Selected Words for Instruction in Patriotic Education* containing the writings and speeches of Mao, Deng, and Jiang Zemin on patriotism. The official *People’s Daily* admitted that the book was meant ‘to fill an ideological vacuum’ in the Chinese people, who were enjoined to ‘love their country’. Spearheading the campaign was Jiang, who instructed his party to rebuild itself ‘under the new banner of nationalism’ and urged that the masses, especially the youth, be ‘deeply inculcated’ with the values of ‘patriotism’.

“Although the Tiananmen incident was the catalyst, Beijing’s turn to patriotic nationalism has deeper roots and can be better understood in the larger context of the Communist Party’s need to relegitimate its rule. Deng’s

⁵² Deng, in Nathan, *op. cit.*, pp. 32, 33.

market reforms had managed to salvage his party's tattered legitimacy from the ruination wrought by Mao and rebuild it upon a pragmatic basis of economic performance. But China's ideocratic political system demands more than pragmatic legitimacy, requiring instead doctrinal legitimation provided by some overarching ideology. Jiang Zemin admitted as much when he said in a speech in 1996 that 'Only with resolute theory can our politics be steadfast.' And the Communist Party seems to have found its new doctrinal legitimation in Deng's developmental nationalism.

"Franz Schurmann once observed that the CCP divides its ideology into two parts: The first is 'theory' (*lilun*) comprised of ideas that are claimed to be universally applicable and for all time; the second is 'thought' (*sixiang*), the practical application of universal theory to concrete circumstances of a particular time and place. For much of its history, the CCP considered Marxism-Leninism to be its guiding theory, while the ideas of Mao Zedong served as its thought. In March 1999, however, the party elevated the reformist ideas of Deng to the level of theory when it incorporated 'Deng Xiaoping theory' into the preamble of its constitution. In so doing, the Communist Party appeared to signal its formal adoption of developmental nationalism as its ideology. As observed by *The Economist*, with communism discredited and democracy distrusted, China's leaders have turned to 'a new ideology' of 'visceral nationalism' to justify their power..."⁵³

By a remarkable coincidence, Russia has moved in a very similar direction: after a decade of Friedmanite economic shock therapy under Yeltsin, Putin has moved to a new ideology of "visceral nationalism"...

However, this "new" ideology was not really new: it was in fact a return to ancient Chinese exceptionalism and nationalism. As Allison writes: "'The [Chinese] empire saw itself as the center of the civilized universe,' the historian Harry Gelber wrote in his 2001 book, *Nations out of Empires*. During the imperial era, 'The Chinese scholar-bureaucrat did not think of a 'China' or a 'Chinese civilization' in the modern sense at all. For him, there were the Han people and, beyond that, only barbarism. Whatever was not civilized was, by definition, barbaric.

"To this day, the Chinese take great pride in their civilizational achievements. 'Our nation is a great nation,' Chinese President Xi Jinping declared in a 2012 speech. 'During the civilization and development process of more than 5,000 years, the Chinese nation has made an invaluable contribution to the civilization and advancement of mankind.' Indeed, Xi claimed in his 2014 book, *The Government of China*, that 'China's continuous civilization is not equal to anything on earth, but a unique achievement in world history.'"⁵⁴

⁵³ Chang, *Return of the Dragon*, Boulder, Co.: Westview Press, 2001, pp. 177-178.

⁵⁴ Allison, *op. cit.*, pp. 82-83.

What is really unique about contemporary China is its *information control*. Most of the population uses the internet and has smart phones. But the government has stopped access to Facebook and Google – with the astonishing result that the Tiananmen massacre of 1989 is more or less completely unknown to the younger generation... Discussion of the events of 1989 is still banned, and media outlets that ignore this ban are shut down.. F

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What of religion in the new China? After the death of Mao, China's main object of worship, writes Ian Johnson, "the country went into shock. Some people were thrilled – finally the tyrant was gone – but many were crushed. Tears flowed, and the country ground to a halt. With traditional religion decimated and Mao dead, people were unsure how to channel their hopes and fears.

"The party responded by trying to turn the clock back to the early 1950s. In 1982, as part of a more general accounting of the destruction wrought by the Cultural Revolution, the Chinese Communist Party issued a 20-page paper titled 'The Basic Viewpoint and Policy on the Religious Question During Our Country's Socialist Period'. Better known as Document 19, it featured an astounding candid analysis of China's religious crisis – and provided the legal basis for the religious revival now under way. The document stated that for 19 of Mao's 27 years in power, 'leftist errors' took hold – a surprising admission of how badly the party had fumbled religious policy during its first three decades in power. It conceded that Maoist radicals had 'forbidden normal religious activities', 'fabricated a host of wrongs and injustices that they pinned upon these religious personages', and 'used violent measures against religion that forced religious movements underground'. The document went on to describe religion in sympathetic language, arguing forcefully that it would disappear – but only very gradually. In the meantime, the party's policy would be 'respect for and protection of the freedom of religious belief'. Places of worship could reopen, and a new generation of clergy could receive training.

"The approach described in Document 19 has more or less guided the party ever since. As a result, China is no longer the bastion of godless communism that many foreigners still imagine. However, that hardly means that religion is not a source of severe tension in Chinese society. People of faith intensely resent the government's control of major temples, churches, and mosques, and many have turned to underground places of worship. It is all but banned from the media; religious leaders, for example, almost never comment on the great issues of the day, or even interact with one another. Interreligious dialogue is all but unknown..."⁵⁵

In 2018 we read that poor Christians in China are being forced to replace portraits of the Lord Jesus Christ with portraits of the Chinese leader Xi.

⁵⁵ Johnson, "China's Great Awakening", *Foreign Affairs*, March/April, 2017, p. 89.

Indeed, persecution of Chinese Christians has now reached its highest level of intensity since the Cultural Revolution.⁵⁶ Nevertheless, Christianity is spreading: according to unofficial figures, there are now 100 million Christians in China as opposed to 90 million members of the Communist Party...⁵⁷

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In many ways, China's path appears to be mirroring - but much more successfully - the development of Russia in recent decades, returning to the totalitarian beginnings of the state after a period of comparative liberalization. As Elizabeth C. Economy writes: "In the 1940s, Mao led the communist revolution that created the contemporary Chinese state. Beginning in the late 1970s, his successor, Deng Xiaoping, oversaw a self-proclaimed 'second revolution', in which he ushered in economic reforms and the low-profile foreign policy that produced China's economic miracle. Now, Xi has launched a third revolution. Not only has he slowed, and, in many cases, reversed, the process of 'reform and opening up' set in motion by Deng, but he has also sought to advance the principles of this new China on the global stage. Moreover, in a striking move made in March, the government eliminated the constitutional provision limiting the president to two terms, allowing Xi to serve as president for life. For the first time, China is an illiberal state seeking leadership in a liberal world order..."⁵⁸

January 29 / February 11, 2019.

⁵⁶ Bradford Richardson, "'Human rights disaster': China's persecution of Christians at highest level since Mao", *The Washington Times*, June 6, 2018, <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2018/jun/6/chinas-christian-persecution-highest-level-mao/>

⁵⁷ "V Kitae bednykh khristian prinuzhdaiut zamenit' Iisusa na Xi Tszin'pina" (In China poor Christians are being forced to replace Jesus with Xi Tsinpin), <http://ekd.me/2017/11/nadoelo-byt-bednyakom-kitaj-predlagaet-povesit-v-komnate-portret-si-czinpina-vmesto-iisusa-xrista/>

⁵⁸ Economy, "China's New Revolution", *Foreign Affairs*, May/June, 2018, p. 61.

4. ST. NICHOLAS OF JAPAN ON THE FUTURE OF ORTHODOXY

In a letter to the future hieromartyr, Archbishop Nikon of Vologda, St. Nicholas of Japan (+1912) wrote:

“I was greatly saddened on reading the darker part of your letter: ‘Threatening clouds are passing over our poor Russia. Not without reason, many are thinking about the end of the world’, etc. But my sadness did not hold out in its full force in the face of my further thoughts. In the heat of battle the warrior sees blood, much blood; but he will not be right if he says: ‘Look, there is only blood; the world will not last, the world will perish!’ You are in the very centre of the heated battle, and you yourself are suffering wounds. How can you not suffer, how can your heart not bleed, how can you restrain a cry of pain! But turn your gaze on the expanse of human history from Adam to the present day: when were there times that were completely consoling? The pre-Christian world choked in a lightless atmosphere of evil to the point that the best people of the time resorted to the final consolation, suicide. Suddenly a heavenly light shone on the earth, and a cup of consolation was given to men, Nevertheless, even when they had entered the beam of this light and accepted the cup, on seeing the darkness that surrounded from outside, they suffered to the point of thinking that the end of the world had come. Remember how the Apostle Paul tried to persuade the Thessalonian: ‘Haste not to be disturbed in mind about the end of the world’, as if the mystery of iniquity has already come. But the end is not now. And when will it be? ‘This Gospel of the Kingdom will be preached throughout the inhabited world, as a witness in every language, and then the end will come.’” What could be clearer or more sure, and also more comforting than this indication! A good half of the pagans in the inhabited world has not yet heard the Gospel of the Kingdom. And have those who have heard it assimilated it in a fitting way? Has the Gospel penetrated the depths of the hearts of the European peoples? No, it is still on the surface of their souls. And this is because the western listen to a Gospel darkened by the distortions of Catholicism and Protestantism; the Russians listen to the all-radiant Gospel with as-yet-unenlightened, ignorant and undeveloped minds and superficial hearts. Was it for that reason that God descended to earth and Himself uttered His teaching to men, so that it should quickly appear in the darkened forms of Catholicism and Protestantism, and that there where it shines with in its full radiance, only a few should be enlightened to the bottom of their hearts and minds and be transfigured by it as was the chorus of saints of the Orthodox Church, but that the masses should walk in this light more through the inclination of their hearts without clearly giving an account to themselves of the treasure they possessed?... The life, both of the individual person, and still more of each people and, undoubtedly, of the whole of humanity, goes through the period appointed for it by its Creator. But what age is humanity now since the time of its birth into new life? Oh, of course, it is still in its youth! Two thousand years for such a large organism is quite a small number of years. Many thousands of years must yet pass before the true

teaching of Christ and the life-creating grace of the Holy Spirit penetrate all the members of this organism, and all the peoples and all the people in them assimilate the teaching of Christ and are subjected to its grace-filled action – the justice of God demands this. The truth of Christ and the grace of the Holy Spirit must enter humanity in all their strength and produce their full effect: then this great organism will extend to its full height, and will accomplish as much good as the nature of man, created by God the Creator and fertilized by God the Saviour, is capable of. Already the ancient prophets foresaw and in ecstatic tones described this time, when ‘there will be no impure path and people will not go astray, there will be no lion or savage beast, and the wolves and sheep will feed together’, in accordance with the much-desired word of Incarnate Truth Himself. There is still a long way to go before humanity reaches this summit! And then it will go down and descend to such a depth of evil as it did not reach even before the flood; the vital forces of light and goodness will dry up almost completely in decrepit humanity – then, and not before that time, will the end of the world come.”⁵⁹

While there are few that would share St. Nicholas’ belief that this world will yet last “many thousands of years”, we can certainly believe that before the Antichrist and the Second Coming of Christ there will yet be a flowering of the true faith and the preaching of the true, Orthodox Gospel to the ends of the world...

⁵⁹ Archbishop Nikon, “Orthodoxy and the Coming Destinies of the World, Pskov-Caves Dormition Monastery, 1995, pp. 295-297.

5. VLADIMIR SOLOVIEV ON NATIONALISM AND CATHOLICISM

The reign of Alexander III was an era of peace and stability during which the old authoritarian regime was not seriously threatened. At the same time it was not a period of intellectual stagnation; and two powerful thinkers set about examining the foundations of the Russian autocracy. The philosopher Vladimir Soloviev examined it particularly in relation to what he regarded as its weakest point, its tendency towards nationalism, while the law professor and over-procurator of the Holy Synod, Constantine Pobedonostsev, examined it in relation to the fashionable contemporary theories of liberal democracy and Church-State separation.

Soloviev was, for good and for ill, the most influential thinker in Russia until his death in 1900, and for some time after. In 1874, at the age of 23, he defended his master's thesis, "The Crisis of Western Philosophy", at the Moscow Theological Academy. Coming at a time when the influence of western positivism was at its peak, this bold philosophical vindication of the Christian faith drew the attention of many; and his lectures on Godmanhood in St. Petersburg were attended by both Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky.⁶⁰ Unfortunately, his philosophy of "pan-unity" contained pantheistic elements; there is evidence that his lectures on Godmanhood were plagiarized from the works of Schelling⁶¹; and his theory of Sophia, the Wisdom of God, was both heretical in itself and gave birth to other heresies.⁶²

Turning from his metaphysics to his social and political teaching, we find in Soloviev a mixture of East and West, Slavophilism and Westernism. On the one hand, he believed fervently, with the Slavophiles, in the Divine mission of Russia. But on the other, he was fiercely critical of the nationalism of the later

⁶⁰ "It was a notable event," writes Rosamund Bartlett, "not because Tolstoy found the lecture interesting (he dismissed it as 'childish nonsense'), but because it was the only occasion on which he and Dostoyevsky were in spitting distance of each other. Strakhov was a friend of both the great writers, but he honoured Tolstoy's request not to introduce him to anyone, and so the two passed like ships in the night, to their subsequent mutual regret. Much later, Tolstoy described in letters the horrible experience of having to sit in a stuffy hall which was packed so full that there were even high-society ladies in evening dress perched on window ledges. As someone who went out of his way to avoid being part of the crowd, and who disdained having anything to do with polite society or fashion, his blood must have boiled at having to wait until the emaciated figure of the twenty-four-year-old philosopher decided to make a grand theatrical entrance in his billowing white silk cravat. Tolstoy certainly did not have the patience to sit and listen to some boy 'with a huge head consisting of hair and eyes' spout pretentious pseudo-profundities. After the first string of German quotations and references to cherubim and seraphim, he got up and walked out, leaving Strakhov to carry on listening to the 'ravings of a lunatic'" (*Tolstoy. A Russian Life*, Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2011, p. 267).

⁶¹ Archbishop Nikon (Rklitsky), *Zhizneopisanie Blazhenneishago Antonia, Mitropolita Kievskago i Galitskago* (Biography of Blessed Anthony, Metropolitan of Kiev and Galich), volume 1, 1971, pp. 103-104.

⁶² For Soloviev Sophia was the feminine principle of God, His 'other'. For some of his heretical followers, such as Protopriest Sergius Bulgakov, it was the Mother of God.

Slavophiles, he admired Peter the Great, did not admire Byzantium and did not accept Khomiakov's claim that Orthodoxy was exclusively the One True Church. He felt drawn to the universalism of the Roman Catholics, becoming an early "prophet" of Orthodox-Roman Catholic ecumenism.

The problem with the Slavic world and Orthodoxy, Soloviev came to believe, was its nationalism. Thus in 1885 he wrote with regard to the Bulgarian schism: "Once the principle of nationality is introduced into the Church as the main and overriding principle, once the Church is recognized to be an attribute of the people, it naturally follows that the State power that rules the people must also rule the Church that belongs to the people. The national Church is necessarily subject to the national government, and in such a case a special church authority can exist only for show..."⁶³

Soloviev feared that Russia's political ambitions in the Balkans and the Middle East were crudely imperialist and did not serve her own deepest interests, but rather the petty nationalisms of other nations. Thus in "The Russian Idea" (1888) he wrote: "The true greatness of Russia is a dead letter for our pseudo-patriots, who want to impose on the Russian people a historical mission in their image and in the limits of their own understanding. Our national work, if we are to listen to them, is something that couldn't be more simple and that depends on one force only - the force of arms. To beat up the expiring Ottoman empire, and then crush the monarchy of the Habsburgs, putting in the place of these states a bunch of small independent national kingdoms that are only waiting for this triumphant hour of their final liberation in order to hurl themselves at each other. Truly, it was worth Russia suffering and struggling for a thousand years, and becoming Christian with St. Vladimir and European with Peter the Great, constantly in the meantime occupying its unique place between East and West, and all this just so as in the final analysis to become the weapon of the 'great idea' of the Serbs and the 'great idea' of the Bulgarians!

"But that is not the point, they will tell us: the true aim of our national politics is Constantinople. Apparently, they have already ceased to take the Greeks into account - after all, they also have their 'great idea' of pan-hellenism. But the most important thing is to know: with what, and in the name of what can we enter Constantinople? What can we bring there except the pagan idea of the absolute state and the principles of caesaropapism, which were borrowed by us from the Greeks and which have already destroyed Byzantium? In the history of the world there are mysterious events, but there are no senseless ones. No! It is not this Russia which we see now, the Russia which has betrayed its best memories, the lessons of Vladimir and Peter the Great, the Russia which is possessed by blind nationalism and unfettered

⁶³ Soloviev, "Golos Moskvyy" (The Voice of Moscow), 14 March, 1885; quoted in Fomin and Fomina, *op. cit.*

obscurantism, it is not this Russia that will one day conquer the second Rome and put an end to the fateful eastern question..."⁶⁴

Soloviev believed passionately in freeing the Church from the shackles imposed on her by the State. In an 1885 article he wrote: "Enter into the situation of our churchman, Spiritual initiative on his own moral responsibility is not allowed. Religious and ecclesiastical truth is completely preserved in a state strongbox, under state seal and the guard of trustworthy sentries. The security is complete, but living interest is lacking. Somewhere far off a religious struggle is going on, but it does not touch us. Our pastors do not have opponents who enjoy the same rights they do. The enemies of Orthodoxy exist outside the sphere of our activity, and if they ever turn up inside it, then only with bound hands and a gag in their mouth."⁶⁵

If these shackles were removed, Russian Orthodoxy could not only be able to preach to the heterodox in a more honest and free environment: she could also fulfil her own needs. For "Russia left to herself," he wrote, "lonely Russia, is powerless. It is not good for man to be alone: this word of God is applicable also to collective man, to a whole people. Only in union with that which she lacks can Russia utilize that which she possesses, that is, in full measure both for herself and for the whole world."⁶⁶

In union with whom was Russia to quench her loneliness? In the 1880s Soloviev was gradually coming to the view that the answer to this question was: the Roman papacy. A union between the Russian emperor and the Roman pope would both cut off Russia's and Orthodoxy's tendency towards nationalism and solve the problem of the union of the churches, which was much discussed in aristocratic and intellectual circles at the time. In 1884 Soloviev visited the Croatian Catholic Bishop Joseph Strossmayer, who, as we have seen, had been one of the principal opponents of the new dogma of papal infallibility at the First Vatican Council and who was sympathetic to Soloviev's idea. On a second visit, Strossmayer told him that he had sent a copy of his French pamphlet *L'idée russe* to the pope, whose reaction had been: "beautiful", but "impossible". On returning to Russia, Soloviev found that there was an almost complete ban on his journalistic activities, and his attempt to meet the Tsar was foiled. For during his trip to Europe, as Mark Everitt writes, "Pobedonstsev had written to the Emperor to draw his attention to an article in the Moscow press which discussed *L'idée russe*: 'You will see to what pitch of insanity a learned and clever Russian can come, and the son of [the famous historian] Sergei Soloviev, too. Pride, reinforced by the veneration in which he is held by some ladies, has driven him on to this erroneous path.' The Emperor replied, 'It truly is frightfully sad, and particularly when you think of dear S.

⁶⁴ Soloviev, in N.G. Fyodorovsky, *V poiskakh svoego puti: Rossia mezhdru Evropoj i Aziej* (In Search of her own Path: Russia between Europe and Asia), Moscow, 1997, pp. 334-335.

⁶⁵ Soloviev, "Kak probudit' nashi tserkovnie sily?" in Paul Valliere, "The Liberal Tradition in Russian Orthodox Theology", in J. Breck, J. Meyendorff and E. Silk (eds.), *The Legacy of St Vladimir*, Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1990, p. 103.

⁶⁶ Soloviev, "Evreystvo i khristianskij vopros", in Valliere, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

Soloviev' – the Emperor's own tutor in his youth. And that was the end of Soloviev's grand design..."⁶⁷

Soloviev did manage to get his ideas published abroad in 1889, in *La Russie et l'Eglise universelle*. In view of their continuing relevance in our ecumenical age, it is worth examining them...

The Roman papacy was to be preferred above the Orthodox Church as the partner to the Russian empire because, in Soloviev's opinion, the Orthodox Church had become a group of national Churches, rather than the Universal Church, and had therefore lost the right to represent Christ. Nevertheless, the Orthodox Church had a wealth of mystical contemplation, which had to be preserved. "In Eastern Christendom for the last thousand years religion has been identified with personal piety, and prayer has been regarded as the one and only religious activity. The Western church, without disparaging individual piety as the true germ of all religion, seeks the development of this germ and its blossoming into a social activity organized for the glory of God and the universal good of mankind. The Eastern prays, the Western prays and labours."

However, only a supranational spiritual power independent of the State could be a worthy partner of the State, forming the basis of a universal theocracy. For "here below, the Church has not the perfect unity of the heavenly Kingdom, but nevertheless she must have a certain real unity, a bond at once organic and spiritual which constitutes her a concrete institution, a living body and a moral individual. Though she does not include the whole of mankind in an actual material sense, she is nevertheless *universal* insofar as she cannot be confined exclusively to any one nation or group of nations, but must have an international centre from which to spread throughout the whole universe...

"Were she not one and universal, she could not serve as the foundation of the positive unity of all peoples, which is her chief mission. Were she not infallible, she could not guide mankind in the true way; she would be a blind leader of the blind. Finally were she not independent, she could not fulfil her duty towards society; she would become the instrument of the powers of this world and would completely fail in her mission...

"If the particular spiritual families which between them make up mankind are in reality to form a single Christian family, a single Universal Church, they must be subject to a common fatherhood embracing all Christian nations. To assert that there exist in reality nothing more than national Churches is to assert that the members of a body exist in and for themselves and that the body itself has no reality. On the contrary, Christ did not found any particular Church. He created them all in the real unity of the Universal Church which He entrusted

⁶⁷ Everitt, "Vladimir Soloviev: A Russian Newman?" *Sobornost'*, vol. 1, no. 1, 1979. p. 36.

to Peter as the one supreme representative of the divine Fatherhood towards the whole family of the sons of Man.

“It was by no mere chance that Jesus Christ specially ascribed to the first divine Hypostasis, the heavenly Father, that divine-human act which made Simon Bar-Jona the first social father of the whole human family and the infallible master of the school of mankind.”

For Soloviev, wrote N.O. Lossky, “the ideal of the Russian people is of [a] *religious* nature, it finds its expression in the idea of ‘Holy Russia’; the capacity of the Russian people to combine Eastern and Western principles has been historically proved by the success of Peter the Great’s reforms; the capacity of national self-renunciation, necessary for the recognition of the Pope as the Primate of the Universal Church, is inherent in the Russian people, as may be seen, among other things, from the calling in of the Varangians. Soloviev himself gave expression to this characteristic of the Russian people when he said that it was ‘better to give up patriotism than conscience’, and taught that the cultural mission of a great nation is not a *privilege*: it must not dominate, but *serve* other peoples and all mankind.

“Soloviev’s Slavophile messianism never degenerated into a narrow nationalism. In the nineties he was looked upon as having joined the camp of the Westernizers. In a series of articles he violently denounced the epigones of Slavophilism who had perverted its original conception. In the article ‘Idols and Ideals’, written in 1891, he speaks of ‘the transformation of the lofty and all-embracing Christian ideals into the coarse and limited idols of our modern paganism... National messianism was the main idea of the old Slavophiles; this idea, in some form or other, was shared by many peoples; it assumed a pre-eminently religious and mystical character with the Poles (Towianski) and with some French dreamers of the thirties and forties (Michelet, Ventra, etc.). What is the relation of such national messianism to the true Christian idea? We will not say that there is a contradiction of principle between them. The true Christian ideal can assume this national messianic form, but it becomes then very *easily pervertible* (to use an expression of ecclesiastical writers); i.e., it can easily change into the corresponding idol of anti-Christian nationalism, which did happen in fact.’...

“Soloviev struggled in his works against every distortion of the Christian ideal of general harmony; he also struggled against all the attempts made by man to satisfy his selfishness under the false pretence of serving a noble cause. Such are for instance the aims of chauvinistic nationalism. Many persons believe, Soloviev tells us, that in order to serve the imaginary interests of their people, ‘everything is permitted, the aim justifies the means, black turns white, lies are preferable to truth and violence is glorified and considered as valor... This is first of all an insult to that very nationality which we desire to serve.’ In reality, ‘peoples flourished and were exalted only when they did not serve their own interests as a goal in itself, but pursued higher, *general* ideal goods.’ Trusting the highly sensitive conscience of the Russian people, Soloviev wrote

in his article, 'What is Demanded of a Russian Party?' 'If instead of doping themselves with Indian opium, our Chinese neighbors suddenly took a liking to the poisonous mushrooms which abound in the Siberian woods, we would be sure to find Russian jingos, who in their ardent interest in Russian trade, would want Russia to induce the Chinese government to permit the free entry of poisonous mushrooms into the Celestial empire... Nevertheless, every plain Russian will say that no matter how vital an interest may be, Russia's honor is also worth something; and, according to Russian standards, this honor definitely forbids a shady deal to become an issue of national politics.'

"Like Tiutchev, Soloviev dreamed of Russia becoming a Christian world monarchy; yet he wrote in a tone full of anxiety: 'Russia's life has not yet determined itself completely, it is still torn by the struggle between the principle of light and that of darkness. Let Russia become a Christian realm, even without Constantinople, a Christian realm in the full sense of the word, that is, one of justice and mercy, and all the rest will be surely added unto this.'"⁶⁸

As we have seen, Dostoyevsky disagreed with his friend on this point, considering the papacy to be, not so much a Church as a State. Nor did he agree with the doctrine of papal infallibility, which Soloviev also rejected. As Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky) wrote in 1890, in his review of Soloviev's book: "A sinful man cannot be accepted as the supreme head of the Universal Church without this bride of Christ being completely dethroned. Accepting the compatibility of the infallibility of religious edicts with a life of sin, with a wicked will, would amount to blasphemy against the Holy Spirit of wisdom by admitting His compatibility with a sinful mind. Khomiakov very justly says that besides the holy inspiration of the apostles and prophets, Scripture tells us of only one inspiration - inspiration of the obsessed. But if this sort of inspiration was going on in Rome, the Church would not be the Church of Christ, but the Church of His enemy. And this is exactly how Dostoyevsky defines it in his 'Grand Inquisitor' who says to Christ: 'We are not with Thee, but with him'... Dostoyevsky in his 'Grand Inquisitor' characterised the Papacy as a doctrine which is attractive exactly because of its worldly power, but devoid of the spirit of Christian communion with God and of contempt for the evil of the world..."⁶⁹

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As a warning against the dangers of a Russian nationalism lacking the universalist dimension of the early Slavophiles and Dostoyevsky, Soloviev's critique had value. But his attempt to tear Russia away from Constantinople and towards Rome was misguided. (He himself received confession and communion from a uniate priest in 1896, but received the last rites from an

⁶⁸ Lossky, *History of Russian Philosophy*, London: Allen Unwin, 1952, pp. 115-117.

⁶⁹ Khrapovitsky, "The Infallibility of the Pope according to Vladimir Soloviev", *Orthodox Life*, vol. 37, N 4, July-August, 1987, pp. 37, 43.

Orthodox priest on his deathbed in 1900).⁷⁰ Moreover, it had an unhealthy influence on other writers, such as D.S. Merezhkovsky, not to mention the many educated Russians who read French and Catholic writers more readily than Russian ones. Thus Merezhkovsky, according to Sergius Firsov, “found it completely normal to compare Roman Catholicism headed by the Pope and the Russian kingdom headed by the Autocrat. Calling these theocracies (that is, attempts to realise the City of God in the city of man) false, Merezhkovsky pointed out that they came by different paths to the same result: the western – to turning the Church into a State, and the eastern – to engulfing the Church in the State. ‘Autocracy and Orthodoxy are two halves of one religious whole,’ wrote Merezhkovsky, ‘just as the papacy and Catholicism are. The Tsar is not just the Tsar, the head of the State, but also the head of the Church, the first priest, the anointed of God, that is, in the final, if historically not yet realised, yet mystically necessary extent of his power – ‘the Vicar of Christ’, the same Pope, Caesar and Pope in one.’”⁷¹

To the educated Russians like Soloviev who were being seduced by Catholicism, St. Ambrose of Optina wrote the following letter: “In vain do some of the Orthodox marvel at the current propaganda of the Roman Church, at the feigned selflessness and activity of her missionaries and at the zeal of the Latin sisters of mercy, and incorrectly ascribe to the Latin Church such importance, as if by her apostasy from the Orthodox Church, the latter remained no longer such, and has the need to seek unification with the former. On rigorous examination, this opinion proves to be false; and the energetic Latin activity not only does not evoke surprise, but, on the contrary, arouses deep sorrow in the hearts of right-thinking people, who understand the truth.

“The Eastern Orthodox Church, from apostolic times until now, observes unchanged and unblemished by innovations both the Gospel and Apostolic teachings, as well as the Tradition of the Holy Fathers and resolutions of the Ecumenical Councils, at which God-bearing men, having gathered from throughout the entire world, in a conciliar manner composed the divine Symbol of the Orthodox Faith [the Creed], and having proclaimed it aloud to the whole universe, in all respects perfect and complete, forbade on pain of terrible punishments any addition to it, any abridging, alteration, or rearrangement of even one iota of it. The Roman Church departed long ago into heresy and innovation. As far back as Basil the Great, certain bishops of Rome were condemned by him in his letter to Eusebius of Samosata, ‘They do not know and do not wish to know the truth; they argue with those who proclaim the truth to them, and assert their heresy.’

“The Apostle Paul commands us to separate ourselves from those damaged by heresy and not to seek union with them, saying, *A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject; knowing that he that is such is subverted, and*

⁷⁰ Everitt, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

⁷¹ Firsov, *Russkaia Tserkov' nakanune peremen (konets 1890-kh – 1918 g.)* (The Russian Church on the Eve of the Changes (the end of the 1890s to 1918), Moscow, 2002, pp. 39-40.

sinneth, being condemned of himself (Titus 3:10-11). The Catholic [universal] Orthodox Church, not two times, but multiple times tried to bring to reason the local Roman Church; but, despite all the just attempts at persuading the former, the latter remained persistent in its erroneous manner of thinking and acting.

“Already back in the seventh century, the false philosophizing that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son was conceived in the Western Church. At first, certain popes rose up against this new reasoning, calling it heretical. Pope Damasus proclaims in a Council resolution: ‘He who thinks rightly about the Father and the Son but improperly about the Holy Spirit is a heretic’ (*Encyclical* § 5). Other popes, such as Leo III and John VIII, also affirmed the same thing. But most of their successors, having been carried away by rights of domination and finding many worldly benefits in this for themselves, dared to modify the Orthodox dogma about the procession of the Holy Spirit, contrary to the decisions of the seven Ecumenical Councils, and also contrary to the clear words of the Lord Himself in the Gospel: *Which proceedeth from the Father* (John 15:26).

“But just as one mistake--which is not considered a mistake--always brings another one in its train, and one evil begets another, so the same happened with the Roman Church. This incorrect philosophizing that the Holy Spirit proceeds also from the Son, having just barely appeared in the West, already then gave birth to other similar offspring, and instituted little by little other novelties, for the most part contradictory to the commandments of our Saviour clearly portrayed in the Gospel, such as: sprinkling instead of immersion in the mystery of Baptism, exclusion of laypersons from the Divine Chalice and the use of unleavened bread instead of leavened bread in the Eucharist, and excluding from the Divine Liturgy the invocation of the All-Holy and Life-Giving and All-Effectuating Spirit. It also introduced novelties that violated the ancient Apostolic rites of the Catholic Church, such as: the exclusion of baptized infants from Chrismation and reception of the Most-Pure Mysteries, the exclusion of married men from the priesthood, the declaration of the Pope as infallible and as the *locum tenens* of Christ, and so on. In this way, it overturned the entire ancient Apostolic office that accomplishes almost all the Mysteries and all the ecclesiastical institutions--the office, which before had been preserved by the ancient holy and Orthodox Church of Rome, being at that time the most honored member of the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church (*Encyclical* § 5, item 12).

“Nevertheless, the main heresy of the Roman Church is not in subject matter, but in action; there is the fabricated dogma of supremacy, or rather, prideful striving for dominance of the bishops of Rome over the four other Eastern Patriarchs. For the sake of this dominance, supporters of the Roman Church placed their pope above the canons and foundations of the Ecumenical Councils, believing in his infallibility. But history truthfully testifies as to just what this papal infallibility is. About Pope John XXIII, it was stated in the decision of the Council of Constance, which deposed this pope: ‘It has been proved that Pope John is an inveterate and incorrigible sinner, and he was and

is an unrighteous man, justly indicted for homicide, poisoning, and other serious crimes; a man who often and persistently before various dignitaries claimed and argued that the human soul dies and burns out together with the human body, like souls of animals and cattle, and that the dead will by no means resurrect in the last day.' The lawless acts of Pope Alexander VI and his sons were so monstrous that, in the opinion of his contemporaries, this pope was trying to establish on Earth the kingdom of Satan, and not the Kingdom of God. Pope Julius II revelled in the blood of Christians, constantly arming--for his own purposes--one Christian nation against another (*Spiritual Conversation*, No. 41, 1858). There are many other examples, testifying to the great falls and fallibility of popes, but there is no time to talk about them now. With such historical evidence of its impairment through heresy and of the falls of its popes, is it warranted for the papists to glory in the false dignity of the Roman Church? Is it just that they should abase the Orthodox Eastern Church, whose infallibility is based not on any one representative, but on the Gospel and Apostolic teachings and on the canons and decisions of the seven Ecumenical and nine Local Councils? At these Councils were God-inspired and holy men, gathered from the entire Christian world, and they established everything relating to the requirements and spiritual needs of the Church, according to the Holy Scriptures. So, do the papists behave soundly, who, for the sake of worldly goals, place the person of their pope above the canons of the Ecumenical Councils, considering their pope as more than infallible?

“For all the stated reasons, the Catholic Eastern Church severed its communion with the local Church of Rome, which had fallen away from the truth and from the canons of the catholic Orthodox Church. Just as the Roman bishops had begun with pride, they are also ending with pride. They are intensifying their argument that allegedly the Orthodox Catholic Church fell away from their local Church. But that is wrong and even ridiculous. Truth testifies that the Roman Church fell away from the Orthodox Church. Although for the sake of imaginary rightness papists promote the view that during the time of union with the Catholic Orthodox Church, their patriarch was first and senior among the five patriarchs, this was true only for the sake of Imperial Rome, and not because of some spiritual merit or authority over the other patriarchs. It is wrong that they called their Church "Catholic", i.e. universal. A part can never be named the whole; the Roman Church before its fall from Orthodoxy, comprised only a fifth part of the one Catholic Church. Especially since it rejected the decisions of the Ecumenical Councils the Roman Church should not be called catholic, as it follows its own incorrect theorizing.

“To some, the sheer numbers and widespread distribution of adherents to the Latin Church is eye-catching, and therefore those who unreliably understand truth deliberate: should it not be for this reason that the Latin Church be called Ecumenical or Catholic? But this view is extremely erroneous, because nowhere in Holy Scriptures are special spiritual rights ascribed to great numbers and large quantity. The Lord clearly showed that the sign of the true Catholic Church does not consist in great numbers and quantity when he spoke in the Gospels, *Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you*

the kingdom (Luke 12:32). There is another example in Holy Scripture which does not favour quantity. Upon the death of Solomon, the kingdom of Israel was divided in the presence of his son, and Holy Scripture presents ten tribes as having fallen away; whereas two, having remained faithful to their duty, had not fallen away. Therefore, the Latin Church in vain tries to prove its correctness by its multitude, quantity, and widespread distribution.

“At the Ecumenical Councils, a completely different indication of the Ecumenical Church was designated by the Holy Fathers, i.e. determined in council: to believe in the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, and not simply in a universal, or everywhere-present church. Although the Roman Church has followers everywhere in the world, since it did not maintain inviolate the catholic and apostolic decrees, but rather deviated towards innovation and incorrect philosophies, it does not at all belong to the One, Holy and Apostolic Church.

“Those well-disposed towards the Latins likewise extremely erroneously reason that, firstly, upon the falling away of the West from Orthodoxy, something as if became lacking in the Catholic Church. This loss was replaced long ago by all-wise Providence--it was the foundation in the North of the Orthodox Church of Russia. Secondly, they think that allegedly for the sake of the former seniority and size of the Roman Church, the Orthodox Church has need of union with it. However, we are speaking not of a human judgment, but a judgment of God. Apostle Paul clearly says, *What communion hath light with darkness?* (II Corinthians 6:14) – i.e., the light of Christ’s truth can never be combined with the darkness of heresy. The Latins don’t want to leave their heresy, and they persist, as the words of Basil the Great testifies about them what has been proven over many centuries, "They do not know the truth and do not wish to know; they argue with those who proclaim the truth to them and assert their heresy," as stated above.

“Instead of entertaining the above-mentioned thoughts, those supportive of the Latins, would be better off thinking about what is said in the psalms, *I have hated the congregation of evil-doers* (Psalm 25:5), and to pity those who, for the sake of domination and avarice and other worldly aims and benefits, scandalized almost the entire world through the Inquisition and cunning Jesuit intrigues, and even now outrage and abuse the Orthodox in Turkey through their missionaries. Latin missionaries don’t care about converting to the Christian faith the native Turks, but they strive to pervert from the true path the Orthodox Greeks and Bulgarians, using for this purpose all sorts of unpleasant means and schemes. Is this not craftiness, and is this craftiness not malicious? Would it be prudent to seek unity with such people? For the same reason, should one be surprised at the feigned diligence and selflessness of such figures, i.e. the Latin missionaries and sisters of mercy? They are downright pitiable ascetics. They strive to convert and lead people, not to Christ, but to their pope.

“What should we say in response to these questions: can the Latin Church and other religions be called the New Israel and ark of salvation? And how can one understand the Eucharist of this Church of Rome? Only the Church of the right-believing, undamaged by heretical philosophizing, can be called the New Israel. Holy Apostle John the Theologian says, *They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they all were not of us* (I John 2:19). And Holy Apostle Paul says, *One Lord, one faith* (Ephesians 4:5), i.e. one is the true faith, and not every belief is good--as those having separated themselves from the one true Church recklessly think, about whom Holy Apostle Jude writes, *How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit* (Jude 1:18-19). Therefore, how can these, who are alien to the spirit of truth, be called the New Israel? Or, how can they be called a haven of salvation for anyone, when both one and the other cannot be effectuated without the grace of the Holy Spirit?

“In the Orthodox Church, it is believed that the bread and wine in the mystery of the Eucharist are transubstantiated by the invocation and descent of the Holy Spirit. But the Latins, as mentioned above, considered this invocation unnecessary and excluded it from their Liturgy. Thus, he who understands - let him understand about the Eucharist of the Latins.

“And another question: if, as it is said, except for the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, which is called the Orthodox Church, salvation in other religions is doubtful, then why is this truth not preached openly in Russia? To this question the answer is very simple and clear. In Russia religious tolerance is allowed, and the heterodox occupy important posts along with Orthodox: heads of educational institutions for the most part are heterodox; leaders of provinces and districts of cities are often heterodox; regimental and battalion commanders are not infrequently heterodox. Wherever a clergyman starts openly proclaiming that outside of the Orthodox Church there is no salvation, heterodox of religious rank take offense. From such a situation, Russian Orthodox clergy have acquired the habit and engrained characteristic of talking about this subject evasively. For this reason, and from continual interaction with heterodox, but more from reading their works, perhaps some began to be lax in their thoughts about the hope of salvation and other religions.

“Despite the Orthodox Church’s spirit of meekness and the love of peace and patience of her pastors and followers, in the West there has been published during the preceding centuries by followers of different Christian creeds, and predominantly in our times, such a multitude of books against the teaching of the Eastern Church that not only would it be difficult to appraise their merit, it would be hard to enumerate them. And although such books in general are filled with slanders, fables, blame, obvious inventions and lies, and especially poisonous mental cobwebs, with the obvious goal of forming in Europe a spirit hostile to the Eastern Church, and especially to our homeland, and, having shaken the faith of our Orthodox Church, to seduce her followers from the path

of truth. But since they are published under tempting names, in agreeable forms, with such typographical neatness that they unconsciously lure the curiosity of readers, not a few of whom are found in our homeland, where these works penetrate by dark paths, and who, having a superficial understanding of the subjects of Christian doctrine, cannot help but be carried away by thoughts contrary to the truth. The writers of the Latin Church have now especially armed themselves against the Orthodox, proclaiming the supremacy of their pope and local Roman Church over all governments and local Churches and nations of the world. Predominantly at the current time those busy with this are the Jesuits in France, who, using the omnipresence of the French language, are intensifying some sort of feverish activity by means of works in that language to implant their manner of thought everywhere against the doctrine and hierarchical structure of the Eastern Church--not ashamed for this purpose to create the most heinous fictions, obvious lies and shameless distortion of historical truths. Many of the educated Orthodox, reading these works in the French language, and not reading their own in Russian about the Orthodox faith, can easily believe the fine-spun lies instead of the truth, which they do not know well..."⁷²

⁷² St. Ambrose, "A reply to one well disposed towards the Latin church. Regarding the unjust glorying of the papists in the imaginary dignity of their church".

6. THE CRISIS OF BYZANTINE STATEHOOD

In the middle of the fourteenth century the Black Death, according to one source, killed most of the inhabitants of Constantinople, undermining the strength of the State. Still more serious for its stability were the divisions between and within the Greek states (for there were several of them), and the state of near-permanent civil war between the members of the ruling Palaeologan dynasty. The humiliation of Orthodoxy was such that towards the end of the century, all the Orthodox rulers, Greek, Slav and Romanian, were vassals of the Turkish sultan and even had to fight in his armies against other Orthodox Christians...⁷³

The underlying spiritual cause of these disasters was not far to find: in spite of the chastening experiences of the previous century, Byzantine rulers still continued to dangle the bait of union with Rome before western princes in exchange for military help that very rarely came. Only once, at the battle of Nicopolis in 1396, did a large-scale "crusade" led by the King of Hungary set off to rescue the Greeks from the Turks. It ended in disaster...

The lesson was obvious, but seemed never to be learned: no material gain, but only continued disasters, not to speak of spiritual shipwreck, came from attempting to sell the birthright of the Orthodox Faith for political gain...

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Paradoxically, however, this deeply dispiriting period from the point of view of state life also witnessed something of a spiritual renaissance in the cultural and religious spheres as a result of *the hesychastic movement*, which was spread by wandering monks such as St. Gregory of Sinai throughout the Orthodox commonwealth, and which brought forth rich fruits of sanctity for centuries to come. Moreover, in defending hesychasm against its humanist and latinizing detractors, the Orthodox Church was able to define the difference between Orthodoxy and Catholicism more broadly and deeply than ever before.

In this struggle, whose epicenter was the decade between 1341 and 1351, two outstanding personalities shine out in the surrounding darkness as defenders of the truth: St. Gregory Palamas, leader of the hesychast monks on Mount Athos and later Archbishop of Thessalonica, who formulated the theological defence of hesychasm, and his friend John Catacuzenus, who in turn became the Great Domestic, the Emperor John VI and then plain Monk Joasaph, and who, while never rejecting the idea of the union as such, always cleverly insisted that it could only be done through an Ecumenical Council – an idea

⁷³ Thus the Emperors Manuel II and John VII were forced by the Sultan to take part in the siege of the last Byzantine city in Asia Minor, Philadelphia (Norwich, *The Decline of Byzantium*, pp. 345-47).

that the Popes rejected because they knew it would end in failure for the uniate cause.

The debate began in the 1330s with a rather original attempt to engineer the unia. The Calabrian Greek monk Barlaam argued that the truths of the Faith – he was thinking especially of the *Filioque* controversy - cannot be proved, so we might as well take both positions, the Greek and the Latin, as private opinions! Such relativism was refuted by St. Gregory, and found no support in the West either: Pope Benedict was no more inclined than the Byzantine Church to accept such agnosticism.

But Barlaam's pride had been hurt, and he now set about attacking the Athonite hesychast monks with regard to their practice of the Jesus prayer. In particular, he attacked the claim that by combining the prayer with certain physical exercises that involved directing the eye of the mind on the physical heart, the monks could reach a state of deification and behold the Uncreated Light that emanated from Christ's Body during the Transfiguration. Barlaam mockingly called the hesychasts *omphalopsychoi*, that is, those who locate the soul in the navel, and identified them with the fourth-century sect of the Messalians, which taught that through asceticism and prayer and without the aid of the sacraments one could see God with one's physical eyes.

The Athonite hesychasts refuted Barlaam's charges in a *Tomos* entitled "The Declaration of the Holy Mountain in Defence of Those who Devoutly Practise a Life of Stillness". Composed by St. Gregory and signed by the leading hesychasts, including Bishop James of Hierissos and the Holy Mountain, it argued that: 1. The deifying grace of God, in and through which we are united with God and saved, is God Himself, uncreated and eternal; 2. This deification is not a capacity inherent in human nature, as the Messalians taught, but a gift of God by grace; 3. The mind (*nous*) which sees God in the Divine Light is located in the heart, for the body takes part in deification as well as the soul; 4. The Light that shone around the disciples on Mount Tabor was not an apparition or a symbol, but the Uncreated Divine Light, God Himself, Which they were able to see through the opening of their spiritual eyes, a transmutation of their spiritual senses; 5. Both the Essence of God and His Energies are Uncreated, but constitute one God, insofar as the Energies are not a second God, but the One God going out of Himself, as it were, in order to unite Himself with created nature; 6. This vision of God and participation in His Uncreated Energies is the mystery of the age to come manifest already in this age. "For if in the age to come the body is to share with the soul in ineffable blessings, then it is evident that in this world as well it will also share according to its capacity in the grace mystically and ineffably bestowed by God upon the purified intellect [nous], and it will experience the divine in conformity with its nature. For once the soul's passible aspect is transformed and sanctified – but

not reduced to a deathlike condition – through it the dispositions and activities of the body are also sanctified, since body and soul share a conjoint existence.”⁷⁴

This teaching was vindicated at a Council in Constantinople presided over by Emperor Andronicus III in 1341. There were further Councils in 1347 and 1351, when Barlaam and his helpers Acindynus and Nicephorus Gregoras were excommunicated. Barlaam renounced Orthodoxy and became a Catholic bishop.⁷⁵

Apart from their great dogmatic significance, these Palamite Councils presented a precious image of Orthodox bishops convened by a right-believing emperor to define essential truths of the faith and thereby preserve the heritage of Orthodoxy for future generations and other nations...

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But amidst this spiritual triumph the state continued to decline, and now divisions appeared not only within the members of the ruling dynasty but between different layers of society. Thus when St. Gregory Palamas was appointed archbishop of Thessalonica he was not at first allowed to enter his see, because in Adrianople and Thessalonica, where sharp divisions in wealth were exacerbated by the feudal system that had been introduced by the Latin crusaders, a social revolution of the poor (called “zealots”) against the rich was in progress.⁷⁶ This revolution betrayed, according to Diehl, “a vague tendency towards a communistic movement”⁷⁷, and in its final wave forced the abdication of Emperor John VI in 1354.

⁷⁴ *The Philokalia*, vol. IV, translated and edited by G.E.H. Palmer, Philip Sherrard and Kallistos Ware, London: Faber and Faber, 1995, p. 423.

⁷⁵ According to Fr. Alexander Prapertov, he “stood at the sources of the Renaissance. One of his pupils was Petrarch himself. And another of his pupils was Leontius Pilatus, the first professor of the Greek language in Western Europe, who translated a multitude of the works of the ancient philosophers and writers (in particular, Homer’s *Iliad*) and was a vivid figure in the Early Renaissance. Giovanni Boccaccio learned Greek from him.” (Facebook communication, March 13, 2017)

⁷⁶ “It is perhaps the fault for which Byzantium was punished,” writes Rebecca West. “The two classes, the ‘powerful’ and the ‘poor’, fought hard from the ninth century. The small landowners and the free peasants were so constantly harried by invasion and civil war that they bartered their liberty in return for the protection of the great nobles, who took advantage of the position to absorb the small landowners’ estates and to make serfs of the free peasants. At first the monarchy fought these great nobles, and even appeared to have vanquished them. Feudalism, the exploitation of a country by its large landowners, could not exist in a declared theocracy, which implied the conception of divinely impartial justice for all individuals and every class. But when the Latins invaded the Byzantine Empire they brought with them the feudal system which was established in their own countries, and it could not be driven out with them, because the Byzantine nobles, like all the rich, would rather choke than not have their mouths full, and applauded the idea of any extension of their wealth and their power, however dangerous.” (*Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, Edinburgh: Canongate, 2006, pp. 872-873)

⁷⁷ Diehl, in A.A. Vasiliev, *A History of the Byzantine Empire*, University of Wisconsin Press, 1955, p. 684.

St. Gregory defended the principle of autocracy against the revolutionaries: "The worst... are those who do not demonstrate a due loyalty to the kings established by God... and do not humble themselves under... the hand of God and do not submit to the Church of Christ." However, he also chastised the rich whose greed and selfishness had laid the seeds for the revolution. He exhorted them: "Do not use force against those subject to you; show them... a fatherly attitude, remembering that you and they are of one race and co-servants. And do not go against submission to the Church and her teachings... You who are in subjection, consider it your duty in relation to the authorities to carry out only that which does not serve as an obstacle to your promised hope of the Heavenly Kingdom."⁷⁸

Amidst all this turmoil there was no agreement about who was the true emperor. First there was a bitter civil war between Andronicus II and his grandson Andronicus III. Then in 1341, after the death of Andronicus III, war broke out between John V Palaeologus and the army's choice, John VI Cantacuzenus (a firm believer in the dynastic principle and lifetime supporter of the Palaeologi!). Then came the forced abdication of John VI, who became a monk. Then civil war again broke out between John V and his son Andronicus IV. Early in the fifteenth century, Manuel II exiled his nephew; and in the very last years of the Empire John VIII had to contend with a rebellion from his brother Demetrius...

Of course, coups and counter-coups were no rarity in Byzantine history - in 74 out of 109 cases, the throne was seized by a coup.⁷⁹ The period of the Nicaean Empire had seen a marked increase in stability and in the quality of imperial rule. But in the fourteenth century, when the external situation of the State was increasingly desperate, the old bad habits reasserted themselves.⁸⁰

We have seen that the Byzantines never had an agreed system of imperial legitimacy and succession. However, L.A. Tikhomirov points to another, still deeper weakness of the Byzantine system: the fact that imperial power was based on two mutually incompatible principles, the Christian and the Old Roman (Republican). According to the Christian principle, supreme power in

⁷⁸ St. Gregory Palamas, *Homilies*; quoted in D.I. Makarov, *Antropologia i Kosmologia Sv. Grigoria Palamy* (The Anthropology and Cosmology of St. Gregory Palamas), St. Petersburg, 2003, pp. 403, 400. See also Metropolitan Hierotheos of Nafpaktos, *Saint Gregory Palamas as a Hagiorite*, Levadia: Birth of the Theotokos Monastery, 1997, pp. 247-257.

⁷⁹ Ivan Solonevich, *Narodnaia Monarkhia*, Minsk, 1998, p. 77.

⁸⁰ We can see that the Byzantines had not lost the consciousness that "rebellion is as the sin of divination" (I Samuel 15.23) in the fact that, as Nikolsky writes, "an anathema against those daring to undertake rebellion was pronounced in the 11th to 14th centuries... Thus, according to the Byzantine historian Kinnamas, Andronicus Manuel fell under anathema in the 12th century. 'This traitor, enemy of the fatherland, made frequent assaults on the Roman lands from Persia, enslaved many people and handed over much military booty to the Persians, for which he was subjected to anathema by the Church.'... But the anathematization against the rebels and traitors was in all probability not introduced by the Greeks into the *Order of Orthodoxy*". (in Fomin & Fomina, *Rossia pered Vtorym Prishestvoiem* (Russia before the Second Coming), Moscow, 1994, vol. I, p. 122).

the State rested in the Emperor, not in the People. But, while supreme, his power was not absolute in that it was limited by the Orthodox Faith and Church; for the Emperor, while supreme on earth, was still the servant of the Emperor of Emperors in heaven. According to the Old Roman principle, however, which still retained an important place alongside the Christian principle in the legislation of Justinian, supreme power rested, not in the Emperor, but in the Senate and the People. But since the Senate and the People had, according to the legal fiction, conceded all their empire and power to the Emperor, he concentrated all executive power in his own person, and his will had the full force of law: *Quod Principi placuit legis habet vigorem, et in eum solum omne suum imperium et potestatem concessit.*

“This idea was purely absolutist, making the power of the Emperor unlimited, but not supreme, not independent of the people’s will. The formula also contradicted the Christian idea of ‘the King, the servant of God’, whose law could in no way be simply what was ‘pleasing’ to him. But the conjunction of popular delegation and Divine election gave Byzantine imperial power the opportunity to be very broadly arbitrary. In the case of a transgression of the people’s rights, it was possible to refer to the unlimited delegation of the people. However, it is impossible not to see that this same conjunction, which gave the Emperor’s power the opportunity to be arbitrary, at the same time did not give it solidity. This power could be taken away from an unworthy bearer of it also on a dual basis: for transgression of the will of God, or on the basis of the will of the people, which did not want to continue the ‘concession’ it had given before any longer.

“The idea of the delegation of the people’s will and power to one person in itself presupposes centralisation, and then bureaucratisation. Truly, as the point of concentration of all the people’s powers, the Emperor is an executive power. In accordance with the concept of delegation, he himself administers everything. He must do all the work of the current administration. For that reason everything is centralised around him, and in him. But since it is in fact impossible in fact for one person, even the greatest genius, to carry out all the acts of State, they are entrusted to servants, officials. In this way bureaucratisation develops.

“The king, ‘the servant of God’, is obliged only to see that the affairs of the country are directed in the spirit of God’s will. The people’s self-administration does not contradict his idea on condition that over this administration the control of ‘the servant of God’ is preserved, directing everything on the true path of righteousness, in case there are any deviations from it. But for the Emperor to whom ‘the people concedes all power and might’, any manifestation of popular self-administration, whatever it may be, is already a usurpation on the part of the people, a kind of taking back by the people of what it had ‘conceded’ to the Emperor.”⁸¹

⁸¹ Tikhomirov, *Monarkhicheskaia Gosudarstvennost’* (Monarchical Statehood), St. Petersburg, 1992, p.163.

In 1369 Emperor John V, knowing that he could never bring his whole people into the unia, went to Italy. As Lord Norwich writes, "he formally signed a document declaring his submission to the Holy Roman Church and its father the Pope, sealing it with his imperial golden seal; and the following Sunday, in the presence of the entire Curia, he did obeisance to the Supreme Pontiff on the steps of St. Peter's, kneeling before him and kissing him on the feet, hands and finally on the lips."⁸²

But there was no rebellion, and no public humiliation of the body of the apostate after his death, as in the time of Michael VIII. In almost any previous period of Byzantine history, such an apostasy would have elicited disturbances among the Orthodox people. But not now... The reason was that, as Runciman writes, "he was careful not to involve the Church in his conversion. His tact was rewarded. Towards the end of his reign, probably in 1380 or soon afterwards, in circumstances that are unknown to us, he was able to make a concordat with the Patriarchate which clarified and restored much of the Imperial control over the Church. It contained nine points. The Emperor was to nominate metropolitans from three candidates whose names were submitted to him. He alone could transfer and promote bishops. He had to sanction appointments to high Church offices. He alone could redistribute sees. Neither he nor his senior officials nor members of the Senate, which was his advisory council, could be excommunicated except with his permission, 'because the Emperor is defender of the Church and the canons'. Bishops were to come to Constantinople and to leave it whenever he ordered. Every bishop must take an oath of allegiance to him on appointment. Every bishop must put his signature to acts passed by a Synod or Council. Every bishop must implement such acts and refuse support to any cleric or candidate for ecclesiastical office who opposed Imperial policy."

St. Simeon, Metropolitan of Thessalonica, commented with some bitterness on the situation: "Now... the Bishop is not counted worthy of any kind of honour for the sake of Christ, but rather his lot is dishonour; he is counted immeasurably inferior to the emperor, who receives a blessing from the Hierarch. At the present time the Bishop falls down at the feet of the emperor and kisses his right hand. With the sanctified lips with which he recently touched the Sacred Sacrifice, he servilely kisses a secular hand, whose function is to hold the sword. And, O shame!, the Bishop stands while the emperor sits. For the Bishop, as the delegate of the Church, all this reflects in an indecent and shameful manner on Christ Himself. These absurd customs were introduced, however, not by the emperors themselves, but by flatterers, who in an undiscerning manner suggested to them that they should use the Divine for evil, that they should ascribe to themselves power and install and remove the Bishop. Alas, what madness! If the deposition of a Bishop is necessary, this should be done through the Holy Spirit, by Whom the Bishop has been consecrated, and not through the secular power. Hence come all our woes and

⁸² Norwich, *op. cit.*, p. 333.

misfortunes; hence we have become an object of mockery for all peoples. If we give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's, then the blessing of God will rest on everything: the Church will receive peace, and the State will become more prosperous."⁸³

"As an Emperor," continues Runciman, "John V was incompetent and almost impotent. The Turks were overrunning all his territory and exacting tribute from him. He himself in a reign of fifty years was three times driven into exile, by his father-in-law, by his son and by his grandson. Yet, as the concordat shows, he still retained prestige enough to reaffirm his theoretical control over a Church, many of whose dioceses lay far outside of his political control. It was soon after his death that the Patriarch Antony IV wrote the letter in which he talked of the great position of the Emperor. It was addressed to the Grand Prince of Muscovy, Vassily I, who had somewhat scornfully pointed out the actual weakness of the Emperor, hinting that some more powerful Orthodox ruler ought to lead the Oecumene. 'The Emperor,' Antony wrote, 'is still the Holy Emperor, the heir of the Emperors of old and the consecrated head of the Oecumene. He, and he alone, is the King whom Saint Peter bade the faithful to honour.'

"The Patriarch's loyalty was greater than his realism. But the Emperor still had some power. About twenty years later, in 1414 or 1415, Manuel II, who was generally liked by his ecclesiastics, when in Thessalonica appointed a Macedonian bishop to the see of Moldavia and sent him to Constantinople for consecration by the Patriarch, Euthymius II. Euthymius refused to perform the service, on the out-of-date ground that a bishop could not be transferred. The case undoubtedly had deeper implications, of which we can only guess. It must be remembered the Emperor was actually nominating a bishop for a Christian country over which he had no control; and the Patriarch must have feared that his own good relations with the sovereign Prince of Moldavia might be endangered. He insisted that the transference be approved by the Holy Synod. But the Emperor referred him to the concordat. He had to yield..."⁸⁴

The concordat was a truly shameful document. And yet there were still many in Byzantium who rejected the subordination of the Church to the State and preferred the dominion of the infidel Turks to that of the heretical Latins. For in religious matters the Turks were more tolerant than the Latins. Moreover, submission to the Turks would at least have the advantage of making the administration of the Church easier – in the present situation, the bishops under Turkish rule were separated from their head in Constantinople and were distrusted because that head lived in a different state...

V.M. Lourié writes: "It was precisely in the 14th century, when immemorial Greek territories passed over to the Turks, and some others – to the Latins, that

⁸³ St. Symeon, in M.V. Zyzykin, *Patriarch Nikon*, Warsaw: Synodal Press, 1931, part I, pp. 122-123.

⁸⁴ Runciman, *The Great Church in Captivity*, Cambridge University Press, 1968, pp. 71-72.

there was formed in Byzantine society those two positions whose struggle would clearly appear in the following, 15th century. It was precisely in the 14th century that the holy Fathers established a preference for the Turks over the Latins, while with the humanists it was the reverse. Neither in the 15th, nor in the 14th century was there any talk of *union* with the Turks – their invasion was thought to be only an evil. But already in the 14th century it became clear that the Empire would not be preserved, that they would have to choose the lesser of two evils. In the capacity of such a lesser evil, although a very great one, the holy Fathers were forced to make an irrevocable decision in favour of the Turks, under whose yoke it was possible to preserve the Church organisation and avoid the politics of forced conversions to Latinism. The danger of conversions to Islam was significantly smaller: first, because the inner administration of the Ottoman empire was based on ‘millet’, in accordance with which the civil administration of the Orthodox population was realized through the structure of the Orthodox Church and the patriarch, and this created for the Turks an interest in preserving the Church, and secondly, because the cases of conversion to Islam, however destructive they were for those who had been converted, did not threaten the purity of the confession of the Christians who remained faithful, while Latin power always strove to exert influence on the inner life and teaching of the faith of the Orthodox Church. The Church history of the 16th to 19th centuries showed that, in spite of all the oppressions caused to the Christians in the Ottoman empire, it protected the Christian peoples living within its frontiers from the influence of European religious ideas and *Weltanschauungen*, whereby it unwittingly helped the preservation of the purity of Orthodoxy...”⁸⁵

Of course, the victory of the Turks would be a terrible disaster.⁸⁶ But the victory of the Latins would be an even greater disaster, since it would signify the end of Greek Orthodoxy.

Nor, said the Zealots, would buying the support of the Latins help matters. For, as the Studite Monk and head of the Imperial Academy, Joseph Vryennios said early in the fifteenth century: “Let no one be deceived by delusive hopes that the Italian allied troops will sooner or later come to us. But if they do pretend to rise to defend us, they will take arms in order to destroy our city, race and name...”⁸⁷

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⁸⁵ Lourié, commentary on J. Meyendorff, *Zhizn' i Trudy Sviatitelia Grigoria Palamy* (The Life and Works of the Holy Hierarch Gregory Palamas), St. Petersburg, 1997, pp. 396-397.

⁸⁶ St. Gregory Palamas was for a time a captive of the Turks and said of them: “This impious people [the Turks] boasts of its victory over the Romans, attributing it to their love of God. For they do not know that this world below dwells in sin, and that evil men possess the greater part of it... That is why, down to the time of Constantine, ... the idolaters have almost always held power over the world.” (John Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, London: Faith Press, 1964, p. 104)

⁸⁷ Cited in Vasiliev, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 672.

An instructive illustration of the complexities faced by the Byzantines can be found in the life of St. Symeon, archbishop of Thessalonica in the early fifteenth century. As David Balfour writes, "The young Turkish Sultan, Murad II, who had recently succeeded his father Mehmed I, was openly preparing for war against the Byzantines for having injudiciously supported a rival claimant to the throne. Thessalonica, the second capital of the Empire, had surrendered to Turkish sovereignty from 1387 to 1403 and there was a large party, supported by a majority of the populace, which felt that the resultant regime had been tolerable and that to resist the Sultan again was suicidal because hopeless. Another party had already begun, it seems, to make private overtures to the Venetians to take over the city (a plan which was actually carried out next year). Symeon agreed with neither party and had done his best to persuade the young governor, the Despot Andronikos, to maintain a purely Byzantine policy independent of both. With the Despot's approval, he slipped away unobserved, leaving behind an Apologia explaining to the Thessalonians that he was proceeding to the capital to solicit such imperial aid from Manuel II as might enable them 'to stay with their Orthodox masters'. His quest was probably hopeless, and anyway he could hardly have chosen a more inappropriate moment, for within five days, first Constantinople and then Thessalonica were blockaded by Murad with a view to their siege. Symeon got no further than Mount Athos; he was persuaded to return to his see; he hints at dangers and afflictions suffered on the Holy Mountain; he must have returned by sea. From then on, as he often complains, he was virtually a prisoner on his own throne..."

"There followed over a year of mounting anguish, during which Symeon felt even more ill, until in mid-September 1423 Thessalonica was handed over to Venice by Andronikos, reluctantly but with his father Manuel's approval. The new sources show that to the very last the saintly Archbishop resisted the hand-over; but he accepted the *fait accompli* and it is recorded that he enjoined obedience to the Venetian authorities as now established by God. He could hardly have done otherwise, seeing that the Palaiologi, father and son, had approved the take-over. But he never ceased to regret what had occurred, or to say so openly. It was a bitter pill for the rigorous anti-Latin to swallow: circumstances not obligated him to become the loyal supporter of a heretical regime which held him prisoner, yet described him and rewarded him as *fidelissimus noster*..."

"The circumstances that led up to the hand-over had been tragic... As the siege initiated in June 1423 progressed and privations and dangers began to multiply, the pro-Turkish party, the party of surrender, became vociferous and took to violence. It had nearly succeeded in betraying the city to a ferocious Turkish leader called Musa who besieged it in 1411. It saw no hope now in resistance to Murad. The majority of the people, as we learn from both Anagnostes and Symeon, wanted to capitulate to the Turks, and the Archbishop was singled out as a principal target of popular indignation, because his utter opposition was well known. Much rioting went on. One has to grasp the fact - which modern Greek patriotism tends to ignore - that

apostasy to Islam was becoming a mass phenomenon; some of the tumultuous rabble must have been intending it, for the rioters, Symeon reports, threatened to drag him down and his churches with him. It was this danger that induced a group of notables to force the Despot Andronikos to call in the Venetians, since it had become evident that Byzantium could do nothing effective. But when that sole solution of the city's predicament was proposed, Symeon rejected it too. He thus became unpopular with nearly everyone, and when during negotiations with Venice he stood up for his Church's rights under the future Latin regime he met, he says, with 'contemptuous treatment and disdainful insults'... So the saintly Archbishop was not only very ill, he was not even enjoying the personal respect and public honour due to him. He did succeed with difficulty in inserting into the agreement with Venice a clause guaranteeing his Church's independence from the Latin Church. But his stand for Orthodoxy and Empire, against both Islam and the Franks, was a venerable martyrdom; he suffered agonies of frustration and humiliation, and nearly died of his distress.

"However, under the Venetian regime from 1423 onwards he does seem gradually to have recovered some degree of respect. The party of surrender now had to keep quiet; some of its leaders had soon been arrested and exiled. The Venetians, sensing how unreliable the population was, appreciated Symeon's outstanding resolution to resist the Turks. He became the most important citizen in their eyes. The people were soon disillusioned with their new masters and learned to appreciate better Symeon's stand against the hand-over. But the beleaguement continued. Murad dropped the siege at Constantinople after a few months and later signed a peace with the Emperor which, onerous though it was, relieved Thrace of the ravages of war for the next twenty-nine years. But Murad refused to recognize the Venetians' right to take over Thessalonica, and continued the blockade of the city, punctuating his blockade with marauding skirmishes and at least one mass onslaught, the progress and final defeat of which Symeon most graphically and fully describes. In the end, Murad in person descended on Thessalonica with overwhelming force and seized it on 29 March 1430, and all its surviving inhabitants were held for slavery or ransom. Symeon himself escaped that fate by dying suddenly a little more than six months before the fatal date..."⁸⁸

⁸⁸ Balfour, "St. Symeon of Thessalonica: a polemical hesychast", *Sobornost'*, 1982, vol. 4, no. 4, pp. 1-15.

7. THE MAN WHO WOULD BE KING

John Huston's film "The Man Who Would Be King" (1975), based on the novella by Rudyard Kipling, has much to teach us about our holy faith...

Two rebel soldiers from the British army, Daniel Dravot (played by Sean Connery) and Peachy Carnehan (Michael Caine) seek adventure in an expedition to Kafiristan, somewhere beyond the Khyber Pass. By making themselves indispensable to the villagers, and accomplishing some pseudo-miracles, one of them, Dravot, is acclaimed as king. Moreover, when he is brought to the high priest of the region, who sees a Masonic amulet around his neck, he is acclaimed as a god and the long-expected successor of Alexander the Great (who considered himself the son of Zeus). At first, this new "god" does good to his worshippers, settling their disputes and leading them to undertake useful projects, while becoming very rich himself. When the snows melt, Carnehan urges his friend to get out while the going is good and return to India across the Khyber pass. However, Dravot has become so enamoured of his role that he declares he will marry a native girl, Roxana (the same name as Alexander the Great's Persian wife). This upsets the locals who say that a god cannot marry a mortal woman – he will burn her up in his divine fire. But the new god insists; and at the marriage ceremony, as he tries to kiss the terrified Roxana (who clearly believes he *is* a god), she bites him, drawing blood. Seeing the blood, the high priest declares that the soldier is neither god nor devil, but an ordinary man and orders him to be seized. The two soldiers flee the city, but are overpowered. Dravot marches across a bridge over a ravine that he himself had ordered built and when the ropes are cut he plunges thousands of feet to his death, chanting "The Son of God Goes Forth to War". Carnehan is crucified between two pine trees but, on being found still alive next morning, is freed. Crippled in body and unhinged in mind from his ordeal, he eventually makes his way back to India as a beggar, always keeping his hand on Dravot's head. Finishing his story, he leaves Kipling's office after putting a bundle on the desk. When Kipling opens it, he finds Dravot's severed head, still wearing a golden crown.

Let us examine the meaning of this parable.

Christ asked His disciples: "Who do men say that I am?" And then He put them another question, the most important question that will ever be asked of any man: "Who do ye say that I am?" On answering this question correctly depends our eternal salvation.

With God's permission, many false christs are gone out into the world in order to deceive men into giving the wrong answer to this question. If they are not atheists, then men give wrong answers to this question because they have already enthroned another man – or demon - in place of the true Christ. And if they are atheists, then they have put themselves in the place of Christ as the highest object of their worship.

All men begin their earthly journey as rebels from “the regular army”, the celestial army of those who obey God. They are rebels because in them is original sin, which alienates them from God and urges them to undertake hazardous adventures in order to satisfy their avarice and lust. Sometimes, even while on the path to doing evil, they are able to do good to men. These pseudo-good works deceive them into thinking they are on the right – or, at any rate, on a permissible – path. Reaching a pinnacle of worldly success, they compound avarice and lust with ambition and pride and, succumbing to the praises of deluded men, deify themselves in their own eyes. However, if God counts them worthy, they are allowed to fall from the pinnacle of worldly power and glory and to become aware of their miserable mortality. As the Scripture says: “I said, Ye are gods, and all of you the sons of the Most High. But like men do ye die, and like one of the rulers do ye fall” (Psalm 81.6-7).

For the price of this recovery of true spiritual sight is *death* – death to the world, and, very often, death *at the hands of* the world, which instinctively resists truth and destroys those who destroy its own comforting delusions. The man who has made himself into a god must die, and so must his friend, the false prophet who conceals the deception and even confirms it. However, there is a great consolation to such a death: by the mercy of God, it is counted as death for the true God, *martyrdom for Christ*.

In the film, Dravot goes voluntarily to his death chanting a hymn to the true Son of God. So if he were Orthodox, he would be a holy martyr. His friend Camehan does not die. But he suffers for the truth; so he would be a holy confessor. Moreover, Camehan takes his friend’s skull with him as a holy relic, which he adorns with a crown, to help him endure his much-suffering life on the edge of madness (for there is something “crazy” in having beliefs contrary to those of the overwhelming majority of men).

All true Christians are martyrs and/or confessors. They have died to the world, renouncing their own fallen passions, which generate idolatry – the worship of anything or anyone other than the true God. And they venerate those who have died as martyrs before them, adorning their relics and icons, in the hope and firm faith that these saints will through their intercessions bring them to live with themselves in “Mount Zion and the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem” (Hebrews 12.22).

*January 28 / February 10, 2019.
Sunday of the Holy New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia.*

8. THE THEOLOGY OF THE STATE: BASIC PRINCIPLES

I. The State is the family writ large. Its members are individual families, headed by a father or *paterfamilias*, who acknowledges the head of the state as his father or king, the “father of fathers”, the *batyushka-tsar*. The purpose of the state is *survival*, in the first place *physical* survival, which is attained through the protection of the families of the state as a single collective, and the preservation of the laws governing family life.

II. The State is created by God, who places within human nature both the tendency to procreate, that is, create families through the sexual union of the husband and wife of each individual family, thereby continuing the existence of the State in time, and the tendency to self-organize into greater social and political units that protect the family thus created. It is *the kingdom of this world* and as such will die in time: there is no eternal State and no absolute value attached to the State. At the same time, it is the duty of each member of every individual family to serve the State into which he has been born or adopted; this duty of *patriotism* is an extension of the commandment to honour one’s father and mother.

III. Although the State is the kingdom of this world, which is temporal and passing, it can serve as a threshold to the Kingdom that is *not* of this world, the Kingdom of God, which abides forever. It does this through entering into a symphonic union with the Kingdom of God on earth, *the Church*. While not abandoning its primary purpose of physical survival, the State now acquires the secondary and higher purpose of assisting in the *spiritual survival* of its member families, their *salvation* from sin and spiritual death.

IV. The State can be destroyed either by the destruction of the collective through war or regicide, usurpation or revolution, or of the laws that govern the individual family through moral corruption. Therefore the most important laws of the State, whose violation incurs the highest penalties, are *patriotism* and *chastity*. When the State enters into a symphonic union with the Church, thereby becoming an *Orthodox autocracy*, these laws are elevated into spiritual virtues, whose violation incurs the highest penalty - spiritual death.

V. When the State is in symphonic union with the Church, its head, the king, receives from the Church the spiritual status and power of “the Anointed of the Lord”. He loses this status and grace only if he betrays the Orthodox faith and tries to lead the State into union with heresy instead of Orthodoxy. At that moment the people who remain faithful to Orthodoxy have the choice of declaring that the new State is not established by God and rebelling against its apostate leader, or continuing to obey the leader in all non-spiritual matters in the hope that the apostasy is temporary and that the leadership will return to Orthodoxy. The same choice is presented to the people if the king is killed and is replaced by an apostate or heretical leader. The decision whether to obey or not to obey then rests with the Church.

Subsidiary principles:-

VI. The Orthodox autocracy as defined above is opposed by two kinds of *anti-autocracies*: *despotism* and *democracy*. In despotism, the autocrat in symphony with the Church is replaced by a ruler, a despot, who neither recognizes the Church nor (*de facto* if not *de jure*) any power higher than himself. In democracy, the autocrat is replaced as true sovereign by the people, the demos, who may recognize a higher authority, but, being divided, leaderless and, above all, *changeable*, are easily manipulated by the most powerful (usually the richest) among them and persuaded to betray such true principles as they may have in exchange new, false ones. The most important of these false principles is *egalitarianism* – that is, the denial of all authority in the name of a mythical equality. The consequence of egalitarianism applied consistently and in every sphere of human life – not least the family, the smallest building block of the state – is *anarchy*. It is in such conditions of anarchy that the last and most fearsome despotism in world history, that of the Antichrist, will arise.

VII. Historically speaking, the greatest autocracies have been overthrown either by despotism (the Ottoman Conquest of New Rome in 1453) or by democracy (the Provisional Government's overthrow of the Third Rome of Russia in 1917). When democracies degenerate and weaken, they are replaced by despotisms pledged to restore order in the name of the people. When these despotisms weaken in their turn, oppressed demos rises up and installs a new democracy in the name of the people. And so the cycle continues, alternating ever more cruel and oppressive despotisms with ever more degenerate democracies. The cycle can be broken only by the return of true autocracy.

VIII. One of the tragedies of the modern world lies in the fact that those who see the evils of despotism generally do not see the evils of democracy, and vice-versa. The only hope for the world is that, in response to a recovery of the true vision of the Orthodox autocracy in a sufficient number of people, God will grant the restoration of the autocracy, at least for a certain time and in a certain place. For only autocracy, according to Holy Scripture (II Thessalonians 2.7) is able to restrain the coming of the Antichrist in his final and most fearsome incarnation.

February 5/18, 2019.

9. THE THREE WORLD CIVILIZATIONS

In the course of history there have been only three major kinds of civilization: the despotic, the democratic and the Orthodox autocratic. All civilizations can be classified as variations on, or mixtures between, one or another of these three types. In the modern world, the clearest example of the despotic kind of civilization is China (or North Korea), and of the democratic kind – the West. Since 1917 (1945 at the latest) there has been no example of an autocratic civilization, although the Russian Federation claims – falsely – to be the successor of the autocratic civilization of the pre-revolutionary Russian Empire.

For a preliminary definition of these three categories, let us turn to the Russian philosopher Vladimir Soloviev. In his article “Three Forces” (1877), Soloviev identified three basic forces as having determined the whole of world history, which were in his time incarnate especially in Islam, the West and the Russian Orthodox Autocracy. Soloviev characterized Islam as being under the dominating influence of what he called the first force, which he defined as “the striving to subject humanity in all its spheres and at every level of its life to one supreme principle which in its exclusive unity strives to mix and confuse the whole variety of private forms, to suppress the independence of the person and the freedom of private life.” Democracy he characterized as being under the dominating influence of the second force, which he defined as “the striving to destroy the stronghold of dead unity, to give freedom everywhere to private forms of life, freedom to the person and his activity; ... the extreme expression of this force is general egoism and anarchy and a multitude of separate individuals without an inner bond.” The third force, which Soloviev believed was incarnate especially in the Slavic world, is defined as “giving a positive content to the two other forces, freeing them from their exclusivity, and reconciling the unity of the higher principle with the free multiplicity of private forms and elements.”

As N.O. Lossky writes, expounding Soloviev: “The relation between free theocracy and the past history of mankind can be established if we examine the ‘three fundamental forces’ which govern human evolution. One of these forces is *centripetal*: its purpose is to subordinate humanity to one supreme principle, to do away with all the manifoldness of particular forms, suppressing the freedom of personal life. The second force is *centrifugal*; it denies the importance of general unifying principles. The result of the exclusive action of the first force would be ‘one master and a dead multitude of slaves’: the extreme expression of the second force would be, on the contrary, ‘general egoism and anarchy, a multitude of separate units without any inner bond.’ The third force ‘lends the positive content to the first two, relieves them of their exclusiveness, reconciles the unity of the supreme principle with the free multiplicity of particular forms and elements and thus creates the wholeness of the universal human organism giving it a peaceful inner life.’

“The third force, which is called upon to give the human evolution its

absolute content, can only be a revelation of the higher divine world; the nation which is to manifest this force must only serve as an *intermediary* between mankind and the world and be its free and conscious instrument. Such a nation must not have any specific limited task; it is not called upon to work out the forms and elements of human existence, but only to impart a living soul, to give life and wholeness to disrupted and benumbed humanity through its union with the eternal divine principle. Such a people has no need for any special prerogatives, any particular powers or outward gifts, for it does not act of its own accord, it does not fulfil a task of its own. All that is required of the people which is the bearer of the third divine force is that it should be free from limitedness and one-sidedness, should elevate itself over the narrow specialized interests, that it should not assert itself with an exclusive energy in some particular lower sphere of activity and knowledge, that it should be indifferent to the whole of this life with its petty interests. It must wholly believe in the positive reality of the higher world and be submissive to it. These qualities undoubtedly belong to the racial character of the Slavs, and in particular to the national character of the Russian people.'

"Soloviev hopes, therefore, that the Slavs and especially Russia, will lay the foundations of a free theocracy. He also tries to prove this by the following arguments of a less general nature. 'Our people's outer form of a servant, Russia's miserable position in the economic and other respects, so far from being an argument against her calling, actually confirms it. For the supreme power to which the Russian people has to introduce mankind is not of this world, and external wealth and order are of no moment for it. Russia's great historical mission, from which alone her immediate tasks derive importance, is a religious mission in the highest sense of this word.'"⁸⁹

Let us now turn to a closer examination of the first category, despotism. This is the oldest kind of civilization, going back as far as Nimrod's Babylon and Pharaonic Egypt. Historically, most despotic civilizations have been pagan, with a tendency to deify the head of the hierarchy that dominates the whole system with his all-seeing eye and all-controlling hand, or identify him with an already-existing god (for example, Marduk in Babylon, or the sun-god Re in Egypt).

In recent times, as belief in God has declined, the god-king has given way to the god-party or god-nation, although the tendency to deify a single person has remained: the *vozhd*, the *Fuhrer*, or the *president-for-life*. Under the influence of the democratic revolutions, terms like "king" or "emperor" have tended to be avoided; but the essence remains the same. He is the supreme ruler, *de facto* infallible, who has the right of absolute dominion over every citizen of his realm or even of the whole world. For the logic of despotism is the logic of world dominion.

It goes without saying that despotism does not value individual freedom.

⁸⁹ Lossky, *History of Russian Philosophy*, London, 1952.

But its essence does not consist in repression. Its essence consists in its refusal to recognize any authority higher than itself. The despot, even if he formally recognizes God as a higher authority than himself, in practice ignores God entirely. Similarly, he ignores the traditions and beliefs of his citizens (or, more accurately, slaves) that derive from their belief in God. He absolves himself from any obligation to observe them, which is why he is called "absolutist". It follows that the despot is essentially *lawless*. It is not quite accurate to say that he is above the law because essentially he is a law unto himself; his will *is* the law.

Logically and historically, the second of the three major forms of civilization, democracy, is defined by contrast with despotism, its antithesis. Thus the first democracy, that of Athens, was forged in the crucible of war against Persian despotism, while the Roman republic arose as the result of the expulsion of the Etruscan kings that ruled the city in the beginning. Since democracy arose among protesters against despotism, it always has a protest quality; its essence consists in the assertion of the rights of one or another minority group - national, religious, class-based or sexual - against a higher despotic authority. Democracy always tends towards the leveling of differences, to egalitarianism, to the destruction of hierarchies; and if the emotional pathos of despotism is pride and vainglory, that of democracy is resentment, envy and discontent. It sees law as in essence a check on the powers that be, and it insists that no man or institution can be above the law, laws being enacted by democratic majorities. Democracies may be led by a single person, but such a person must bow to the will of the people, the real sovereign. He may even be called a king, but he is a king who reigns rather than rules.

In essence, democracy is as godless as despotism; for it will not allow the will of God to overrule the will of man as expressed by democratic elections and resolutions. "Christian democracy" is a contradiction in terms because while for a Christian God is the ultimate authority, for a democrat it is the people. We can therefore say that democracy, no less than despotism, is absolutist, since it is absolved from obeying any god or tradition that contradicts the will of the people.

The third category of civilization, the Orthodox autocracy, is neither despotic nor democratic because it is not absolutist - that is, the autocrat does not feel himself to be absolved from obedience to God and the Orthodox Church. The Orthodox autocrat sees himself as a son of the Church who submits to the Church in all spiritual matters. In fact, he sees the main aim of his rule as bringing the whole of his kingdom into obedience to the will of God as defined by the Church.

Some rulers have come perilously close to despotism by defying the Church or attempting to make it a department of state (caesaropapism) - Peter the Great is perhaps the best example. Others have veered towards democracy by willingly or unwillingly admitting elements of a constitution - Nicholas II's reign after the October 1905 manifesto is an example of that. Orthodox civilizations can continue to exist during such deviations from the norm of

Church-State “symphony”, but only temporarily.

While the Orthodox autocrat sees himself as bound by Orthodox tradition, and respects the autonomy of the Orthodox Church, he is not bound by any other forces. That is why he is called an autocrat - that is, one who “rules himself”. Other forces may lobby him, and he may choose to consult with one or another interest group, but consultation is not the same as imposition. Thus the Russian tsars convened “Assemblies of the Land” (*Zemskie Sobory*) in order to consult with different sections of the people on important political decisions. But these assemblies did not have the legislative powers of a democratic parliament: the tsar remained free to accept or reject their advice.

We have linked the words “Orthodox” and “autocracy” because an autocracy that is not Orthodox cannot fulfill the will of God, which is the sole aim of all true autocracies. The main western confessions - Catholicism and Protestantism - cannot work together with an autocrat. For, on the one hand Catholicism sees the Pope as having power also in the political sphere, being himself a despot (papocaesarism), and on the other hand, Protestantism undermines all authorities, replacing them with the “conscience” of the individual believer or citizen - a recipe for perpetual revolution. The autocrat must be free to carry out his own vision of what is the will of God for his kingdom provided it is in accord with the teaching of the Orthodox Church, the other autonomous pillar of the kingdom. Through the sacrament of anointing the Church gives him the grace to carry out this godly task, and does not interfere with his actions in the political sphere unless they clearly harm the Church by transgressing the commandments of God.

Autocrats are not elected, because elections express man’s will rather than God’s. Only during an interregnum, when the dynastic succession has been interrupted or destroyed, do the people get together in order, not so much to elect, as to *discern*, not their choice, but God’s - as was done at the “election” of Michael Romanov in 1613. When the autocrat dies, the kingdom passes to his son or nearest relative because, again, in this God’s will is discerned rather than man’s. And if the choice of God for king turns out to be a bad man, then the people accept this as God’s punishment for their sins. Only when the new king sins against the faith are the people entitled to rise up against him and restore the *Orthodox* autocracy.

The Orthodox autocracy alone guarantees the preservation of the Orthodox faith and Orthodox civilization. When the autocracy falls, and a despot usurps the throne, the Orthodox faith is persecuted and begins to fail or be corrupted among the people - unless the people succeed in rising up and restoring Orthodoxy. In a democratic state the Orthodox faith may not be openly persecuted, but other principles, such as the theory of human rights, will be introduced that gradually corrupt the Orthodox consciousness of the people.

The fervent prayer of all Orthodox Christians living in a despotic or democratic state must be for the restoration of the throne of the Orthodox

autocrats.

February 26 / March 11, 2019.

10. THE MYSTERY OF THE TSAR'S ABDICATION

Undoubtedly the most important date in modern history is March 2/15, 1917, the date of the abdication of Tsar Nicholas II. However, the mystical significance of this event is still little understood, even by the Orthodox. And yet we must try to understand it, otherwise the history of the last century remains, in Macbeth's words, "a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing..."

The meaning of the mystery is contained in three Grace-filled visions.

The first took place on the very day of the Tsar's abdication, when the Mother of God appeared to the peasant woman Eudocia Adrianovna and said to her: "Go to the village of Kolomenskoye; there you will find a big, black icon. Take it and make it beautiful, and let people pray in front of it." Eudocia found the icon at 3 o'clock, the precise hour of the abdication. Miraculously it renewed itself, and showed itself to be the "Reigning" icon of the Mother of God, the same that had led the Russian armies into war with Napoleon. On it she was depicted sitting on a royal throne dressed in a dark red robe and bearing the orb and sceptre of the Orthodox Tsars, as if to show that the sceptre of rule of the Russian land had passed from earthly rulers to the Queen of Heaven...⁹⁰

So the Orthodox Autocracy, as symbolized by the orb and sceptre, had not been destroyed, but was being held "in safe keeping", as it were, by the Queen of Heaven, until the earth should again be counted worthy of it...⁹¹

A second vision was given in this year to the holy Metropolitan Macarius of Moscow, who alone in the Church's hierarchy refused to accept the Provisional Government because of his oath of allegiance to the Tsar, for which he was removed from his see: "I saw a field. The Saviour was walking along a path. I went after Him, crying,

"Lord, I am following you!"

"Finally we approached an immense arch adorned with stars. At the threshold of the arch the Saviour turned to me and said again:

"Follow me!"

⁹⁰ It is also said that during the siege of the Moscow Kremlin in October, 1917, the Mother of God ordered the "Reigning" icon to be taken in procession seven times round the Kremlin, and then it would be saved. However, it was taken round only once... (Monk Epiphany (Chernov), *Tserkov' Katakombnaia na Zemle Rossijskoj* (The Catacomb Church in the Russian Land), Old Woking, 1980 (MS), <http://www.vs-radoste.narod.ru/photoalbum09.html>)

⁹¹ However, both the facts about the appearance of the icon and its theological interpretation are disputed. See M. Babkin, "2 (15) marta 1917 g.: iavlenie ikony 'Derzhavnoj' i otrechenie ot prestola imperatora Nikolaia II" (March 2/15, 1917: the appearance of the "Reigning" icon and Emperor Nicholas II's abdication from the throne), *Posev*, March, 2009, pp. 21-24.

And He went into a wondrous garden, and I remained at the threshold and awoke. Soon I fell asleep again and saw myself standing in the same arch, and with the Saviour stood Tsar Nicholas. The Saviour said to the Tsar:

"You see in My hands two cups: one which is bitter for your people and the other sweet for you."

"The Tsar fell to his knees and for a long time begged the Lord to allow him to drink the bitter cup together with his people. The Lord did not agree for a long time, but the Tsar begged importunately. Then the Saviour drew out of the bitter cup a large glowing coal and laid it in the palm of the Tsar's hand. The Tsar began to move the coal from hand to hand and at the same time his body began to grow light, until it had become completely bright, like some radiant spirit. At this I again woke up.

"Falling asleep yet again, I saw an immense field covered with flowers. In the middle of the field stood the Tsar, surrounded by a multitude of people, and with his hands he was distributing manna to them. An invisible voice said at this moment:

"The Tsar has taken the guilt of the Russian people upon himself, and the Russian people is forgiven."

But how could the Russian people could be forgiven through the Tsar? A.Ya. Yakovitsky expressed the following thought. The aim of the Provisional Government was to have elections to the Constituent Assembly, which would finally have rejected the monarchical principle. But this would also have brought the anathema of the *Zemsky Sobor* of 1613 upon the whole of Russia, because the anathema invoked a curse on the Russian land if it ever rejected Tsar Michael Romanov and his descendants. The vision of Metropolitan Macarius demonstrates that through his martyric patience the Tsar obtained from the Lord that the Constituent Assembly should not come to pass. Moreover, his distributing manna to the people is a symbol of the distribution of the Holy Gifts of the Eucharist. So the Church hierarchy, while it wavered in its loyalty in 1917, did not finally reject monarchism, and so did not come under anathema and was able to continue feeding the people spiritually. In this way the Tsar saved and redeemed his people.

Returning to the Reigning icon, Yakovitsky writes: "Through innumerable sufferings, blood and tears, and after repentance, the Russian people will be forgiven and Royal power, preserved by the Queen of Heaven herself, will undoubtedly be returned to Russia. Otherwise, why should the Most Holy Mother of God have preserved this Power?"⁹²

⁹² Yakovitsky, in S. Fomin (ed.), *Rossia pered Vtorym Prishestviem* (Russian before the Second Coming), Moscow, 2003, p. 235.

“With this it is impossible to disagree. The sin committed can be purified only by blood. But so that the very *possibility of redemption* should arise, some other people had to receive power over the people that had sinned, as Nebuchadnezzar received this power over the Jewish people (as witnessed by the Prophet Jeremiah), or Baty over the Russian people (the first to speak of this after the destruction was the council of bishops of the Kiev metropolia)... Otherwise, the sufferings caused by fraternal blood-letting would only deepen the wrath of God...”⁹³

So redemption could be given to the Russian people only if they expiated their sin through the sufferings of martyrdom and repentance, and provided that they did not reject the Orthodox Autocracy *in principle*. The Tsar laid the foundation to this redemption by his petition before the throne of the Almighty. The New Martyrs built on this foundation through their martyric sufferings.

And yet redemption, as revealed in the restoration of the Orthodox Autocracy, has not yet come. And that because the third element – the repentance of the whole people – has not yet taken place.

A third vision in the same fateful year of 1917 was given to “a pious girl”. Elder Nectarius of Optina interpreted it as follows: “Now his Majesty is not his own man, he is suffering such humiliation for his mistakes. 1918 will be still worse. His Majesty and all his family will be killed, tortured. One pious girl had a vision: Jesus Christ was sitting on a throne, while around Him were the twelve apostles, and terrible torments and groans resounded from the earth. And the Apostle Peter asked Christ:

“O Lord, when will these torments cease?”

“And Jesus Christ replied: ‘I give them until 1922. If the people do not repent, do not come to their senses, then they will all perish in this way.’

“Then before the throne of God there stood our Tsar wearing the crown of a great-martyr. Yes, this tsar will be a great-martyr. Recently, he has redeemed his life, and if people do not turn to God, then not only Russia, but the whole of Europe will collapse...”⁹⁴

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For further insight into this mystery, let us return to a closer examination of the abdication itself, beginning with the question: Why did the Tsar agree to abdicate?

⁹³ Yakovitsky, “Sergianstvo: mif ili real’nost’”, *Vernost’* (Fidelity), N 100, January, 2008.

⁹⁴ I. Kontsevich, *Optina Pustyn’ i ee Vremia* (Optina Desert and its Time), Jordanville, N.Y.: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1977.

Yana Sedova goes back to the similar crisis that took place during the abortive 1905 revolution. "His Majesty himself explained the reason for his agreement. He wrote that he had to choose between two paths: a dictatorship and a constitution. A dictatorship, in his words, would give a short 'breathing space', after which he would 'again have to act by force within a few months; but this would cost rivers of blood and in the end would lead inexorably to the present situation, that is, the power's authority would have been demonstrated, but the result would remain the same and reforms could not be achieved in the future'. So as to escape this closed circle, his Majesty preferred to give a constitution with which he was not in sympathy.

"These words about a 'breathing-space' after which he would again have to act by force could perhaps have been applied now [in 1917]. In view of the solitude in which his Majesty found himself in 1917, the suppression of the revolution would have been the cure, not of the illness, but of its symptoms, a temporary anaesthesia – and, moreover, for a very short time."⁹⁵

The tsar was quite capable of sending troops to suppress the revolution by force. In fact, he ordered this only days before his abdication. And he would have been justified in acting in this way in order to defend the throne, order and the monarchical principle as a whole. But now he saw how much hatred there was against himself, and believed that the February revolution was directed only *personally* against him. He did not want to shed the blood of his subjects to defend, not so much his throne, as *himself* on the throne...⁹⁶

Moreover, in refusing to defend himself personally, the Tsar was demonstrating what the Orthodox autocracy really is, and how it differs from an absolutist tyranny, on the one hand, and a constitutional monarchy on the other. The tyrant kills his own subjects in order to defend his personal rule; the constitutional monarch allows his subjects to rule over him. Tsar Nicholas rejected both of these paths. He both rejected the constitutionalism that the Duma and the liberals in general wanted to impose on him. And he rejected the tyranny of imposing his rule by force on his unwilling subjects.

The Russian constitutionalists demanded of Tsar Nicholas that he give them a "responsible" government – that is, a government completely under *their* control. But the rule of Tsar Nicholas was already responsible in the highest degree – to God. For this is the fundamental difference between the Orthodox autocrat and the constitutional monarch, that the autocrat truly governs his people, whereas the constitutional monarch "reigns, but does not rule", in the phrase of Adolphe Thiers. The first is responsible to God alone, but the latter, even if he claims to rule "by the Grace of God" and receives a Church coronation, in fact is in thrall to the people and fulfils their will rather than

⁹⁵ Sedova, "Pochemu Gosudar' ne mog ne otrech'sa?" (Why his Majesty could not avoid abdication), *Nasha Strana*, March 6, 2010, N 2887, p. 2.

⁹⁶ Sedova, "Ataka na Gosudaria Sprava" (An Attack on his Majesty from the Right), *Nasha Strana*, September 5, 2009.

God's. As St. John Maximovich writes, "the Russian sovereigns were never tsars by the will of the people, but always remained Autocrats by the Mercy of God. They were sovereigns in accordance with the dispensation of God, and not according to the 'multimutinous' will of man."⁹⁷ And so we have three kinds of king: the Orthodox autocrat, who strives to fulfill the will of God alone, and is responsible to Him alone, being limited only by the Faith and Tradition of the people as represented by the Orthodox Church; the absolute monarch, such as the French Louis XIV or the English Henry VIII, who fulfills only his own will, is responsible to nobody, and is limited by nothing and nobody; and the constitutional monarch, who fulfills the will of the people, and can be ignored or deposed by them as they see fit.

Monarchy by the Grace of God and monarchy by the will of the people are incompatible principles. The very first king appointed by God in the Old Testament, Saul, fell because he tried to combine them; he listened to the people, not God. Thus he spared Agag, the king of the Amalekites, instead of killing them all, as God had commanded "because I listened to the voice of the people" (I Kings 15.20). In other words, he abdicated his God-given authority and *became a democrat*, listening to the people rather than to God.

The significance of the reign of Tsar Nicholas II lies in the fact that he demonstrated by his truly Christlike, self-sacrificial actions what a true Orthodox autocrat – as opposed to an absolutist despot or a constitutional monarch – really is. This knowledge had begun to fade in the minds of the people, and with its fading the monarchy itself had become weaker. The Tsar agreed to abdicate because he believed that the general dissatisfaction with his *personal* rule could be assuaged by his *personal* departure from the scene. But he never saw in this the renunciation of *the autocracy itself*; he envisaged only the transfer of power from himself to another member of the dynasty – his son or his brother. This, he thought, would placate the army and therefore ensure victory against Germany. By sacrificing himself, the Tsar restored the image of the Autocracy to its full glory, thereby preserving the possibility of its restoration in a future generation...

The Tsar wrote in his diary: "My abdication is necessary. Ruzsky transmitted this conversation to the Staff HQ, and Alexeyev to all the commanders-in-chief of the fronts. The replies from all arrived at 2:05. The essence is that for the sake of the salvation of Russia and keeping the army at the front quiet, I must resolve on this step. I agreed. From the Staff HQ they sent the draft of a manifesto. In the evening there arrived from Petrograd Guchkov and Shulgin. I discussed and transmitted to them the signed and edited manifesto. At one in the morning I left Pskov greatly affected by all that had come to pass. All around me I see treason, cowardice, and deceit."

⁹⁷ St. John Maximovich, *Proiskhozhdenie Zakona o Prestolonasledii v Rossii* (The Origin of the Law of Succession in Russia), quoted in "Nasledstvennost' ili Vybory?" ("Hereditry or Elections?"), *Svecha Pokaiania* (Candle of Repentance), N 4, February, 2000, p. 12. The phrase "multimutinous" was used by Tsar Ivan the Terrible in his correspondence with Kurbsky.

Commenting on these words, Fr. Lev Lebedev writes: “The Tsar was convinced that this treason was personally directed to him, and not to the Monarchy, not to Russia! The generals were *sincerely* convinced of the same: they supposed that in betraying the Tsar they were not betraying the Monarchy and the Fatherland, but were even serving them, acting for their true good!... But betrayal and treason to *God’s* Anointed is treason to everything that is headed by him. The Masonic consciousness of the generals, drunk on their supposed ‘real power’ over the army, could not rise even to the level of this *simple* spiritual truth! And meanwhile the traitors had already been *betrayed*, the deceivers *deceived*! Already on the following day, March 3, General Alexeyev, having received more detailed information on what was happening in Petrograd, exclaimed: ‘I shall never forgive myself that I *believed* in the sincerity of certain people, obeyed them and sent the telegram to the commanders-in-chief on the question of the abdication of his Majesty from the Throne!’... In a similar way General Ruzsky quickly ‘*lost faith* in the new government’ and, as was written about him, ‘suffered great moral torments’ concerning his conversation with the Tsar, and the days March 1 and 2, ‘until the end of his life’ (his end came in October, 1918, when the Bolsheviks finished off Ruzsky in the Northern Caucasus). But we should not be moved by these belated ‘sufferings’ and ‘recovery of sight’ of the generals (and also of some of the Great Princes). They did not have to possess information, nor be particularly clairvoyant or wise; they simply had to be *faithful to their oath* – and nothing more!..

“... At that time, March 1-2, 1917, the question was placed before the Tsar, his consciousness and his conscience in the following way: the revolution in Petrograd is being carried out under *monarchical* banners: society, the people (Russia!) are standing for the preservation of tsarist power, for the planned carrying on of the war to victory, but this is being hindered only by one thing – general dissatisfaction *personally* with Nicholas II, general distrust of his *personal* leadership, so that if he, for the sake of the good and the victory of Russia, were to depart, he would *save* both the Homeland and the Dynasty!

“Convinced, as were his generals, that everything was like that, his Majesty, who never suffered from love of power (he could be powerful, but not power-loving!), after 3 o’clock in the afternoon of March 2, 1917, immediately sent two telegrams – to Rodzyanko in Petrograd and to Alexeyev in Mogilev. In the first he said: ‘*There is no sacrifice that I would not undertake in the name of the real good of our native Mother Russia. For that reason I am ready to renounce the Throne in favour of My Son, in order that he should remain with Me until his coming of age, under the regency of My brother, Michael Alexandrovich*’. The telegram to Headquarters proclaimed: ‘In the name of the good of our ardently beloved Russia, her calm and salvation, I am ready to renounce the Throne in favour of My Son. I ask everyone to serve Him faithfully and unhypocritically.’ His Majesty said, as it were between the lines: ‘Not as you have served Me...’ Ruzsky, Danilov and Savich went away with the texts of the telegrams.

“On learning about this, Voeikov ran into the Tsar’s carriage: ‘Can it be true... that You have signed the abdication?’ The Tsar gave him the telegrams lying on the table with the replies of the commanders-in-chief, and said: ‘What was left for me to do, when they have all betrayed Me? And first of all – Nikolasha (Grand Duke Nicholas Nikolayevich)... Read!’”⁹⁸

As in 1905, so in 1917, probably the single most important factor influencing the Tsar’s decision was the attitude of his uncle and the former Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, Grand Duke Nicholas Nikolayevich Romanov, “Nikolasha” as he was known in the family. In 1905 Nikolasha had refused to accept the post of dictator, which forced the Tsar to grant the constitution that weakened his autocratic power. Now, in 1917, Nikolasha was among the generals pleading with him to abdicate... There was very little that the tsar could do in view of the treason of the generals and Nikolasha.

S.S. Oldenburg writes: “One can speculate whether his Majesty could have not abdicated. With the position taken by General Ruzsky and General Alexeyev, the possibility of resistance was excluded: the commands of his Majesty were not delivered, the telegrams of those who were loyal to him were not communicated to him. Moreover, they could have announced the abdication without his will: Prince Mark of Baden announced the abdication of the German emperor (9.11.1918) when the Kaiser had by no means abdicated! His Majesty at least retained the possibility of addressing the people with his own last word... His Majesty did not believe that his opponents could cope with the situation. For that reason, to the last moment he tried to keep the steering wheel in his own hands. When that possibility had disappeared – it was clear that he was in captivity – his Majesty wanted at least to do all he could to make the task of his successors easier... Only he did not want to entrust his son to them: he knew that the youthful monarch could not abdicate, and to remove him they might use other, bloody methods. His Majesty gave his opponents everything he could: they still turned out to be powerless in the face of events. The steering wheel was torn out of the hands of the autocrat-‘chauffeur’ and the car fell into the abyss...”⁹⁹

E.E. Alferov echoes this assessment and adds: “The Empress, who had never trusted Ruzsky, on learning that the Tsar’s train had been held up at Pskov, immediately understood the danger. On March 2 she wrote to his Majesty: ‘But you are alone, you don’t have the army with you, you are caught like a mouse in a trap. What can you do?’”¹⁰⁰

Perhaps he could have counted on the support of some military units. But the result would undoubtedly have been a civil war, whose outcome was doubtful, but whose effect on the war with Germany could not be doubted: the

⁹⁸ Lebedev, *Velikorossia* (Great Russia), St. Petersburg, 1999, pp. 486-488.

⁹⁹ Oldenburg, *Tsarstvovanie Imperatora Nikolaiia II* (The Reign of Emperor Nicholas II), Belgrade, 1939, vol. 2, pp. 641-642.

¹⁰⁰ Alferov, *Imperator Nikolaj II kak chelovek sil'noj voli* (Emperor Nicholas II as a Man of Strong Will), Jordanville, N.Y.: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1983, 2004, p. 121.

Germans would have been given a decisive advantage at a critical moment when Russia was about to launch a spring offensive. This last factor was decisive for the Tsar: he would not contemplate undermining the war effort for any reason. For the first duty of an Orthodox Tsar after the defence of the Orthodox faith is the defence of the country against external enemies – and in the case of the war with Germany the two duties coincided.

The Tsar had always steadfastly refused to consider any internal constitutional changes during the war for the very good reason that such changes were bound to undermine the war effort. But his enemies wanted to force him to make such changes precisely while the war was still being waged. For, as George Katkov penetratingly observes, the Russian liberals' and radicals' "fear of the military failure and humiliation of Russia was, if we are not mistaken, only the decent cover for another feeling – the profound inner anxiety that the war would end in victory before the political plans of the opposition could be fulfilled, and that the possibilities presented to it by the exceptional circumstances of wartime, would be missed".¹⁰¹

Not knowing that the Tsar had already abdicated, the Duma deputies Guchkov and Shulgin arrived about 10 p.m. on March 2. "By this time, that is, in the evening, the Tsar had somewhat changed his original decision. The point was the extremely dangerous illness of his Son, the Tsarevich Alexis, who was still destined to rule, albeit under the regency of his uncle, Michael. The Tsar-Father, worrying about his, asked the doctors for the last time: was there the slightest hop of Alexis Nikolayevich being cured of haemophilia? And he received a negative reply: there was no hope. Then the Tsar took the decision to keep his sick son completely with himself and abdicate in favour of his brother *Michael*. However, the text of the abdication manifesto was still marked as March 2, 15.00 hours, that is, the moment when he decided to renounce his power. So when Guchkov and Shulgin brought the text of the manifesto that they had composed they found that it was not necessary. The Tsar gave them his. And they had to admit with shame how much more powerful, spiritual and majestic in its simplicity was the manifesto written by the Tsar than their talentless composition.¹⁰² They *begged* the Tsar to *appoint* Prince Lvov as President of the Council of Ministers and General L.G. Kornilov as Commander of the Petrograd military district. The Tsar signed the necessary orders. These were the last appointments made by *the Tsar*.

"Seeing themselves as the controllers of the destinies and rulers of Russia, Guchkov and Shulgin both arrived in a concealed manner, bewildered, unshaven, in noticeably dirty collars, and departed with all the papers they had

¹⁰¹ Katkov, *Fevral'skaia Revoliutsia* (The February Revolution), Paris: YMCA Pres, 1974, p. 236.

¹⁰² Shulgin wrote: "How pitiful seemed to me the sketch that we had brought him... It is too late to guess whether his Majesty could have not abdicated. Taking into account the position that General Ruzsky and General Alexeyev held, the possibility of resistance was excluded: his Majesty's orders were no longer passed on, the telegrams of those faithful to him were not communicated to him... In abdicating, his Majesty at least retained the possibility of appealing to the people with his own last word" (in Oldenburg, *op. cit.*, p. 253). (V.M.)

been given in a conspiratorial manner, looking around them and concealing themselves from 'the people' whom they thought to rule... Thieves and robbers! Guchkov's plan had been carried out, while as for Guchkov himself – what a boundlessly pitiful situation did this very clever Mason find himself in, he who had worked for so many years to dig a hole under Tsar Nicholas II!

“Nicholas II's manifesto declared: 'During the days of the great struggle against the external foe which, in the space of almost three years, has been striving to enslave our Native Land, it has pleased the Lord God to send down upon Russia a new and difficult trial. The national disturbances that have begun within the country threaten to reflect disastrously upon the further conduct of the stubborn war. The fate of Russia, the honour of our heroic army, the well-being of the people, the entire future of our precious Fatherland demand that the war be carried out to a victorious conclusion, come what may. The cruel foe is exerting what remains of his strength, and nor far distant is the hour when our valiant army with our glorious allies will be able to break the foe completely. In these decisive days in the life of Russia, We have considered it a duty of conscience to make it easy for Our people to bring about a tight-knit union and cohesion of all our national strength, in order that victory might be the more quickly attained, and, in agreement with the State Duma We have concluded that it would be a good thing to abdicate the Throne of the Russian State and to remove Supreme Power from Ourselves. Not desiring to be separated from Our beloved Son, We transfer Our legacy to Our Brother Grand Duke Michael Alexandrovich, and bless Him to ascend the Throne of the Russian State. We command Our Brother to conduct State affairs fully and in inviolable unity with the representatives of those men who hold legislative office, upon those principles which they shall establish, swearing an inviolable oath to that effect. In the name of our ardently beloved Native Land We call upon all faithful sons of the Fatherland to fulfil their sacred duty before it, by submitting to the Tsar during the difficult moment of universal trials, and, aiding Him, together with the representatives of the people, to lead the Russian State out upon the path of victory, well-being and glory. May the Lord God help Russia. Pskov. 2 March, 15.00 hours. 1917. Nicholas.' Countersigned by the Minister of the Court Count Fredericks.¹⁰³

“Then – it was already night on March 2 – the Tsar telegraphed the essence of the matter to his brother Michael and asked forgiveness that he 'had not been able to warn' him. But this telegram *did not reach* its addressee.

“Then the train set off. Left on his own, in his personal compartment, the Tsar prayed for a long time by the light only of a lampada that burned in front of an icon. Then he sat down and wrote in his diary: 'At one in the morning I

¹⁰³ Lebedev's text has been slightly altered to include the whole text of the manifesto (V.M.). For more on the text of the manifesto, and proof that it was written by the Tsar himself, see "Manifest ob otrechenii i oktiabrskij perevorot: Kniaz' Nikolai Davydovich Zhevakov" (1874-1939)", <http://www.zhevakhov.info/?p=465>.

left Pskov greatly affected by all that had come to pass. All around me I see treason, cowardice, and deceit.'

"This is the condition that *reigned* at that time in 'society', and especially in democratic, Duma society, in the highest army circles, in a definite part of the workers and reservists of Petrograd..."¹⁰⁴

Time was to show that this condition reigned in the great majority of the Russian people...

Although he had abdicated, the Tsar considered himself to be still Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces. That is why his train now moved towards Mogilev, and why neither Ruzsky nor Alexeyev nor even Guchkov prevented him from returning there.

General Vladimir Voeikov, commandant of the guard at Tsarskoye Selo, wrote: "Immediately the train had moved from the station, I went into the Tsar's compartment, which was lit by one lampada burning in front of an icon. After all the experiences of that heavy day, the Tsar, who was always distinguished by huge self-possession, could not control himself. He embraced me and sobbed... My heart broke into pieces at the sight of such undeserved sufferings that had fallen to the lot of the noblest and kindest of tsars. He had only just endured the tragedy of abdicating from the throne for himself and his son because of the treason and baseness of the people who had abdicated from him, although they had received only good from him. He was torn away from his beloved family. All the misfortunes sent down upon him he bore with the humility of an ascetic... The image of the Tsar with his tear-blurred eyes in the half-lit compartment will never be erased from my memory to the end of my life..."¹⁰⁵

"Afterwards, 'I slept long and deeply,' wrote Nicholas. 'Talked with my people about yesterday. Read a lot about Julius Caesar.' Then he remembered Misha: 'to his Majesty Emperor Michael. Recent events have led me to decide irrevocably to take this extreme step. Forgive me if it grieves you and also for no warning - there was no time.'"¹⁰⁶

Well he might remember Julius Caesar. For like Caesar, the Tsar, the Emperor of the Third Rome, was stabbed in the back on the Ides of March, bringing the Christian Roman empire to an end...

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At Stavka the Tsar appointed Nikolasha supreme commander of the armed forces, and Prince George Lvov - president of the Council of Ministers of the

¹⁰⁴ Lebedev, *op. cit.*, pp. 488-489.

¹⁰⁵ Voeikov, *So Tsarem i Bez Tsaria* (With and Without the Tsar), Moscow, 1995, p. 190.

¹⁰⁶ Montefiore, *The Romanovs*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2016, p. 623.

Provisional Government. For the last time, he listened to a report by General Alexeyev on the military situation. At the end of it, in a low voice said that it was difficult for him to part from them, and it was sad for him to be present for the last time at a report, "but it is evident that the will of God is stronger than my will".¹⁰⁷

Sister Florence Farmborough, an English Red Cross nurse serving at the Russian Front, writes: "Deprived of Throne and Power, his visit was sorrowful in the extreme. He spent only a few days there and was visited by his mother, the Dowager Empress Marie. There they parted; she, to return to her home in Kiyev; he, to return as a prisoner to his family in Tsarskoe Selo [the Village of the Tsar]. Those who saw him in Mogilev were amazed at the self-control and courage with which he carried out the final ceremonies. He wrote to his fighting men on the various Fronts and addressed the troops in person. He told them that he was leaving them because he felt that he was no longer necessary; thanked them for their never-failing loyalty; praised them for their unwavering patriotism and besought them to obey the Provisional Government, to continue the war and to lead Russia to Victory. Only his mournful, hollow eyes, and extreme pallor told of the effort he was making to preserve the calm demanded of him.

"Even before he left Mogilev, vociferous celebrations were taking place in the town; large red flags blazed in the streets; all photographs of himself and family had disappeared; Imperial emblems were being pulled down from walls, cut off uniforms; and, while the ex-Tsar sat alone in his room, the officers who had visited him, cheered his brave words and bowed low – many in tears – before him as he bid them farewell, were at that moment queuing up in the open air, outside his window, to take the Oath of Allegiance to the Provisional Government."¹⁰⁸

For almost a whole week after his abdication the Tsar continued to lead all the Armed Forces of Russia!... But, although there many senior officers there who were ready to die for him, the Tsar made no move to make use of his powerful position to march against the revolution. On March 7 the Provisional Government ordered the arrest of the Tsar. And on March 8 four Duma deputies came to Mogilev and arrested him. This meant that he could not leave Russia (even if he had wanted to, which he and the Tsarina did not), and was the step that led inexorably to his martyrdom in Yekaterinburg the following year...

According to Lebedev, the Tsar was sincerely convinced that "his departure from power could help everyone to come together for the decisive and already very imminent victory over the external enemy (the general offensive was due

¹⁰⁷ Alferov, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

¹⁰⁸ Farmborough, *Nurse at the Russian Front. A Diary 1914-18*, London: Book Club Associates, 1974, pp. 271-272. Alexeyev reported the Tsar's last address to the army to Guchkov, now War Minister. Guchkov forbade the distribution of the speech... (Alferov, p. 108)

to take place in April). Let us recall his words to the effect that *there was no sacrifice* which he was not prepared to offer for the good of Russia. In those days the Tsar expressed himself still more definitely: ‘... *If Russia needs an atoning sacrifice, let me be that sacrifice*’. The Tsar was convinced (and they convinced him) that... the Provisional Government, society and the revolution were all (!) for *the preservation of the Monarchy* and for carrying through the war to a *glorious victory*...”¹⁰⁹

Lebedev is not convincing here. The Tsar’s first priority was undoubtedly a successful conclusion to the war. After all, on the night of his abdication, he wrote in his diary: “I decided to take this step for the sake of Russia, *and to keep the armies in the field*.” But it is hard to believe that he *still*, after all the treason he had seen around him, believed that “the Provisional Government, society and the revolution [!] are all for the preservation of the Monarchy”...

It is more likely is that he believed that without the cooperation of the generals and the Duma Russia could not win the war, which was the prime objective, upon which everything else depended. And so he abdicated, not because he had any illusions about the Provisional Government, but because, as a true patriot, he wanted Russia to win the war...

One of the best comments on the Tsar in the February revolution came from Winston Churchill: “Surely to no nation has Fate been more malignant than to Russia. Her ship went down in sight of port... Every sacrifice had been made; the toil was achieved... In March the Tsar was on the throne: the Russian Empire and the Russian army held up, the front was secured and victory was undoubted. The long retreats were ended, the munitions famine was broken; arms were pouring in; stronger, larger, better equipped armies guarded the immense front... Moreover, no difficult action was now required: to remain in presence: to lean with heavy weight upon the far stretched Teutonic line: to hold without exceptional activity the weakened hostile forces on her front: in a word to endure – that was all that stood between Russia and the fruits of general victory... According to the superficial fashion of our time, the tsarist order is customarily seen as blind, rotten, a tyranny capable of nothing. But an examination of the thirty months of war with Germany and Austria should correct these light-minded ideas. We can measure the strength of the Russian Empire by the blows which it suffered, by the woes it experienced, by the inexhaustible forces that it developed, and by the restoration of forces of which it showed itself capable... In the government of states, when great events take place, the leader of the nation, whoever he may be, is condemned for failures and glorified for successes. The point is not who did the work or sketched the plan of battle: reproach or praise for the outcome is accorded to him who bears the authority of supreme responsibility. Why refuse this strict examination to Nicholas II? The brunt of supreme decisions centred upon him. At the summit where all problems are reduced to Yea and Nay, where events transcend the faculties of men and where all is inscrutable, he had to give the answers. His

¹⁰⁹ Lebedev, *op. cit.*, p. 491.

was the function of the compass needle. War or no war? Advance or retreat? Right or left? Democratise or hold firm? Quit or persevere? These were the battlefields of Nicholas II. Why should he reap no honour for them?...

“The regime which he personified, over which he presided, to which his personal character gave the final spark, had at this moment won the war for Russia. Now they crush him. A dark hand intervenes, clothed from the beginning in madness. The Tsar departs from the scene. He and all those whom he loved are given over to suffering and death. His efforts are minimized; his actions are condemned; his memory is defiled...”¹¹⁰

The autocrat, according to the Orthodox understanding, can rule only in partnership or “symphony” with the Church. Moreover, the leaders of neither Church nor State can rule if the people rejects them; for in Deuteronomy 17.14 the Lord had laid it down as one of the conditions of the creation of a God-pleasing monarchy that the people should *want* a God-pleasing king.¹¹¹ In view of this, the Tsar, who very well understood the true meaning of the autocracy, could not continue to rule if the Church and people did not want it. Just as it takes two willing partners to make a marriage, so it takes a head and a body who are willing to work with each other to make a Christian state. The bridegroom in this case was willing and worthy, but the bride was not...

Nevertheless, the Tsar laid down his life for his bride, the Russian people, in order that they should one day be found worthy again of receiving the precious gift of the Autocracy back again, from the Reigning Mother of God...

In an important address entitled “Tsar and Patriarch”, P.S. Lopukhin approaches this question by noting that the Tsar’s role was one of *service*, service in the Church and for the Church. And its purpose was to bring people to the Church and keep them there, in conditions maximally conducive to their salvation. But if the people of the Church, in their great majority, cease to understand the Tsar’s role in that way, then he becomes literally of no service to them.

“The understanding of, and love and desire for, the ‘tsar’s service’ began to wane in Russia. Sympathy began to be elicited, by contrast, for the bases of the rationalist West European state, which was separated from the Church, from the religious world-view. The idea of the democratic state liberated from all

¹¹⁰ Churchill, *The World Crisis. 1916-18*, vol. I, London, 1927, pp. 223-225. Churchill was a Mason, Master of “Rosemary” lodge no. 2851, since 1902. However, this did not prevent him from being an admirer of the Tsar, and a fierce anti-communist.

¹¹¹ As Lev Alexandrovich Tikhomirov writes: “Without establishing a kingdom, Moses foresaw it and pointed it out in advance to Israel... It was precisely Moses who pointed out in advance the two conditions for the emergence of monarchical power: it was necessary, first, that the people itself should recognize its necessity, and secondly, that the people itself should not elect the king over itself, but should present this to the Lord. Moreover, Moses indicated a leadership for the king himself: ‘when he shall sit upon the throne of his kingdom, he must... fulfil all the words of this law’.” (*Monarkhicheskaia Gosudarstvennost’* (Monarchical Statehood), St. Petersburg, 1992, pp. 127-129).

obligation in relation to God, the Church and the spiritual state of the people began to become attractive. The movement in this direction in the Russian people was long-standing and stubborn, and it had already a long time ago begun to elicit profound alarm, for this movement was not so much 'political' as spiritual and psychological: the so-called Russian 'liberation' and then 'revolutionary movement' was mainly, with rare and uncharacteristic exceptions, an a-religious and anti-religious movement.

"It was precisely this that elicited profound alarm in the hearts of St. Seraphim, Fr. John of Kronstadt, Dostoyevsky and Metropolitan Anthony...

"This movement developed inexorably, and finally there came the day when his Majesty understood that he was alone in his 'service of the Tsar'...

"The Orthodox Tsar has authority in order that there should be a Christian state, so that there should be a Christian-minded environment. The Tsar bears his tsarist service for this end.

"When the desire for a Christian state and environment is quenched in the people, the Orthodox monarchy loses both the presupposition and the aim of its existence, for nobody can be forced to become a Christian. The Tsar needs Christians, not trembling slaves.

"In the life of a people and of a man there are periods of spiritual darkening, of 'stony lack of feeling', but this does not mean that the man has become completely stony: the days of temptation and darkness pass, and he is again resurrected. When a people is overcome by passions, it is the duty of the authorities by severe means to sober it up and wake it up. And this must be done with decisiveness, and it is healing, just as a thunderstorm is healing.

"But this can only be done when the blindness is not deep and when he who is punished and woken up understands the righteousness of the punishment. Thus one peasant reproached a landowner, asking why he had not begun to struggle against the pogroms with a machine-gun. "Well, and what would have happened then?" "We would have come to our senses! But now we are drunk and we burn and beat each other."

"But when the spiritual illness has penetrated even into the subconscious, then the application of force will seem to be violence, and not just retribution, then the sick people will not longer be capable of being healed. Then it will be in the state in which was the sinner whom the Apostle Paul 'delivered to Satan for the tormenting of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved' (I Corinthians 5.5).

"At the moment of his abdication his Majesty felt himself to be profoundly alone, and around him was 'cowardice, baseness and treason', and to the question how he could have abdicated from his tsarist service, it is necessary to

reply: he did this because we abdicated from his tsarist service, from his sacred and sanctified authority..."¹¹²

As St. John Maximovich put it: "Calculating malice did its work: it separated Russia from her tsar, and at that terrible moment in Pskov he remained abandoned... The terrible abandonment of the Tsar... But it was not he who abandoned Russia: Russia abandoned him, who loved Russia more than his own life. Seeing this, and in hope that his self-humiliation would calm the stormy passions of the people, his Majesty renounced the throne... They rejoiced who wanted the deposition of the Tsar. The rest were silent. There followed the arrest of his Majesty and the further developments were inevitable... His Majesty was killed, Russia was silent..."

These explanations of why the Tsar abdicated agree with each other and are essentially true. But we can go still further and deeper. Michael Nazarov argues that the Tsar, seeing that it was impossible to stem the tide of apostasy at that time, offered himself as a sacrifice for the enlightenment of *future* generations, in accordance with the revelation given to Metropolitan Macarius: "His Majesty Nicholas II very profoundly felt the meaning of his service as tsar. His tragedy consisted in the fact that at the governmental level of the crisis fewer and fewer co-workers were appearing who would combine in themselves administrative abilities, spiritual discernment and devotion. 'All around me are betrayal and cowardice and deception', wrote his Majesty in his diary on the day of the abdication... Therefore, in the conditions of almost complete betrayal, his humble refusal to fight for power was dictated not only by a striving to avoid civil war, which would have weakened the country before the external enemy. This rejection of power was in some way similar to Christ's refusal to fight for His life before His crucifixion - for the sake of the future salvation of men. Perhaps his Majesty Nicholas II, the most Orthodox of all the Romanovs, intuitively felt that there was already no other way for Russia to be saved - except *the path of self-sacrifice for the enlightenment of descendants*, hoping on the help and the will of God..."¹¹³

From this point of view it was the will of God that the Tsar abdicate, even though it meant disaster for the Russian people, just as it was the will of God that Christ be crucified, even though it meant the destruction of the Jewish people. Hence the words of Eldress Paraskeva (Pasha) of Sarov (+1915), who had foretold the Tsar's destiny during the Sarov Days: "Your Majesty, descend from the throne yourself".¹¹⁴ On the one hand, his abdication was wrong both in the legal sense that it was contrary to the Basic Laws of the Autocracy, which does not allow for the abdication of the tsar, and in the historical sense that it meant "the removal of him who restrains" the coming of the Antichrist (II Thessalonians 2.7) with all the disasters that came with that. But on the other

¹¹² Lopukhin, "Tsar' i Patriarkh" (Tsar and Patriarch), *Pravoslavnij Put'* (The Orthodox Way), Jordanville, 1951, pp. 103-104.

¹¹³ Nazarov, *Kto Naslednik Rossijskogo Prestola?* (Who is the Heir of the Russian Throne?), Moscow, 1996, pp. 72-73. Italics mine (V.M.)

¹¹⁴ N. Gubanov (ed.), *Nikolai II-ij i Novie Mucheniki*, St. Petersburg, 2000, p. 70.

hand, it was right and inevitable in a mystical, eschatological sense, in that it preserved the Autocracy pure and unimpaired, ready for the time when the bride would awake from her profound sleep and return with penitence and joy to her bridegroom...¹¹⁵ As Blessed Duniushka of Ussuruisk, who was martyred in 1918, said: "The Tsar will leave the nation, which shouldn't be, but this has been foretold to him from Above. This is his destiny. There is no way that he can evade it..."¹¹⁶

*March 2/15, 2019.
Reigning Icon of the Mother of God.*

¹¹⁵ On hearing the new of the abdication, the Tsar's earthly bride wrote to him: "I fully understand your action, my own hero... I know that you could not sign against what you swore at your coronation. We know each other through and through - need no words."

¹¹⁶ <http://www.geocities.com/kitezgrad/prophets/duniushka.html>.

11. BREXIT, DEMOCRACY AND THE ANTICHRIST

British commentators are describing the failure of the British parliament to fulfill the will of the people and take Britain out of the European Union as a failure of democracy that even portends the collapse of democracy itself. Whether or not democracy will fall is difficult to say. What we can say with more certainty is that the Brexit process has revealed the internal contradictions of democracy as nothing else.

This is indeed a remarkable, perhaps unprecedented, situation. On June 23, 2016, in the largest democratic vote in its history, the British people voted by a narrow but decisive majority (52% to 48%) that their country should leave the European Union. Then, in 2017, both of the major parties formally committed themselves in their manifestos to implementing this decision, and then voted overwhelmingly that the date of Brexit should be March 29, 2019. Now we are past that date, and yet Britain is still in the European Union, while every means of extracting her from Europe in an orderly manner – that is, through a legal treaty agreement with the Union – has failed to pass in parliament. The reason does not lie in the evil machinations of any actor, whether British or European. The reason lies in the fact that *there is no majority for any single course of action*. In other words, there is no single will of the people, neither a Rousseauist general will, nor a single proposed course of action that commands a majority in parliament. And since democracy cannot work without a majority, that means that democracy in “the mother of parliaments” has ceased to work.

Democracy is a mechanism for getting things done in a divided community that would otherwise fragment. In a monarchy the king decides, and that is the end of the matter. He may or may not be wise, and he may or may not have the agreement of the majority. In any case, the people accept his decision. In a democracy there is no king. There is an elected executive, but in major decisions the executive cannot act without the consent of the majority of elected representatives. In this Brexit process, not only has the executive failed to get a majority for its preferred course of action: parliament has failed to agree on any other course of action. There is a total impasse.

The logical course now, in the opinion of many, is to have a general election or another referendum. But in the opinion of many others, this would be undemocratic as putting the original decision, by 17.4 million people, in jeopardy. In any case, there is no guarantee that it would resolve the impasse: more votes may mean still more division and sclerosis – and more passion.

A radical solution would be the break-up of the United Kingdom, allowing, for example, Scotland and Northern Ireland, which both voted to stay in the European Union in 2016, to make their own decisions and make their own treaty with the Union, while Wales and England, which voted to leave, would similarly make their own decisions. But where would that leave London, which, unlike the rest of England, voted to remain? And would the European Union agree to negotiate with what were now in effect separate countries?

We are reminded of the Lord's words: "A house that is divided cannot stand." Believers in democracy claim that it is the panacea for all division, a way of resolving conflicts in a peaceful and just manner. But the present situation proves that this is not always the case. In the past, democracy failed because the people unwisely voted for a person or power bent on destroying democracy – such as the revolutionary socialists in Russia in 1917, or the national socialists in Germany in 1933. Today, as far as we can tell, there is no Lenin or Hitler waiting in the wings to take over the rule of Britain. And yet democracy has manifestly failed.

Democracy is based on a fiction: that there is such a thing as a single will of the collective organism called the people, as opposed to the many wills of many individual people. Of course, it is a useful fiction and serves a useful purpose in very many situations. But it remains a fiction, and it is important to understand why it is untrue.

Democracy is based on an aggregate of many personal wills. This aggregate changes from day to day, even from hour to hours; so there is no constant thing called "the will of the people". Moreover, at one time certain wills are good and wise, while others are bad and unwise; whereas at other times the reverse may be the case. Summing up an aggregate of wills by no means guarantees that the collective pseudo-will that emerges will be good and wise. In other words, democracy is only as good as the people and the wills that make it up at any given moment.

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

In a world pushed hither and thither by the "multimutinous" wills of men (van der Tuin's phrase), some kind of compromise must be effected if a state of permanent war is to be avoided. Democracy is such a compromise. As such, it is not to be despised by those who prefer relative peace to constant war. But it must be recognized for what it is: a convenient fiction that guarantees nothing except relative peace. It is a method of conflict resolution, not a path to wisdom, or true peace and prosperity; and even as a method of conflict resolution it has its limits, as the present impasse over Brexit has proved. When a truly momentous decision approaches, democracy shows itself to be at its weakest. For when supremely important issues are at stake, relative peace becomes less important than *truth*. In an obscure but definite way, the British people feel that the decision to leave the European Union is one such momentous decision. Let us briefly examine why.

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The root difference between “Leavers” and “Remainers” is not primarily over economics, even if most of the argumentation we hear on the media is indeed about economics. The Remainers believe that Britain’s long-term economic interests lie in remaining within the very large free trading area that is the European Union, and that leaving that area, with all its privileges, would damage British business both in the short- and the long-term. The Leavers accept that there might be some short-term disruption, but that the long-term advantages of being able to conclude trading agreements with countries all round the globe as an individual trading nation and not as a member of the European cartel, outweigh the short-term losses.

But the Leavers care less about economics than about *political sovereignty* and *national identity*. They argue that Britain in the European Union is no longer a sovereign nation in that decisions passed in bodies such as the European Commission and the European Court of Justice can overrule decisions passed in the British parliament or the British courts. In other words, Britain is a *vassal state* whose real ruler is no longer the Queen in parliament but the (usually unelected) institutions of the European Union. This is not disputed by the Remainers, who argue that political sovereignty is an outdated concept in today’s globalized world whose problems can only be solved by global or at any rate regional “super-nations”. Moreover, there is the strong feeling among Remainers that the European Union represents modernity, and that if Britain wants to be part of the modern world and prosper in it she must integrate herself into it and not “miss the train” as it leaves the station for a radiant if indeterminate future. But Leavers see this as integration into a socialist super-power that exercises a despotic dominion over its member-states. As that notable anti-socialist Margaret Thatcher said in her famous Bruges speech in September, 1988: “We have not successfully rolled back the frontiers of the state in Britain only to see them re-imposed at a European level, with a European super-state exercising a new dominance from Brussels.” And, as Norman Stone writes, “she said, about the tired metaphor of not taking the European train as it was leaving the station, that ‘people who get on a train like that deserve to be taken for a ride’.”¹¹⁷

In the end, for the British citizen this argument comes down to the question: do you feel yourself to be primarily European, and only secondly British (or English, Scottish, Welsh or Irish), or primarily British? Remainers see Brexit as a threat to their European identity, while Leavers see it as reasserting their British identity. It is this question that particularly divides the generations. Older people, who were born before Britain joined the European Union (then only the European Economic Community) in 1975, grew up in an independent Britain feeling Britain, not Europe, to be their real home; whereas younger people, having been born into the European Union see it as their real homeland.

¹¹⁷ Stone, *The Atlantic and its Enemies*, London: Penguin, 2010, p. 596.

As Anthony Seldon writes, this issue of “membership of the EU goes to the very heart of national identity. It is not just about what people think or where they perceive their economic interests to lie; it is about who they are.”¹¹⁸

Since this is a matter of individual and social psychology, it is unlikely that it can be resolved by rational argument. But there is an aspect to this question that transcends both economic and political arguments, and questions of national identity and sovereignty. If Europe were a godly state from which there issued godly laws and godly people and influences, we should be glad to be part of it, as Britain was glad to be part of the Roman empire and patriarchate in the so-called “Dark Ages”. But Europe today is the gateway into the New World Order, whose creed is atheism and multicultural ecumenism (especially Islamophilia) and morality – the immorality of the LGBT rainbow, abortion on demand and the crazy world of universal human rights.

As Orthodox Christians, we know that one day the Antichrist will be enthroned as the head of a world government and global state. His rule will be religious as well as political and economic. Among the main organs of religious globalization are the World Council of Churches, which has already ensnared all the Local Churches of World Orthodoxy, and the World Constitution and Parliament Association (WCPA). The latter was founded in 1959; although its aims are political and economic, it clearly has ramifications for religious organization, as the following 1992 report makes clear: "Its members in their turn are representatives of such organizations as, for example: the United Nations, the World Council of Churches, Green Peace, the World Muslim Congress, the Council on Foreign Relations, the World Court, and the ambassadors and ministers of many countries. This organization has already arranged several meetings of a Provisional World Parliament and passed eleven laws of a World Codex of laws. It is interesting that the WCPA has divided the whole world into *ten kingdoms*, employing precisely that term in English: 'kingdoms'. It is proposed that a new world financial system will be introduced immediately the first *ten countries* confirm a World Constitution, since the remaining countries will then be forced to accept this constitution for economic reasons. At the present time the WCPA is trying to convene a Constitutional Assembly so as to substitute the constitution of the USA for the World Constitution. In 1990 the WCPA sent a letter to all heads of government in which it declared the formation of a World Government, and after this many leaders of states openly began to speak about the New World Order."¹¹⁹

Now the American president in 1990 was George H.W. Bush, who saw European unity as the model for world unity, while the core of that unity would be the United Nations: "I see a world of open borders, open trade and, most importantly, open minds; a world that celebrates the common heritage that belongs to all the world's people.... I see a world building on the emerging new model of European unity. ... The United Nations is the place to build

¹¹⁸ Seldon, “J’Accuse!”, *New Statesman*, 29 March – 4 April, 2019, p. 23.

¹¹⁹ *Pravoslavnaiia Rus’* (Orthodox Russia), N 15, 1992, p. 16.

international support and consensus for meeting the other challenges we face... the threats to the environment, terrorism... international drug trafficking... refugees.... We must join together in a new compact -- all of us -- to bring the United Nations into the 21st century."

"I see a world building on the emerging new model of European unity." So global unity depends to a certain degree on European unity. Europe has a huge diversity of nations, languages, traditions and creeds from which two world wars have emerged in recent times. It follows that if unity can be attained in such a divided and complex region, there is hope that the wider, global unity can be achieved, too. If, on the other hand, European unity fails, the march towards global unity and a single world government is also halted. Hence the great importance of the Brexit issue for Europeans and globalists.

Like Marx and Lenin, today's globalists believe in *the march of history*. There is no arguing with History - if you do not want to be crushed by it and cast into its dustbin... For, as the economist Roger Bootle writes: "European integration has had an air of inevitability about it. It seemed to be the summation and healing of the past and the way of the future. Nation states were on the way out, *passé*. A united Europe would embody the best of European traditions while securing Europe's future in the modern world."¹²⁰

But "what is the point of the EU? Is it to link together countries and peoples that are 'European'? Is it to link together countries and peoples that are geographically close together? Is it to link together countries that conduct themselves in a certain way and are prepared and able to obey EU law? Or is it simply to carry on expanding as far as it can, because bigger is better, so that the EU can be regarded as an early progenitor of global government?"

"Without a clear answer to these questions, it is difficult to see why the EU should not contemplate expansion to nations that are geographically close, such as Israel or the countries of North Africa, even though they are not strictly European. (Interestingly, the remit of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) does extend into the Middle East and North Africa.) Or if the key concept is cultural, what about countries that are European in character and history but are far distant, such as Canada, Australia or New Zealand?"

"This question is of exceptional importance. For if there is no clear answer to the question of how far EU membership should spread, perhaps it should be restricted to a smaller territory - or indeed, perhaps the EU should not exist at all..."¹²¹

There are other issues and nations threatening to undermine the unity of Europe. The four "Vishegrad" countries of Poland, Czechia, Slovakia and

¹²⁰ Bootle, *The Trouble with Europe*, London: Nicholas Brealey Publishing, 2015, p. 31.

¹²¹ Bootle, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

Hungary have set their minds firmly against uncontrolled migration and the undermining of their Christian civilization by Muslim immigration; they are defying ne the EU's four major principles, that of free movement. These are very important concerns that are felt in Britain, too – it is generally agreed that the main motivation for the original Brexit referendum result was fear of uncontrolled immigration.

And there are other incipient rebellions. Italy now has a government which is openly Eurosceptic. France has a powerful anti-European party led by Marine Le Pen. Germany's AFD party is rapidly increasing its membership and influence, and its leader recently made a powerful speech in the Bundestag sympathizing with Britain and blaming the EU for Brexit. So-called "populist" movements are spreading throughout Europe and threatening the security of its centralizing elites.

There is a more than symbolic importance in the fact that the first country to vote to leave the EU apart from tiny Greenland has been Britain. Was not Britain the first country to build a truly global economy through its control of the seas in the nineteenth century? And was it not Britain that first formulated and popularized the principles of laissez-faire economics and parliamentary democracy that the globalists pay lip-service to even if they disregard them in practice? How then can this founder-member of the New World Order want to leave the NWO? What does this tell us about the NWO?

The globalists do not want to face this question squarely, for it would undermine faith in the radiant future of the globalizing movement, the twenty-first century's equivalent of the twentieth century's Comintern. They didn't mind that tiny Greenland wanted to leave. But Britain must not be allowed to leave. Or she should be allowed – but at such a cost to herself that it would put off any other potential leavers. Otherwise, the whole global experiment might be in jeopardy. So the Europeans continue to assert that the problems of Europe can be solved, not by a reassertion of the sovereignty of the nation-state, but only by "more Europe" – that is, the tightening of the screws that bind the states of the European super-state together until the nation-state is suffocated completely...

The expansionist, globalist project of which the European project is a part recalls the very first such project in history, the Tower of Babel. Moreover, the Europeans seem willingly to accept this parallel.

Thus Andrew Drapper writes: "The EU Parliament building is pretty obviously intended to look like or is modelled after the biblical tower of babel. Or perhaps more accurately it is modelled after Pieter Brueghel the Elder's painting 'The Tower of Babel' (1563).

"Though modernist in style, the parliament building is recognisably intended to represent the unfinished Tower of Babel. This is further supported by things like the famous Council of Europe poster depicting the EU Parliament

building in the process of being finished by the people of Europe. The text on the poster, 'Europe: Many Tongues, One Voice.' Here a very strong connection is made not only to the image of the Tower of Babel in Brueghel's painting, but also to the record of the Tower of Babel as recorded in the Bible."¹²²

And so history has come round full circle: contemporary globalization returns to the world's first globalization project, Nimrod's attempt to unite the people in building a tower to reach from earth to heaven in order to make a name for himself and to make himself equal to the gods. We know how that attempt ended: it remains to be seen how the contemporary effort will end...

*March 20 / April 2, 2019.
St. Cuthbert of Lindisfarne.*

¹²² Drapper, "Why we MUST leave the European Union! Part One", *The Red Pill Report*, February 15, 2017.

12. THE REVOLUTION IN MEDIEVAL EUROPE

What we know today as the socialist or communist revolution has deep roots in history. The period 1350 to 1450 was especially fertile in this respect.

The first of the proto-democratic revolutions took place in Rome against the Roman papacy. « Under Clement VI (1342-52), » writes Bertrand Russell, « Rome, for a time, sought to free itself from the absentee Pope under the leadership of a remarkable man, Cola di Rienzi. Rome suffered not only for the rule of the popes, but also from the local aristocracy, which continued the turbulence that had degraded the papacy in the tenth century. Indeed it was partly to escape from the lawless Roman nobles that the popes had fled to Avignon. At first Rienzi, who was the son of a tavern-keeper, rebelled only against the nobles, and in this he had the support of the Pope. He roused so much popular enthusiasm that the nobles fled (1347). Petrarch, who admired him and wrote an ode to him, urged him to continue his great and noble work. He took the title of tribune, and proclaimed the sovereignty of the Roman people over the Empire. He seems to have conceived this sovereignty democratically, for he called representatives from the Italian cities to a sort of parliament. Success, however, gave him delusions of grandeur. At this time, as at many others, there were rival claimants to the Empire. Rienzi summoned both of them, and the Electors, to come before him to have the issue decided. This naturally turned both imperial candidates against him, and also the Pope, who considered that it was for him to pronounce judgement in such matters. Rienzi was captured by the Pope (1352), and kept in prison until Clement VI died. Then he was released, and returned to Rome, where he acquired power again for a few months. On this second occasion, however, his popularity was brief, and in the end he was murdered by the mob.»¹²³

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Meanwhile, the Hundred Years war and the Black Death were devastating Western Europe. About half the population died across Europe; between 75 and 200 million are thought to have died between 1347 and 1351, while outbreaks continued into the nineteenth century¹²⁴. About 80% of those contracting the disease in England died; the poor were particularly vulnerable. It was a time for apocalyptic pessimism - and an opportunity for repentance.

However, the papacy had undermined the very idea of repentance by its abuses; so the spiritual opportunity was lost, and the West moved still further towards revolution. In England, writes Robert Tombs, “the population had been reduced by famine and plague from about 6 million in 1300 to about 2.5 million in 1350. The pressure that had forced up rents and prices and depressed

¹²³ Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy*, London : Allen Unwin, 1946, pp. 504-505.

¹²⁴ Sophie Gallacher, “The Black Death was always blamed on rats, but we were wrong”, *Huffpost*, January 16, 2018, http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/black-death-has-always-been-blamed-on-rats-this-was-a-mistake_uk_5a5dd5b9e4b04f3c55a59756?ncid=webmail.

wages had gone. Surviving tenants threatened to leave unless rents were reduced and feudal obligations dropped. The new laws, though vigorously applied by local landowners as Justices of the Peace, were defied or evaded. There was an immediate leap in real wages as food prices fell. Employers had to supplement fixed wages with bonuses, free food, lodgings and allotments of land. Food traditionally given to harvest workers improved – even the poor refused ‘bread that had beans therein, but asked for the best white, made of clean wheat, nor none halfpenny ale, in no wise would drink, but of the best and brownest.’ Those who were denied better terms simply went elsewhere...”¹²⁵

Invasions of the south coast by the French and Castilians, a Welsh uprising and a Scottish invasion increased the people’s anger, leading in the end to the Peasants’ Revolt of June, 1381. Charles George writes: “Although the pretext for revolt was a tax grievance against the government of Richard II’s minority, and was linked therefore to the heavy and unpopular burden of the Hundred Years’ War, the motives of the insurgents went deeper. Their anger, like that of the German peasants one hundred and fifty years later, was directed against primary mechanisms within the social system: the customary manorial services to the lord, the restrictive aristocratic forest laws, the wealth of the Church. These demands for the freer sharing of the land and game of England, for greater security and opportunity for the farmer in the village through fixed rents, and the animus expressed against institutional Christianity represented more than a temporary disaffection resulting from the fortuitous bad luck with nature and disease and the stupid wars of the century. The English historian, G.M. Trevelyan, puts the case strongly, perhaps, but interestingly:

“Nothing is more remarkable than the change in the temper and mental activity of the lower orders during the fourteenth century. Professor Davis has summed up the reign of Henry III with the words: “Of all the contrasts which strike us in medieval life, none is so acute as that between the intellectual ferment in the upper class and the oriental passivity of their inferiors.” But in the reign of Edward III the peasants could no longer be accused of “oriental passivity”, and the “intellectual ferment” in their ranks reminds us of a modern labor movement. Village unions strike for higher wages, villains demand freedom in return for 4d. an acre rent, and men ask each other in every field that deep-probing question –

*When Adam delved and Eve span
Who was then the gentleman?”*¹²⁶

These words were spoken by John Ball, “the crazy priest”, as Froissart calls him, in his address to the rebels at Blackheath. He went on, using amazingly modern, almost socialist language: “From the beginning all men by nature were created alike, and our bondage or servitude came in by the unjust oppression

¹²⁵ Tombs, *The English and their History*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2015, pp. 119-120.

¹²⁶ George, *500 Years of Revolution: European Radicals from Hus to Lenin*, Chicago, 1998, pp. 13-14.

of naughty men. For if God would have had any bondmen from the beginning, he would have appointed who should be bond, and who free. And therefore I exhort you to consider that now the time is come, appointed to us by God, in which ye may (if ye will) cast off the yoke of bondage, and recover liberty. I counsel you therefore well to bethink yourselves, and to take good hearts unto you, that after the manner of a good husband that tilleth his ground, and riddeth out thereof such evil weeds as choke and destroy the good corn, you may destroy first the great lords of the realm, and after, the judges and lawyers, and questmongers, and all other who have undertaken to be against the commons. For so shall you procure peace and surety to yourselves in time to come; and by dispatching out of the way the great men, there shall be an equality in liberty, and no difference in degrees of nobility; but a like dignity and equal authority in all things..."¹²⁷

At his first meeting with the rebels the fourteen-year-old King Richard II agreed to abolish serfdom, "whose breakdown the Black Death accelerated, making those still constrained by it all the more aggrieved"¹²⁸, and set a flat-rent rate of four pence an acre.

The rebels appeared to have won; nor did the king succeed in saving the Archbishop of Canterbury Sudbury, who was executed on Tower Hill. However, he agreed to a second face-to-face meeting with the peasants at Smithfield on June 15.

"Before he left," writes Simon Schama, "he went to the great shrine that Henry III had built at Westminster and prayed to the king whom the Plantagenets had made their guardian saint, Edward the Confessor. When he reached Smithfield, he saw that the rebel leaders were on the west side of the field, the royal party on the east. Wat Tyler rode over to Richard, dismounted, briefly and unconvincingly bent his knees, but then rose, shook the king's hand and called him 'brother'. 'Why will you not go home?' Richard asked. Tyler is said to have responded with a curse and a demand for a new Magna Carta, this time for the common people, formally ending serfdom, pardoning all outlaws, liquidating the property of the Church and declaring the equality of all men below the king. As revolutionary as all this sounds (and undoubtedly was), all the demands, other than the pardon for outlaws, would, in fact, return as elements of English royal policy in the centuries to come. But that was for the future. When Richard replied in the affirmative (with the crucial loophole, 'saving only the regality of his crown'), it was hard to know who was more flabbergasted - the rebels or the royals.

"Perhaps taken aback by the unexpected concession, for a moment no one did anything. A silence fell over the field, broken by Wat Tyler, calling for a flagon of ale, emptying it, then climbing back on his mount, a big man on a little horse. And it was at that moment that history changed.

¹²⁷ Brian Macarthur, *The Penguin Book of Historic Speeches*, London: Penguin, 1995, p. 37.

¹²⁸ Tombs, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

“Someone on the royal side was evidently unable to take the humiliation a moment longer. It was a royal esquire, a young man of the king’s own age, who shouted that Tyler was a thief. Tyler turned his horse, drew his dagger and rounded on the boy. The spell was broken. A *mêlée* broke out, and [the Mayor of London] Walworth, who must have been beside himself with mortification, attempted to arrest Tyler. There was fighting, Tyler striking the mayor with his dagger, Walworth cutting Tyler through the shoulder and neck. He rode his horse a little way back, blood pouring from him, then fell to the ground where the king’s men were on him, finishing him off.

“It was the moment of truth. Once they had discovered Tyler’s fate, the rebel side might have attacked then and there. But before they could, Richard himself pre-empted the action with a show of astonishing courage and resourcefulness, riding straight to them shouting, famously, ‘You shall have no captain but me.’ The words were carefully chosen and deliberately ambiguous. To the rebels it seemed that Richard was now their leader just as they had always hoped. But the phrase could just as easily have been meant as the first, decisive reassertion of royal authority. In any event, it bought time for Walworth to speed back to London and mobilize an army that, just the day before, had been much too scared to show itself. At Smithfield the process of breaking the now leaderless army began cautiously and gently, with promises of pardons and mercy. Once back in London and Westminster, though, the king and council acted with implacable resolution. On 18 June, just three days after Smithfield, orders were sent to the disturbed counties, commanding the sheriffs to do whatever it took to restore the peace...”¹²⁹

The mystique of the anointed king had saved the day. As Shakespeare’s Richard II put it in his play of the same name (III, ii, 54-57):

*Not all the water in the wide rough sea
Can wash the balm from an anointed king;
The breath of worldly men cannot depose
The deputy elected by the Lord.*

In any case, the real target of the rebels had been the landowners, not the king. “Their watchword was: ‘Wyth kynge Richarde and with the *trew communes*’.”¹³⁰

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“This brief uprising,” writes Tombs, “had been more than just another rural disturbance. It had been a mass demand for rights and freedom, and had shown a striking degree of political sophistication on the part of the ‘*trew communes*’. It was the first time that popular political and social ideas had been

¹²⁹ Schama, *A History of Britain*, vol. 1, pp. 217-218.

¹³⁰ Tombs, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

recorded in writing – England had an unusually high level of literacy thanks to its developed commercial activity. Political messages were transmitted in English through rhymes, sermons, handbills, posters, prophecies – and ministers of the Crown were killed by angry mobs because of them...”¹³¹

Indeed, the literacy of the English was to be an increasingly important factor in the country’s life. For it was precisely in this, the second half of the fourteenth century, that were produced Wycliffe’s translation of the Vulgate Bible and Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*, constituting the real beginnings of English literature as the world knows it. But the English we are talking about here is known as “Middle English” to distinguish it from the (to modern ears) largely incomprehensible Old English of the Anglo-Saxon and Norman periods. “This ‘Middle English,’” writes Tombs, “was very different from ‘Old English’. The influx of a ruling class of non-native speakers after 1066 had led to simplification of the language, which lost much of its grammatical complexity – three genders, four cases, two conjugations. The alphabet too became simpler, and more Latin-based. There was no common spelling, and there were differences of dialect and accent, though grammar was largely uniform. Alone of the Germanic tongues, it had received a massive influx of words from Latin and French, which doubled its vocabulary. Between 1250 and 1450, of 17,000 new words identified, 22 percent were derived from French, and most others from Latin. English often acquired several words for the same concept. They were sometimes used in tandem to make meaning sure, or just for rhetorical purposes, as in ‘aiding and abetting’, ‘fit and proper’, ‘peace and quiet’. In due course they could acquire nuances of meaning, as with ‘kingly’, ‘royal’ and ‘regal’, or ‘loving’, ‘amorous’ and ‘charitable’, from English, French and Latin respectively. Linguistic flexibility was greatly enhanced by bolting together grammatical elements from each language. Prefixes and suffixes made word creation easy: for example, the Old English ‘ful’ added to French nouns (beautiful, graceful); or French suffixes with Old English verbs (knowable, findable). It has been argued that this made it really a new language. But the basics remained, and remain, Anglo-Saxon: in modern written English, the hundred most frequently used words are all derived from Old English.”¹³²

Although the peasants seemed to have lost the battle, their ideas continued to spread. But to the rescue of the monarchy came the charismatic theologian and Master of Balliol College, Oxford, John Wycliffe (ca. 1320-84). Motivated by his love for the poor and disgust at the behaviour of rich churchmen, Wycliffe became a champion of royal power.

In his *Tractatus de Officio Regis*, he argued that God favoured kingship, since three kings had visited the manger at Bethlehem. The king was the vicar of God. He should study theology and suppress heresy and have full jurisdiction over the clergy. If the Pope tried to diminish his authority, he should be denounced as the Antichrist... For “however unjust, the king was vicar of God

¹³¹ Tombs, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

¹³² Tombs, *op. cit.*, p. 130.

and above all human laws. If necessary he was obliged to reform the church, correcting the worldly pursuit of the clergy for honours and offices, punish their simony and remove them from temporal dominion. The clergy were to live in an apostolic manner surviving on tithes and alms offered by the faithful."¹³³

"Wycliff," writes Nicolson, "advanced the difficult idea that the king was superior to the Church since he reflected the godhead of Christ, where the priest reflected his manhood only. He argued that the king was above the law (*solutus legibus*) and that it was the moral duty of the citizen to obey the authority of the crown in every circumstance... Richard II was deeply imbued with Wycliff's teaching and asserted that 'the laws were in his mouth or in his breast and he alone could change the statutes of the realm'."¹³⁴

Wycliffe founded an order of "poor priests", the Lollards (literally "mumblers"), that preached to the poor. He called the Pope the Antichrist, and said that all popes that had accepted the Donation of Constantine were apostates. Most controversially, he asserted that the doctrine of transubstantiation was a deceit and a blasphemous folly. This led John of Gaunt, who held power during the minority of Richard II, and befriended him as long as possible, to order him to be silent. Moreover, Wycliffe also had socialist tendencies - Pope Gregory XI condemned eighteen of his theses in his Oxford lectures, saying that they were derived from Marsilius of Padua.

"The Peasants' Revolt," writes Bertrand Russell, "made matters more difficult for Wycliffe. There is no evidence that he actively encouraged it, but, unlike Luther in similar circumstances, he refrained from condemning it. John Ball, the Socialist unfrocked priest who was one of the leaders, admired Wycliffe, which was embarrassing. But as he had been excommunicated in 1366, when Wycliffe was still orthodox, he must have arrived independently at his opinions. Wycliffe's communistic opinions, though no doubt the 'poor priests' disseminated them, were, by him, only stated in Latin, so that at first hand they were inaccessible to peasants.

"It is surprising that Wycliffe did not suffer more than he did for his opinions and his democratic activities. The University of Oxford defended him against the bishops as long as possible. When the House of Lords condemned his itinerant preachers, the House of Commons refused to concur. No doubt

¹³³ Janet Coleman, "Property and poverty", *Cambridge History of Medieval Political Thought, c. 350 - c. 1450*, Cambridge University Press, 1991, p. 647.

¹³⁴ Nicolson, *Monarchy*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1962, pp. 192-193. Another influence on Richard was, according to Nigel Saul, "the ideas of the Roman - in other words, the civil - lawyers. In general terms, civilian thought emphasized the scope of the King's will. To the civilian, a King's power should be unlimited because his rule was just. At a number of points, correspondences are to be observed between Richard's governance and a popular civilian-influenced tract, Giles of Rome's *De Regimine Principum* (c. 1277-9)" ("Richard II: Author of his own Downfall?", *History Today*, vol. 49 (9), September, 1999, pp. 40-41). (V.M.)

trouble would have accumulated if he had lived longer, but when he died in 1384 he had not yet been formally excommunicated..."¹³⁵

Richard II, meanwhile, entered into conflict with parliament, who, as Tombs writes, "were forced to swear that all acts to restrain royal power were illegal – a renunciation of *Magna Carta*... He insisted on the sacred nature of kingship – courtiers had to prostrate themselves, and he may have planned a re-coronation using the newly 'discovered' holy chrism given by the Virgin Mary to Thomas Becket. He even dreamed of becoming Holy Roman Emperor." In 1399, however, he was deposed by his cousin, Henry Bolingbroke. This "changed the basis of kingship, for Henry, though Richard's cousin, was not his heir. He therefore claimed the throne by God's grace (proved by having succeeded), by necessity, and, in Chaucer's words, 'by free election'..."¹³⁶

The epitaph Richard chose for his tomb at Westminster sounds impressive: "He threw down all who violated the royal prerogative; he destroyed heretics and scattered their friends." But the truth is that by his fickleness and injustice he tarnished the royal name. He betrayed his promises to the peasants, and turned out to be a real tyrant. The foundations of the monarchy continued to be undermined – "the world is changed and overthrown," lamented the poet Gower. Nevertheless, "when Parliament recognized Bolingbroke as Henry IV they were careful to maintain the fiction of Divine Right by asserting that he had succeeded 'through the right God had given him by conquest'..."¹³⁷ "Right of conquest" is a much weaker argument than "right by royal anointing". But the Divine right of kings had to be maintained somehow...

The problem for the late medieval kings was that in opposing (with justification) the overweening power of the heretical papacy, they had deprived themselves of ecclesiastical sanction, which made the people less inhibited from rebelling against them. Secularist defences of royal as opposed to papal power, like that of Marsilius, only made the problem worse in the long run. For even if mixed with theological arguments, they could only convince the listeners that papal authority was less than the kings', not that the kings' power was holy in itself. The problem derived from the loss of the concept of the symphony of powers in western society. Unlike in the East, where Church and State were both considered holy and supported each other, in the West since the eleventh century there was always a *competition* between the two powers that ultimately discredited both.

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But let us look more closely at Wycliffe's most influential idea, anticipating the Protestant Reformation by more than a century: his undermining of the

¹³⁵ Russell, *op. cit.*, pp. 508-509.

¹³⁶ Tombs, *op. cit.*, p. 137.

¹³⁷ Nicolson, *op. cit.*, p. 195.

authority of the Church by exalting that of the Bible, of which he became the first major translator into English since Bede.

“His main argument,” writes Melvyn Bragg, “was to distinguish the eternal, ideal Church of God from the material one in Rome. In short, he maintained that if something is not in the Bible there is no truth in it whatever the Pope says – and, incidentally, the Bible says nothing at all about a Pope. When men speak of the Church, he said, they usually mean priests, monks, canons and friars. But it should not be so. ‘Were there a hundred popes,’ he wrote, ‘and all the friars turned to cardinals, their opinions on faith should not be accepted except in so far as they are founded on scripture itself.

“This was inflammatory and cut away the roots of all established authority, especially as he and his followers like John Ball coupled this with a demand that the Church give away all its worldly wealth to the poor. The Church saw no option but to crush him. For Wycliffe went even further. He and his followers attacked transubstantiation, the belief that, administered by the clergy, the wine and bread turn miraculously into the blood and body of Christ; he attacked clerical celibacy, which he thought of as an institutional control system over the army of the clergy; he attacked enforced confession, the method, Wycliffe argued, by which the clergy could trap dissidents and check errors in thought; and indulgences, the purchase of which were said to bring relief from purgatory but also brought wealth to the Church; pilgrimages, as a form of idolatry; and mystery plays, because they were not the word of God. Wycliffe took no prisoners.

“His prime and revolutionary argument, one which, if accepted in any shape or form would have toppled the Church entirely, was that the Bible was the sole authority for religious faith and practice and that everyone had the right to read and interpret scripture for himself. This would have changed the world and those who ruled the world knew it. He was to become their prime enemy. It is ironic that his main arguments had to be written in Latin – the international language of scholarship and theology – though there are English sermons by him and his followers.”¹³⁸

It is ironic, too, that his main argument on the private interpretation of Scripture is refuted by Scripture itself. For St. Peter says: “No prophecy is of any private interpretation” (II Peter 1.20). And St. Paul says that it is the Church that is the ultimate authority, “the pillar and ground of the truth” (I Timothy 3.15). This is in no way to diminish the authority and truth of Holy Scripture. The point is: Holy Scripture is written by and for the Church, which precedes it in time and is the witness to its truth, rather than the other way round. But of course, the *true* Church is meant here, not Roman Catholicism...

In spite of the riskiness of his challenge to the Church, Wycliffe gained support from other scholars. “What sustained them,” opines Bragg, “was the

¹³⁸ Bragg, op. cit., pp. 83-84.

state of the Church as they saw it every day. It was intolerable to these Christian scholars. It was often lazy and corrupt. Bible reading even among the clergy appears to have been surprisingly rare, for often they did not have the Latin. When, for example, the Bishop of Gloucester surveyed three hundred and eleven deacons, archdeacons and priests in his diocese, he discovered that a hundred and sixty-eight were unable to repeat the Ten Commandments, thirty-one did not know where to find these Commandments in the Bible and forty could not repeat the Lord's Prayer. To men of true conscience, integrity and faith, men like Wycliffe and his followers, this state of decay and lack of care in what mattered most, this debilitated belief and betrayal of vocation, had to be got rid of and defeated. The chief weapon, the natural weapon for a scholar, was a book, the Bible, in English.

"A full Bible in English was unauthorized by the Church and potentially heretical, even seditious, with all the savage penalties including death which such crimes against the one true Church exacted. Any translation was very high risk and had to be done in secrecy.

"Wycliffe inspired two Biblical translations and rightly they bear his name. Both versions are made from the [fourth-century] Latin Vulgate version and follow it so closely that it can be incomprehensible. Wycliffe prepared the first translation but the burden of it was undertaken by Nicholas Hereford of Queens College, Oxford. He would have needed the help of many friends as well as recourse to a great number of books. It was not only the translation itself, a mammoth task, which faced them: the Bible had to be disseminated too. Rooms in quiet Oxford colleges were turned into revolutionary cells, scriptoria, production lines were established turning out these holy manuscripts and from the number that remain we can tell that a great many were made. One hundred and seventy survive, a huge number for a six-hundred-year-old manuscript, which tells us that there must have been effective groups of people secretly translating it, copying it, passing it on. Later, hundreds would be martyred, dying the most horrible deaths, for their part in creating and distributing to the people the first English Bible.

"It is difficult to appreciate the extent and the audacity of this enterprise. Wycliffe was leading them into the cannon's mouth. All of them knew it and yet behind the obedient honey-coloured Latinate walls of Oxford colleges, the medieval equivalent of the subversive samizdat press which bypassed Stalin's controls in Russia was organized, and effectively...

"By the standards of the day it was a bestseller and at first the Church merely condemned Wycliffe. They complained that he had made the scriptures 'more open to the teachings of laymen and women. Thus the jewel of the clerics is turned to the sport of the laity and the pearl of the Gospel is scattered abroad and trodden underfoot by swine...

"The Bible, through English, now called out directly to the people. This could not be tolerated. On 17 May 1382, in Blackfriars in London,... a synod of the

Church met to examine Wycliffe's works. There were eight bishops, various masters of theology, doctors of common and civil law and fifteen friars.

"It was a show trial.

"Their conclusions were preordained and on the second day of their meeting they drafted a statement condemning Wycliffe's pronouncements as outright heresies. Wycliffe's followers were also condemned. The synod ordered the arrest and prosecution of itinerant preachers throughout the land. Many of those caught were tortured and killed.

"Perhaps most significantly of all as far as the English language is concerned, the synod led, later, to a parliamentary ban on all English-language Bibles and they had the power to make this effective.

"Wycliffe's great effort was routed. He had taken on the power of the Church and he had been defeated. His Bibles were outlawed. The doors of the Church, from the greatest cathedrals to the lowliest parish churches, were still the monopoly of Latin.

"On 30 May, every diocese in the land was instructed to publish the verdict. Wycliffe became ill. He was paralysed by a stroke. Two years later he died on the last day of 1384..."¹³⁹

Now some of Wycliffe's ideas - particularly his denial of Transubstantiation (contrary to the clear witness of Holy Scripture) - were indeed heretical. Nevertheless, it is difficult not to admire, not only the scholarship, but also the courage and zeal of this mighty contender for the people's right to read the Word of God. Moreover, in 1383, just before his death, he displayed an insight into the truth of Eastern Orthodoxy over Roman Catholicism that appears to have been lost completely in the West since the twelfth century: "The pride of the Pope," he said, "is the reason why the Greeks are divided from the so-called faithful... It is we westerners, too fanatical by far, who have been divided from the faithful Greeks and the Faith of our Lord Jesus Christ..."¹⁴⁰

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In Bohemia another revolution broke out under the leadership of the Czech cleric Jan Hus, a follower of Wycliffe (Richard II's queen was Bohemian and had supported Wycliffe at Oxford).

¹³⁹ Bragg, *op. cit.*, pp. 85-86, 87, 89.

¹⁴⁰ Wyclif, *De Christo et Suo Adversario Antichristo* (On Christ and His Adversary, the Antichrist), 8; in R. Buddensig (ed.), *John Wiclif's Polemical Works in Latin*, London: The Wiclif Society, 1883, volume II, p. 672. In 1412 the Archbishop of Canterbury ordered all Wycliffe's works to be burned, and sent a list of 267 heresies "worthy of the fire" to the Pope. Then, in 1415, at the Council of Constance, he was condemned as a heretic, and in 1428 it was ordered that his bones be exhumed and removed from consecrated ground. His remains were burned and his ashes scattered into the River Swith.

“Like his English inspiration,” writes Bridget Healy, he “attacked indulgences and condemned the vices and failings of the clergy... Hus advocated communion in both kinds – that the communion wine, Christ’s blood, should be given to the laity as well as the clergy – and emphasized the importance of preaching the Gospel. From the perspective of Czech history, locating the start of the Reformation in Wittenburg in 1517 is a provocative act, for it was not Luther but Hus who achieved the first lasting religious reform of the early modern era.”¹⁴¹

Hus was excommunicated and burned at the Council of Constance in 1415, the same Council that ordered Wycliffe’s bones to be dug up and burnt. However, the Czech Hussite rebellion continued, and was put down only with the greatest difficulty and after much bloodshed in 1434.

On two occasions (in 1418 and 1452) the Hussites applied to join the Patriarchate of Constantinople. However, Constantinople rejected the Hussite Articles of Faith.

The more radical Hussites were called Taborites. They recognized no ruler except God: “All must be brothers to each other and no one must be subject to another.” And so taxation and royal power had to be eliminated, along with every mark of inequality.¹⁴²

In one Taborite manuscript we read: “Everyone must gird himself with a sword, and let not brother spare brother, or father – son, or son – father, or neighbour – neighbour. Kill all of them, one after the other, so that the German heretics should run away in droves and we should exterminate and greed and lust for profit of the clergy in this world. In this way we shall fulfill the seventh commandment of God in accordance with the words of the Apostle Paul: ‘greed is idolatry.’ And we must overthrow the idols and kill the idolaters, so as to wash our hands in their filthy blood. That is what Moses taught us by example in his books, for what is written there is written for our instruction.”¹⁴³

“The Taborites,” writes T.L. Frazier, “set about constructing a theocratic society in their territory in southern Bohemia. In theory, there was to be no human authority, for all were brothers and sisters. Of course, the theory was ‘modified’ somewhat to allow for the necessity of government. The older brothers obviously needed to look after their younger siblings. It was also supposed to be a classless society, and a primitive version of communism was attempted. Private property, rents, taxes, and dues were abolished. Peasants from all over Bohemia and Moravia sold all their worldly possessions to contribute to the common purse. In the first part of 1420, chests were set up by

¹⁴¹ Healy, “Martin Luther and the German Reformation”, *History Today*, March, 2017, 30-31.

¹⁴² N.N. Alexeev, “Idea ‘Zemnago Grada’ v Khristianskom Verouchenii” (“The Idea of the ‘Earthly City’ in Christian Doctrine”), *Put’* (The Way), N 5, October-November, 1926, p. 566.

¹⁴³ Igor Shafarevich, *Sotsializm kak iavlenie mirogoj istorii* (Socialism as a phenomenon of world history), Paris: YMCA Press, 1977, pp. 352-353.

the Taborite clergy in which the people were expected to deposit all their money. But here, too, reality didn't always conform to theory. The leadership concentrated so much on common ownership that they took no thought of motivating people to produce anything.

“Rather than construct a functioning economy for their newly established Kingdom of God, the Taborites turned to simple banditry whenever the communal chests were empty. As the people of God, they reasoned, they had a right to all of God's wealth found on the earth. Conversely, those who were not of the people of God, that is, all who were not Taborites, had no claim to the resources of the earth. Thus raids on the property of non-Taborites were rationalized and became common.

“According to Taborite plans, after all of Bohemia was subjected to Taborite control, the purification of the rest of the world would follow through conquest and domination. This belief was deeply engrained in the Taborite movement. Norman Cohn writes: ‘As late as 1434 we find a speaker at a Taborite assembly declaring that, however unfavorable the circumstances might be at present, the moment would soon come when the Elect must arise and exterminate their enemies – the lords in the first place, and then any of their own people who were of doubtful loyalty or usefulness.’”¹⁴⁴

Taborism is a form of the ancient heresy of *chiliasm* or *millenarianism*, - the idea that the Kingdom of heaven will be achieved here on earth, by the efforts of men and in the conditions of the fall. In the opinion of some, this is the heart of the revolutionary movement and modern secularism in general. Certainly, there is a red thread of utopian, millenarian thought connecting the rebellions of 1381 in England, of 1415-1437 in Bohemia, of the Anabaptists in the 1520s in Germany, of the Levellers in England in the 1640s, of the Jacobites in France in the 1790s, of many nineteenth-century revolutions, and of the Russian revolution in the twentieth-century, not to speak of our own, twenty-first century rebellion against all the foundations of Christian society.

*March 20 / April 2, 2019.
St. Cuthbert of Lindisfarne.*

13. THE REVOLUTION, ROMANTICISM AND REALISM

The Age of Revolution was also the Age of Romanticism, and the one is incomprehensible without the other. Of course, political and religious change has always been reflected in artistic change. But the relationship is closer than usual here. The image of the Decembrist revolutionary Ryleev ascending the scaffold with a volume of Byron in his hand encapsulates that relationship: the revolutionaries were impelled to their acts of violence by their visionary

¹⁴⁴ Frazier, *A Second Look at the Second Coming*, Ben Lomond: Conciliar Press, 1999, pp. 61-62.

Romanticism. Their love of political freedom was seen as being born from the love of freedom expressed in their Romantic art; the *theoria* of the one engendered the *praxis* of the other.

The revolutionary nature of Romanticism inevitably meant that it was linked to the revolution in politics. "During the 1820s," writes Sir Richard Evans, in spite of the conservative reaction imposed by the Congress of Vienna in 1815, "writers and thinkers began to move towards a more liberal point of view. Victor Hugo, who in 1824 declared that literature should be 'the expression of a religious and monarchical society', was by 1830 propounding the principle that 'Romanticism, taken as a whole, is only liberalism in literature... Freedom in art and liberty in society are the twin goals to which all consistent and logical thinkers should march in step.' In 1827 the French art critic August Jal (1795-1873) declared that Romanticism was 'the echo of the cannot shot of 1789', and as if to prove his point, Eugène Delacroix produced in 1830 what is probably the most famous representation of revolution in any artwork, *Liberty Leading the People*. For many Romantic poets and writers, the Greek uprising was a turning point, symbolized by Byron's death at Missolonghi. The opera that launched the Belgian revolution in 1830 was only one example of a new trend, begun in Italy, of portraying ancient struggles for liberty in words and music in such a way that their contemporary relevance was unmistakable."¹⁴⁵

The connection between the revolution and romanticism became especially clear and strong during the July Days of the 1830 revolution, as Adam Zamoyski notes: "'People and poets are marching together,' wrote the French critic Charles Augustin Sainte-Beuve in 1830. 'Art is henceforth on a popular footing, in the arena with the masses.' There was something in this. Never before or since had poetry been so widely and so urgently read, so taken to heart and so closely studied for hidden meaning. And it was not only in search of aesthetic or emotional uplift that people did so, for the poet had assumed a new role over the past two decades. Art was no longer an amenity but a great truth that had to be revealed to mankind, and the artist was one who had been called to interpret this truth, a kind of seer. In Russia, Pushkin solemnly declared the poet's status as a prophet uttering the burning words of truth. The American Ralph Waldo Emerson saw poets as 'liberating gods' because they had achieved freedom themselves, and could therefore free others. The pianist and composer Franz Liszt wanted to recapture the 'political, philosophical and religious power' that he believed music had in ancient times. William Blake claimed that Jesus and his disciples were all artists, and that he himself was following Jesus through his art. 'God was, perhaps only the first poet of the universe,' Théophile Gauthier reflected. By the 1820s artists regularly referred to their craft as a religion, and Victor Hugo represented himself alternately as Zoroaster, Moses and Christ, somewhere between prophet and God."¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁵ Evans, *The Pursuit of Power. Europe 1815-1914*, London: Penguin, 2017, pp. 81-82.

¹⁴⁶ Zamoyski, *op. cit.*, p. 255.

The forty years or so between the First and the Second French Revolutions (in 1789 and 1830 respectively) are among the most decisive and profound transition-periods in the history of the world. The changes are most obvious, of course, in politics; and there is no question but that the French revolution constitutes the vital link between the English revolution of the seventeenth century and the Russian revolution of the twentieth century, constituting the break-through that destroyed the old, and created the new world that we live in now. However, it could be argued that the political revolution was less profound and all-embracing than the revolution in thought and feeling that we call the Romantic movement, and that gave the revolution its long-term vitality.

Romanticism was influenced by Rousseau's concept of the "natural man", which, as George L. Mosse writes, emphasized "that the individual was good and virtuous when removed from the fetters of civilization. In such an ideal state heart and head were unspoiled and therefore functioned properly. For Rousseau and other eighteenth-century thinkers this meant that humans were both reasonable and virtuous. However, the element of human reason in the state of nature played, for Rousseau, a lesser part than the goodness of the heart. This foreshadowed the romantic belief in the essential rightness and virtue of mankind's proper emotions when they are left to develop freely. The concept of natural man became a widespread fad in the eighteenth century: Louis XVI and his queen had a rural village built for themselves behind their palace of the Trianon where they could play at 'natural' man and wife. Moreover, this image was associated with rural life, the kind of Arcadia which writer had idealized for centuries. It should be kept in mind that the ideal of natural man associated with rural life was not only a background for the romantic movement, but also went into the making of one of the most important preconceptions of the nineteenth century, indeed of modern times: namely, that the peasant represents the greatest virtues in a society which is growing ever more industrial and urban.

"The concept of 'natural man' was not the only element which went into the making of the romantic atmosphere. Evangelicalism in England and pietism in Germany provided important stimuli for romanticism, just as they were to be important in the making of the new middle-class morality. Both stressed 'piety of the heart' - religion as an emotional experience. Pietism was more temperate than the evangelical movement; nevertheless, the emotional appeal was present. Evangelicalism with its outright appeal to emotional conversion, 'coming to Christ', implanted an emotionalism in all classes of the English population. The emphasis upon hymn singing together with preaching as the chief outward appeals of faith played an important part. Nor can the increasing stream of oratory and moral exhortations which marked both movements be neglected. Many other causes, like the Temperance League and the Society Against Vice, depended on similar methods. All over Europe the reading public was increasing; and what they read, above all, were books of edification or moral exhortation to lead a good life. Education by exhortation was prominent in the making of middle-class morality, as Dr. Thomas Arnold of

Rugby can show, but it also created an atmosphere congenial to life viewed as an emotional experience.

“Though Rousseau foreshadowed the romantic mood in France and evangelicalism did much to encourage it in England, Germany seemed at the head of the movement during the eighteenth century. Not only German pietism, but particularly a literary movement known as the storm and stress (*Sturm und Drang*, 1765-1785) set the romantic tone. Making its home in Weimar, the movement’s importance for the cultural revival in Germany was equal to its contribution to romanticism. Friedrich Schiller (1759-1805), in particular, portrayed his heroes in terms of their inner responses to life, abstracting people from their environment. In depicting the *Robbers*, for example, he made their inner conflicts and the resulting tragedy take precedence over the morality or the effects of their actions. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832), the greatest German man of letters of that century, passed through the Enlightenment and classicism to a romantic period. The narrative of his journeys to Italy did much to stimulate a new emphasis upon nature as emotional and sentient rather than as imprisoned within rational laws of nature.”¹⁴⁷

Another aspect of Romanticism is its seeking of the unusual and the exotic, even the mad and the criminal, in human experience. Thus, as Evans writes, “a number of early Romantic works were written under the influence of opium, including, famously the poem *Kubla Khan* (1816) by Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834), who became a serious addict, consuming up to four quarts of laudanum (tincture of opium) a week. The drug’s impact was recorded in detail by Thomas de Quincey (1785-1859) in his *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* (1821). Opium distorted perception of time and space and heightened emotional experience, something that strengthened its appeal to the Romantics. Whereas the Enlightenment had stressed the need to subordinate the emotions to the intellect, Romanticism instead stressed feeling as the fundamental source of truth and authenticity and their expression in art.”¹⁴⁸

“In Romanticism,” writes Jacques Barzun, “thought and feeling are fused; its bent is toward exploration and discovery at whatever risk of error or failure; the religious emotion is innate and demands expression. Spirit is a reality but where it is placed varies and is secondary: the divine may be reached through nature or art. The individual self is a source of knowledge on which one must act; for one is embarked – *engagé*, as the 20C Existentialists say. To act, enthusiasm must overcome indifference or despair; impulse must be guided by imagination and reason. The search is for truths, which reside in particulars, not in generalities; the world is bigger and more complex than any set of abstractions, and it includes the past, which is never fully done with. Meditating on past and present leads to the estimate of man as great and wretched. But heroes are real and indispensable. They rise out of the people,

¹⁴⁷ Mosse, *The Culture of Western Europe*, Boulder: Westview Press, 1988, pp. 30-31.

¹⁴⁸ Evans, *The Pursuit of Power*, London: Penguin, 2917, p. 449.

whose own mind-and-heart provides the makings of high culture. The errors of heroes and peoples are the price of knowledge, religion, and art, life itself being a heroic tragedy."¹⁴⁹

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Romanticism was born as a reaction to the Enlightenment and, more generally, to the whole classical concept of civilization. For the dry, rationalist world-view of the Enlightenment, while it influenced everybody, left many with a feeling that an important part of the truth – especially that truth of the heart which is accessible only to intuition and the emotions – had been left out by it. Moreover, the Scottish philosopher David Hume had demonstrated, by purely logical arguments, that the empirical, rationalist view of the world had, paradoxically, no rational foundations; for it led to a denial of the objective existence of God, the soul, morality and even of the external world, thereby literally cutting the ground from under its feet. It was Hume's withering criticism that drew Immanuel Kant out of his "dogmatic slumbers"; by his *Critique of Pure Reason* and other works, he re-established, at least to his own satisfaction, the necessity of believing in God, the soul, causality, free will and the external world. Ultimately, however, he beget, not a rebirth of empiricism on rational foundations, but the German philosophy of *idealism*, which turned everything on its head by defining the material world as spirit, the objective as the subjective, the irrational as the rational.

Fr. Georges Florovsky writes that romantics such as Goethe, Carlyle, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Hartmann, Renan and Maeterlinck "at first cautiously, and then with greater and greater ardour, swelled the waves of 'irrationalism'. Everywhere and in everything, right to the religious feeling of the world and the aesthetic perception of life. Beginning with 'literary' phrases about the 'bankruptcy' of science and ending with immersion in the satanic abysses of black magic and the revival of the orgiastic cult of Dionysius and Ceres, from a superficial atheist denial of Christian dogmatics to an inspired justification of 'the many forms of religious experience', from a call to return to nature to futurism – everywhere we see clear manifestations of a profound disbelief in rational knowledge, in 'the wisdom of systems'. 'Intuition' triumphantly squeezed out 'logic', and the very ideal of scientific knowledge of 'the truth' paled – sometimes in the unclear light of biological adaptation to the conditions of existence, sometimes in the vivid flame of mystical feeling and pantheistic joy. The dynamic nature of the cosmos began to be felt. The proud dream of Feuerbach to 'create' God was revived, the old idea of 'the evolving Absolute' and the unfinished nature of the world was resurrected."¹⁵⁰

The Romantic conception of a dynamic, unfinished world undermined faith in eternal values and verities, and, combined with the idea of ever-oscillating

¹⁴⁹ Barzun, *From Dawn to Decadence, 1500 to the Present*, New York: Perennial, 2000, p. 491.

¹⁵⁰ Florovsky, "Khitrost' Uma" (The Cunning of the Mind), in *Vera i Kul'tura (Faith and Culture)*, St. Petersburg, 2002, pp. 49-50.

polarities, paved the way for the Hegelian schema of thesis-antithesis-synthesis – albeit usually without the synthesis.

Sir Isaiah Berlin's definition is also illuminating: "Since the Greeks, and perhaps long before them, men have believed that to the central questions about the nature and purpose of their lives, and of the world in which they lived, true, objective, universal and eternal answers could be found. If the answers could not be discovered by me, then perhaps by someone more expert or wiser than I; if not in the circumstances in which I found myself, then in others more propitious: in an innocent and happy past – a Garden of Eden from which our ancestors had for their sins been expelled, or perhaps in a golden age that still lay in the future, which posterity (perhaps after much labour and suffering) would, or at any rate could, one day reach. It was assumed that all the truly central problems were soluble in principle even if not in practice. Somewhere true answers to all genuine questions must exist, if not in the minds of men, then in the mind of an omniscient being – real or imaginary, material or ideal, a personal deity, or the universe come to full consciousness of itself.

"This presupposition, which underlies most classical and Christian thought, orthodox and heretical, scientific and religious, was connected with the belief that, whether men knew it or not, the whole of life on earth was in some sense bound up with the search for answer to the great, tormenting questions of fact and of conduct; of what there is, was, will be, can be; of what to do, what to live by, what to seek, hope for, admire, fear, avoid; whether the end of life was happiness or justice or virtue or self-fulfilment or grace and salvation. Individuals, schools of thought, entire civilisations differed about what the answers were, about the proper method of discovering them, about the nature and place of moral or spiritual or scientific authority – that is to say, about how to identify the experts who are qualified to discover and communicate the answers. They argued about what constitutes such qualifications and justifies such claims to authority. But there was no doubt that the truth lay somewhere; that it could in principle be found. Conflicting beliefs were held about the central questions: whether the truth was to be found in reason or in faith, in the Church or the laboratory, in the insights of the uniquely privileged individual – a prophet, a mystic, an alchemist, a metaphysician – or in the collective consciousness of a body of men – the society of the faithful, the traditions of a tribe, a race, a nation, a social class, an academy of experts, an elite of uniquely endowed or trained beings – or, on the contrary, in the mind or heart of any man, anywhere, at any time, provided that he remained innocent and uncorrupted by false doctrines. What was common to all these views – incompatible enough for wars of extermination to have been fought in their name – was the assumption that there existed a reality, a structure of things, a *rerum natura*, which the qualified enquirer could see, study and, in principle, get right. Men were violently divided about the nature and identity of the wise – those who understood the nature of things – but not about the proposition that such wise men existed or could be conceived, and that they would know that which would enable them to deduce correctly what men should believe, how they should act, what they should live by and for.

“This was the great foundation of belief which romanticism attacked and weakened. Whatever the differences between the leading romantic thinkers – the early Schiller and the later Fichte, Schelling and Jacobi, Tieck and the Schlegels when they were young, Chateaubriand and Byron, Coleridge and Carlyle, Kierkegaard, Stirner, Nietzsche, Baudelaire – there runs through their writings a common notion, held with varying degrees of consciousness and depth, that truth is not an objective structure, independent of those who seek it, the hidden treasure waiting to be found, but is itself in all its guises created by the seeker. It is not to be brought into being necessarily by the finite individual: according to some it is created by a greater power, a universal spirit, personal or impersonal, in which the individual is an element, or of which he is an aspect, an emanation, an imperfect reflection. But the common assumption of the romantics that runs counter to the *philosophia perennis* is that the answers to the great questions are not to be discovered so much as to be invented. They are not something found, they are something literally made. In its extreme Idealistic form it is a vision of the entire world. In its more familiar form, it confines itself to the realm of values, ideals, rules of conduct – aesthetic, religious, social, moral, political – a realm seen not as a natural or supernatural order capable of being investigated, described and explained by the appropriate method – rational examination or some more mysterious procedure – but as something that man creates, as he creates works of art; not by imitating, or even obtaining illumination from, pre-existent models or truths, or by applying pre-existent truths or rules that are objective, universal, eternal, unalterable but by an act of creation, the introduction into the world of something literally novel – the activity, natural or supernatural, human or in part divine, owing nothing to anything outside it (in some versions because nothing can be conceived as being outside it), self-subsistent, self-justified, self-fulfilling. Hence that new emphasis on the subjective and ideal rather than the objective and the real, on the process of creation rather than its effects, on motives rather than consequences; and, as a necessary corollary of all this, on the quality of the vision, the state of mind or soul of the acting agent – purity of heart, innocence of intention, sincerity of purpose rather than getting the answer right, that is, accurate correspondence to the ‘given’. Hence the emphasis on activity, movement that cannot be reduced to static segments, the flow that cannot be arrested, frozen, analysed without being thereby fatally distorted; hence the constant protest against the reduction of ‘life’ to dead fragments, of organism to ‘mere’ mechanical or uniform units; and the corresponding tendency towards similes and metaphors drawn from ‘dynamic’ sciences – biology, physiology, introspective psychology – and the worship of music, which, of all the arts, appears to have the least relation to universally observable, uniform natural order. Hence, too, the celebration of all forms of defiance directed against the ‘given’ – the impersonal, the ‘brute fact’ in morals or in politics – or against the static and the accepted, and the value placed on minorities and martyrs as such, no matter what the ideal for which they suffered.

“This, too, is the source of the doctrine that work is sacred as such, not because of its social function, but because it is the imposition of the individual or collective personality, that is, activity, upon inert stuff. The activity, the struggle is all, the victory nothing: in Fichte’s words, ‘*Frei sein ist nichts – frei werden ist der Himmel*’ (‘To be free is nothing – to become free is very heaven’). Failure is nobler than success. Self-immolation for a cause is the thing, not the validity of the cause itself, for it is the sacrifice undertaken for its sake that sanctifies the cause, not some intrinsic property of it.

“These are the symptoms of the romantic attitude. Hence the worship of the artist, whether in sound, or word, or colour, as the highest manifestation of the ever-active spirit, and the popular image of the artist in his garret, wild-eyed, wild-haired, poor, solitary, mocked - but independent, free, spiritually superior to his philistine tormentors. This attitude has a darker side too: worship not merely of the painter or the composer or the poet, but of that more sinister artists whose materials are men – the destroyer of old societies, and the creator of new ones – no matter at what human cost: the superhuman leader who tortures and destroys in order to build on new foundations – Napoleon in his most revolutionary aspect. It is this embodiment of the romantic ideal that took more and more hysterical forms and in its extreme ended in violent irrationalism and Fascism. Yet this same outlook also bred respect for individuality, for the creative impulse, for the unique, the independent, for freedom to live and act in the light of personal, undictated beliefs and principles, of undistorted emotional needs, for the value of personal life, of personal relationships, of the individual conscience, of human rights. The positive and negative heritage of romanticism – on the one hand contempt for opportunism, regard for individual variety, scepticism of oppressive general formulae and final solutions, and on the other self-prostration before superior beings and the exaltation of arbitrary power, passion and cruelty – these tendencies, at once reflected and promoted by romantic doctrines, have done more to mould both the events of our century and the concepts in terms in which they are viewed and explained than is commonly recognised in most histories of our time.”¹⁵¹

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The central false dogma of the Romantic era was the moral superiority and godlike status of the artist (like Byron) and/or the revolutionary (like Napoleon), standing alone and above the world. The political or artistic genius was truly a “genie” who, once let out of his bottle by his divine imagination, could create heaven or hell on earth – and for his worshippers, it didn’t really matter which. Revolutionaries and artists both saw visions unattainable to the ordinary mortal, and for that they were venerated as God-seers if not as gods.

¹⁵¹ Berlin, “The Essence of European Romanticism”, *The Power of Ideas*, London: Pimlico, 1998, pp. 201-204.

For Imagination for the Romantics was much more than the ability to fantasize. As Jacques Barzun writes: "Out of the known or knowable, Imagination connects the remote, interprets the familiar, or discovers hidden realities. Being a means of discovery, it must be called 'Imagination of the real'. Scientific hypotheses perform that same office; they are products of imagination.

"This view of the matter explains why to the Romanticists the arts no longer figured as a refined pleasure of the senses, an ornament of civilized existence, but as one form of the deepest possible reflection on life. Shelley, defending his art, declares poets to be the 'unacknowledged legislators of the world'. The arts convey truths; they are imagination crystallized; and as they transport the soul they reshape the perceptions and possibly the life of the beholder. To perform this feat requires genius, because it is not a mechanical act. To be sure, all art makes use of conventions, but to obey traditional rules and follow set patterns will not achieve that fusion of idea and form which is properly creation. It was Romanticist discussion that made the word *creation* regularly apply to works of art...

"Those Romanticist words, recharged with meaning, helped to establish the religion of art. That faith served those who could and those could not partake of the revived creeds. To call the passion for art a religion is not a figure of speech or a way of praise. Since the beginning of the 19C, art has been defined again and again by its devotees as 'the highest spiritual expression of man'. The dictum leaves no room for anything higher and this highest level is that which, for other human beings, is occupied by religion. To 19C worshippers the arts form a treasury of revelations, a body of scriptures, the makers of this spiritual testament are prophets and seers. And to this day the fortunate among them are treated as demigods..."¹⁵²

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We may conclude that the long-term effects of Romanticism were disastrous, as disastrous as the political revolutions it inspired, even if in the shorter term they provided a much-needed corrective to the rationalism of the Enlightenment epoch.

As Bertrand Russell writes, "Rousseau and the romantic movement extended subjectivity from theory of knowledge to ethics and politics, and ended, logically, in as complete anarchism as that of Bakunin. This extreme of subjectivism is a form of madness..."¹⁵³

Not for nothing was Adam Zamoyski's excellent study of Romanticism entitled *Holy Madness*. And indeed, much of early nineteenth century history can be seen as a chronicle of madmen. By the middle of the century,

¹⁵² Barzun, *From Dawn to Decadence, 1500 to the Present*, New York: Perennial, 2000, pp. 473-474.

¹⁵³ Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy*, London: Allen & Unwin, 1946, p. 514.

reactionaries had succeeded in imposing straitjackets on them. But by the end of the century the madmen – Nietzsche is the most important example – were beginning to take control of the asylum.

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The defeat of the 1848 revolution, and the great industrial boom of the 1850s, placed a temporary damper on the romantic, mystical and irrationalist tendencies of the previous age. The post-1848 era was the age of reaction in politics, of the realistic novel in art and of positivism in philosophy, when "the real" was defined as exclusively "the rational".

Romanticism, as we have seen, is characterized by the love of the exotic, the erotic and the extreme in human nature. Realism, on the other hand, describes the commonplace, which may be connected with the advent of the age of the common man, of democracy.

Perhaps the earliest realist in the field of the novel was Honoré de Balzac (1799-1850), whose masterpiece, *La Comédie Humaine*, "is made up of nearly 100 works, which contain more than 2000 characters and together create an alternative reality that extends from Paris to the provincial backwaters of France. Balzac's works transformed the novel into a great art form capable of representing life in all its detail and colour, so paving the way for the ambitious works of writers such as Proust and Zola...

"His imaginative gift and powers of description set the tone for the development of the 19th-century realist novel. As Oscar Wilde said, Balzac 'created life, he did not copy it.' ..."¹⁵⁴

Evans suggests that that the rise of realism in art has something to do with the advent of photography – the Duke of Wellington and the battlefields of the Crimean War were among the first subjects to be photographed. And he continues: "By mid-century the age of Romanticism was drawing to a close with the growing turn to Realism in the work of painters such as Gustave Courbet (1819-77), who eschewed mythical and religious themes of the past for the concerns of contemporary life. His landscapes abandoned the dramatic exaggeration and compositional artifice employed by the Romantics in favour of a naturalistic approach that suggested he had just come upon a scene and decided on the spot to paint it. In *The Stone-Breakers* (1849) Courbet depicted two peasants breaking rocks by the side of a road, while in *A Burial at Ornans* (1849) he showed the funeral of his great-uncle, depicting not richly clad models but the actual people who attended the event, participating in orderly manner rather than indulging in the emotional gestures that would have been expected in a Romantic representation of the same subject. 'The burial at Ornans, Courbet remarked, 'was in reality the burial of Romanticism.' Later he

¹⁵⁴ Montefiore, *op. cit.*, pp. 343, 345.

complained that 'the title of Realist was thrust upon me just as the title of Romantic was imposed upon the men of 1830.' But his paintings undoubtedly inaugurated a new cultural style. Courbet was a political radical and a committed participant in the Paris Commune of 1871, and he painted scenes of poverty that were intended as social criticism rather than presentations of the picturesque. In *The Gleaners* (1857) Jean-François Millet (1814-75) showed poor peasant women bending over to pick up small ears of corn left on the fields after the harvest, while *The Potato Eaters* (1885) by Vincent van Gogh depicted a group of rough peasants sitting round a table eating the potatoes by the light of a little lamp. Van Gogh wanted, he said, to indicate by their appearance the fact that they had 'tilled the earth themselves with these hands they are putting in the dish'.

"Realist in a very different way were the English painters of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, founded in 1848. From one point of view their paintings of Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-82), William Holman Hunt (1827-1910), John Everett Millais (1829-96) and their colleagues reflected the concern of Romanticism, with their focus on the Middle Ages and religious subjects and their break with Classical models and techniques in the search for authenticity of expression. But they also follow the new Realism in using ordinary people, including working-class girls and prostitutes, as models. Millais' painting *Christ in the House of His Parents*, exhibited in 1850, was widely condemned: instead of employing transcendental religious imagery, it was set amid the dirt and mess of a carpenter's workshop and showed the Holy Family as ordinary, poor people. Even more controversial was the sculptor Auguste Rodin (1840-1917), whose sculptures were a far cry from the smooth Classicism of the Academies...

"Realism spread rapidly to other countries, reaching Russia for example in the shape of 'The Wanderers', fourteen young artists who abandoned the Imperial Academy of Arts in 1863 to form their own co-operative, painting scenes such as the celebrated *Barge Haulers on the Volga* (1873) by Ilya Yefimovich Repin (1844-1930). Similarly, the Realist novel was often, though not invariably, set in the present rather than in the Romantic past. It allowed readers to inhabit a world parallel to their own, where moral and social dramas were played out in ways that were recognizably similar to their own lives, but more eventful and exciting, and which sometimes prompted the desire to subscribe to the reforming ideas of the author. The chronology of literary Realism did not match that of its counterpart in the visual arts precisely: already in the 1830s, Balzac was turning away from writing historical fiction in the manner of Walter Scott, as in early novels such as *Les Chouans* (1829) and fantasy-fables like *La Peau de Chagrin* (1831), to writing in a Realist manner his series *La Condition humaine*. Of course some artists continued to paint Biblical, Classical and historical scenes regardless of the Realist trend. But there is no doubt that artworks and novels addressing contemporary life and attempting to portray it in a manner that was true to life predominated after the middle years of the century.

“It was above all industrialization that called forth the Realist novel as a means of portraying the collectivity of society, with its teeming mass of characters and its description of the shifting relations between them. The master here was Charles Dickens, many of whose works sought to lay bare in literary form the evils of the age and to advocate by showing their dramatic consequences the urgent need to tackle them: *Oliver Twist* (1837-9) addressed the state of crime and disorder in London, *Bleak House* (1853) the expense and injustice of the antiquated English system of civil law, *Hard Times* (1854) the cruelties inflicted by the utilitarian philosophy of the new industrialists. The ‘social novel’ carried a strong charge of social criticism: *Alton Locke* (1849) by Charles Kingsley (1819-75) reflected its author’s Chartist sympathies in its depiction of the exploitation of agricultural labourers and workers in the garment industry, while *Mary Barton* (1848) by Elizabeth Gaskell (1810-65) showed what its author called the ‘misery and hateful passions caused by the love of pursuing wealth as well as the egoism, thoughtlessness and insensitivity of manufacturers’. *Les Misérables* (1862) addressed the three great problems of the age, identified by Victor Hugo as ‘the degradation of man by poverty, the ruin of women by starvation, and the dwarfing of childhood by physical and spiritual night’. In *L’Assommoir* (1877), Émile Zola painted a drastic portrait of poor housing conditions in a Parisian slum, while his *Germinal* (1885) brought together the political and social features of life in a coal mining community over several decades in a dramatic narrative of a strike followed by an uprising. More drastic still was the account of impoverished Russians living in a shelter for the homeless in *The Lower Depths* (1902) by Maxim Gorky.

“Realist novels could flourish in many European countries not least because of the emergence of a new market for books, as the middle classes grew in numbers and wealth, and merchants, industrialists, lawyers, bankers, employers and landowners were joined in the ranks of the affluent by doctors, teachers, civil servants, scientists, and white-collar workers of various kinds, numbering more than 300,000 in the 1851 census in the United Kingdom for example, the first time they were counted, and more than double that number thirty years later. Books became cheaper and more plentiful as steam-driven presses replaced hand-operated ones in the printing industry, and as mechanical production reduced the cost of paper while hugely increasing the supply. Novels, including those of Dickens and Dostoyevsky, were commonly printed in instalments and read in serial form. Alongside the ‘penny dreadful’ and the *colportage* serial a new type of bourgeois novel emerged, catering for an educated readership. Altogether, if 580 books were published in the United Kingdom every year between 1800 and 1825, more than 2,500 appeared annually in mid-century, and more than 6,000 by the end of the century. In 1855 some 1,020 book titles were published in Russia, and by 1894 this figure had increased tenfold, to 10,691, a figure equal to the output of new titles in Britain and the United States combined.

“In all of this, despite the growing taste for non-fiction, ranging from encyclopedias and handbooks to triple-decker biographies, the proportion of

works of fiction published in Britain increased from 16 per cent in the 1830s to nearly 25 per cent half a century later. Novel-reading, once the province of upper-class women, became a general habit among the middle classes of both sexes. Perhaps by necessity, in order to gain a following, Realist artists and writers focused on the comfortably off as well as on the poor and the exploited. Portraits continued to be a significant source of income for painters, while in literature the bourgeoisie featured centrally in the family sagas of the age. *Fathers and Sons* (1862) by Ivan Turgenev dissected the fraught relationship between a conservative elder generation and young nihilistic intellectuals; Zola's *Les Rougon-Macquart* (1871-1893), a cycle of twenty novels, attempted, as the author said, 'to portray, at the outset of a century of liberty and truth, a family that cannot restrain itself in its rush to possess all the good things that progress is making available and is derailed by its own momentum, the fatal convulsions that accompany the birth of a new world'.

"In *Middlemarch: A Study of Provincial Life* (1871-2), George Eliot tackled the impact of change brought by the railways, medicine and other harbingers of modernity on a deeply conservative small-town society; *Madame Bovary* (1856), written by Gustave Flaubert after his friends had persuaded him to abandon early efforts at historical fantasy, described in realistic detail the daily life and love affairs of the bored wife of a weak provincial doctor; both Theodor Fontane in *Effi Briest* (1894) and Tolstoy in *Anna Karenina* (1877) dealt with adultery, real or imagined, and the constrained lives of married women in the upper reaches of society; and in the six-novel sequence *The Barsetshire Chronicles* (1855-67), Anthony Trollope traced the fortunes of the leading inhabitants of an imaginary provincial town, while *The Pallisers* (1865-80) focused on the engagement of a much grander family with parliamentary politics. As the American writer Henry James (1843-1916) remarked, in a somewhat backhanded compliment, Trollope's 'inestimable merit was a complete appreciation of the usual'. However quotidian their concerns, Realist novels and paintings shared one thing in common with the cultural products of Romanticism: their appeal to the emotions, achieved not least by plumbing the depths of character and arousing sympathy and identification in the reader or the viewer..."¹⁵⁵

Nevertheless, so powerful was the romance of revolution and the revolution of romanticism, that neither the political nor the artistic madness was brought to an end by the age of political reaction and artistic realism. Thus the revolutionary/romantic personality became a subject of realistic art, as in Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment* and *The Devils*. As for music, the most romantic of the arts, it never went through a realist reaction, but went on to still wilder emotional extremes, as in Wagner's *Tristan* or Strauss's *Salome*.

And in philosophy, while the hard-boiled realists might insist that man was just a complicated animal or machine, the romantics still dreamed dreams and saw visions and believed in the world spirit and their inner divinity. If the men-

¹⁵⁵ Evans, *op. cit.*, pp. 520-524.

gods had been brought down to earth, their dreams and fantasies were now part of the mental furniture of every European (and American). The bacillus was now in the bloodstream of western man, and it would require a still greater blood-letting, at the hand of a still crueller tyrant, to tame it...

March 26 / April 8, 2019.

15. FROM FEBRUARY TO OCTOBER

The abdication of Tsar Nicholas II on March 2, 1917 marked the end of the Christian era of political history initiated by the coming to power of St. Constantine the Great in 306. The enormous change – and the enormous loss – was felt immediately by those who lived through it. As the novelist I.A. Bunin wrote: “Our children and grandchildren will not be able even to imagine that Russia in which we once (that is, yesterday) lived, which we did not value and did not understand – all that might, complexity, wealth and happiness...”

The only possible source for the legitimate, ordered succession of power after the abdication of the Tsar was the Tsar’s own orders, given on the same day, transferring royal power to his brother, Great Prince Michael, and appointing – at the request of the Duma representatives Guchkov and Shulgin – Prince G.E. Lvov as President of the Council of Ministers and General L.G. Kornilov as Commander of the Petrograd military district. But the Duma politicians had no intention of accepting Great Prince Michael as tsar (Milyukov and Guchkov were in favour of a constitutional monarchy, but not a true autocracy), and soon they compelled him, too, to abdicate (he was shot in Perm in June, 1918). As for Lvov, he was made head of the Provisional Government, but not by virtue of any order of the Tsar, whose authority the Duma politicians rejected.

The Duma politicians had a real problem of legitimacy. Since the legitimizing power of the Tsar’s orders had been rejected, there remained only the authority of a popular election, according to liberal theory. But the Provisional Government had not, of course, been elected. Rather, its purpose was to supervise the election of a Constituent Assembly that alone, according to liberal theory, could bring a legitimate government into power. So when the formation of the Provisional Government was announced Milyukov on March 2, he resorted to a deliberate paradox. In response to the question “Who elected you?” he replied that they had been “elected” by *the revolution*.¹⁵⁶ The paradox consisted in the fact that revolutions do not “elect” in accordance with established legal procedures. For the revolution is the *violent overthrow* of all existing procedures and legalities...

If it was the revolution that “elected” the leaders of the Provisional Government, what objection could they have against the further “election” of Lenin in the next stage of the revolution? They could have none. That is why they offered no real opposition to the Bolshevik revolution in October, and were so easily swept into “the dustbin of history”, in Trotsky’s phrase. For if

¹⁵⁶ Many years later Milyukov wrote: “We were not ‘elected’ by the Duma. Nor were we elected by Lvov in accordance with the tsar’s order prepared at Headquarters, of which we could not have been informed. All these sources for the succession of power we ourselves had consciously cast out. There remained only one reply, the clearest and most convincing. I replied: ‘The Russian revolution has elected us!’ This simple reference to the historical process that brought us to power shut the mouths of the most radical opponents.” (in G. Katkov, *Fevral’skaia Revoliutsia* (The February Revolution), Paris: YMCA Press, 1977, p. 3700.

the Provisional Government came to power through the revolution – that is, through the violent overthrow of all existing procedures and legalities – it had no *legal* authority to suppress the *continuation* of the revolution (for who can tell when the revolution is complete?) through the violent overthrow of *its own* power. In this fact lies the clue to the extraordinarily weak and passive attitude of the Provisional Government towards all political forces to the left of itself. It could not rule because, according to its own liberal philosophy, it had no right to rule...

No such inhibitions were felt by the radical socialists, for whom might was right and the niceties of liberal political philosophy and procedure irrelevant. Already the previous night the Duma had *begged* Himmer, Nakhamkes and Alexandrovich of the Petrograd Soviet to *allow* them to create a government; which showed that the Soviet, and not the Provisional Government, was the real ruler.

“The two forces that brought down the monarchy,” writes S.A. Smith, “ – the mass movement of workers and soldiers and the middle-class parliamentary opposition – became institutionalized in the new political set-up, the Petrograd Soviet keeping a watchful eye over the Provisional Government. The government, headed by Prince G.E. Lvov, a landowner with a long record of service to the *zemstvos*, was broadly representative of professional and business interests. It was liberal, even mildly populist, in its politics; the only organized force within it was the Kadet Party, once a liberal party but now evolving rapidly in the direction of conservative nationalism. In its manifesto of 2 March, the government pledged to implement a far-reaching programme of civil and political rights and to convoke a Constituent Assembly. Significantly, it said nothing about the burning issues of war and land. The government, which had no popular mandate, saw its principal task as being to oversee the election of a Constituent Assembly, which would determine the shape of the future polity. It believed that only such an assembly had the authority to resolve such pressing issues as land redistribution.

“The Petrograd Soviet enjoyed the real attributes of power since it controlled the army, transport, and communications, as well as vital means of information. It also had a popular mandate insofar as 1,200 deputies were elected to it within the first week. A few Bolsheviks, anarchists, and others pressed the Soviet to assume full power, but the moderate socialist intellectuals who controlled its executive committee believed that this was not appropriate to a revolution whose character they defined as ‘bourgeois’, i.e. as destined to bring about democracy and capitalist development in Russia rather than socialism. In addition, they feared that any attempt to assert their authority would provoke ‘counter-revolution’. Consequently, they agreed to support but not to join the ‘bourgeois’ Provisional Government, so long as it did not override the interests of the people. The radical lawyer A.F. Kerensky alone of the Petrograd Soviet representatives determined to join the government, portraying himself as the ‘hostage of the democracy’ within it. Thus was born ‘dual power’. In spite of the prevailing mood of national unity, it reflected a

deep division in Russian society between the 'democracy' and 'propertied society'.

"Outside Petrograd dual power was much less in evidence. In most localities a broad alliance of social groups formed committees of public organizations to eject police and tsarist officials, maintain order and food supply, and to oversee the democratization of the town councils and zemstvos. The government endeavoured to enforce its authority by appointing commissars, most of whom were chairs of county zemstvos – which by this stage were undergoing democratic election – and the soviets reflected the deep fragmentation of power in provincial towns and cities. In rural areas peasants expelled land captains, township elders, and village policemen and set up township committees under their control. The government attempted to strengthen its authority by setting up land and food committees at township level, but these too fell under peasant control. At the very lowest level the authority of the village gathering was strengthened by the revolution, although it became 'democratized' by the participation of younger sons, landless labourers, village intelligentsia (scribes, teachers, vets, and doctors), and some women. The February Revolution thus devolved power to the localities and substantially reduced the capacity of the Provisional Government to make its writ run beneath the county level."¹⁵⁷

However, the immediate result of the abdication of the Tsar was not the emergence of a new power, but a power vacuum – that is, *anarchy*. I.L. Solonevich writes: "I remember the February days of our great and bloodless [revolution] – how great a mindlessness descended on our country! A 100,000-strong flock of completely free citizens knocked about the prospects of Peter's capital. They were in complete ecstasy, this flock: the accursed bloody autocracy had come to an end! Over the world there was rising a dawn deprived of 'annexations and contributions', capitalism, imperialism, autocracy and even Orthodoxy: now we can begin to live! According to my professional duty as a journalist, overcoming every kind of disgust, I also knocked about among these flocks that sometimes circulated along the Nevsky Prospect, sometimes sat in the Tauris palace, and sometimes went to watering holes in the broken-into wine cellars. They were happy, this flock. If someone had then begun to tell them that in the coming third of a century after the drunken days of 1917 they would pay for this in tens of millions of lives, decades of famine and terror, new wars both civil and world, and the complete devastation of half of Russia, - the drunken people would have taken the voice of the sober man for regular madness. But they themselves considered themselves to be completely rational beings..."¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁷ Smith, *The Russian Revolution. A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press, 2002, pp. 18-20.

¹⁵⁸ Solonevich, in "Ot Ipatievskogo Monastyria do Doma Ipatievskogo" (From the Ipatiev Monastery to the Ipatiev House), *Pravoslavnii Monastyri* (Orthodox Monasteries), 29, 2009, p. 10.

The very first act of the Soviet, "Soviet Order Number One", proclaimed: "The orders of the military commission of the State Duma are to be obeyed only in such instances when they do not contradict the orders and decrees of the Soviet." In other words, the Provisional Government that officially came into being on March 3, and which was formed from liberal Duma deputies, was to rule only by permission of the *real* ruler, the Soviet, which had come into being on March 1 and supposedly represented the soldiers and workers. So Soviet power was born in March, not October, 1917. Only for a few months this fact was masked by the "dual power" arrangement with the Provisional Government.

The immediate effect of Order Number One was to destroy discipline in the army. Florence Farmborough wrote in her diary for March 4, 1917: "Manifestoes from the new Government have begun to be distributed widely along the Russian Front. Our *Letuchka* [flying squad] is well supplied with them; many are addressed to me by the military staff – a courtesy which I greatly appreciate. The main trend of these proclamations directed especially to the fighting men, is FREEDOM. 'Russia is a free country now,' the Manifestoes announce. 'Russia is free and *you*, Russian soldiers, are free men. If you, before being freed, could fight for your Mother-Country, how much more loyally will you fight now, when, as free men, you will carry on the successful conflict on behalf of your free Country.' So the great *perevorot* [revolution] had come! Russia is a free country! The Russians are a free people! Tremendous excitement reigns on all sides; much vociferous enthusiasm, tinged with not a little awe. What will happen now? Newspapers are seized and treasured as though made of gold, read, and re-read. 'The Dawn of Russian Freedom!' 'The Daybreak of the New Epoch!' rhapsodise the romancer-reporters. A *prekaz* [order] has been sent to the Front Line soldiers describing the *otkaz* [dismissal] of the Emperor. We were told that in some sectors the news had been received with noisy gratification; in others, the men have sat silent and confused..."¹⁵⁹

The soldiers had to decide: which of the two powers – the Provisional Government or the Soviets – were they to obey? On March 7 a "Text of Oath for Orthodox and Catholics" and signed by Lvov was published and distributed to the army: "I swear by the honour of an officer (soldier, citizen) and promise before God and my own conscience to be faithful and steadfastly loyal to the Russian Government, as to my Fatherland. I swear to serve it to my last blood... I pledge obedience to the Provisional Government, at present proclaimed the Russian government, until the establishment of the System of Government sanctioned by the will of the People, through instrumentality of the Constituent Assembly..."¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁹ Farmborough, *Nurse at the Russian Front. A Diary 1914-1918*, London: Blue Club Associates, 1974, p. 260

¹⁶⁰ Farmborough, *op. cit.*, p. 261.

In general, the officers were happy to make this oath. And soldiers of all faiths repeated it word for word and then shouted "Hurrah!" But what of those who did not believe in God, or who thought they were now free of all masters – not only of *Batyushka* Tsar, but also of *Batyushka* God?

The Soviet also made its power felt in the composition of the Provisional Government. Thus Rodzyanko was excluded from the list of ministers as being unacceptable to the masses; while Guchkov and Miliukov, the Ministers of War and Foreign Affairs, who had also played major roles in the abdication, did not last beyond the April Crisis after their support for the continuation of the war became apparent. For on April 4 the executive committee of the Petrograd Soviet, without calling for an end to the war as Lenin would do in a few days' time, had demanded self-determination, no annexations and no indemnities – a "peace without defeat" policy that was similar to President Wilson's earlier "peace without victory" programme and elicited support from both the German SPD and British Labour and Liberal MPs.

"One of the bitterest ironies of 1917," writes Adam Tooze, "is that the peace programme of the Russian revolution echoed that sponsored by the American president only a few months earlier prior to America's entry into the war: a peace without victory, without annexation or indemnities and based on self-determination. If Wilson had been able to stay out of the war a few months longer, or the tsar's regime had fallen a few weeks sooner, the revolutionary regime in Petrograd might have offered the president precisely the wedge that he wanted to drive Britain and France to the negotiating table. Germany's gamble on the U-boats voided that fateful juncture..."¹⁶¹

The formal head of the Provisional Government was Prince Lvov. But the real leader was the Justice Minister, Alexander Kerensky, a Trudovik lawyer who had wanted to be an actor. As Graham Darby writes, contemporaries saw Kerensky "as the real prime minister from the outset but despite being in both the government and the soviet – thereby embodying the dual power structure – he was in between the two camps, distanced from party politics, a politician of compromise who would fail to reconcile the irreconcilable... For a brief moment Kerensky was the essential man, the peoples' tribune, a fine orator and a man of charisma. A good actor, he could catch the mood of an audience. He wore semi-military costume and attempted to strike a Napoleonic pose. He enjoyed immense popularity, even adulation, in the early months and a personality cult grew up around him fuelled by his own self-promotion, a range of propaganda (articles, medals, badges, poems) and a receptive audience. Many saw him as a saviour, the true successor to the tsar. There was, however, an inherent contradiction between Russia's political culture, with its dependency on powerful leaders, and the democratic ideology of the early stages of the revolution, a contradiction embodied in Kerensky, the undemocratic democrat. The adulation went to his head and he came to overestimate his popularity long after it had evaporated. He moved into the

¹⁶¹ Tooze, "365 Days that Shook the World", *Prospect*, January, 2017, pp. 26-27.

Winter Palace, lived in the tsar's apartments and used the imperial train. He was seemingly powerful but only by virtue of the offices he held and the fickle nature of mass popularity. To sustain the latter he had to fulfil everyone's expectations, but as Lenin pointed out, he 'wanted to harmonise the interests of landowners and peasants, workers and bosses, labour and capital'. It was an impossible task..."¹⁶²

P. Novgorodtsev writes: "Prince Lvov, Kerensky and Lenin were bound together by an unbroken bond. Prince Lvov was as guilty of Kerensky as Kerensky was of Lenin. If we compare these three actors of the revolution, who each in turn led the revolutionary power, in their relationship to the evil principle of civil enmity and inner dissolution, we can represent this relationship as follows. The system of guileless non-resistance to evil, which was applied by Prince Lvov as a system of ruling the state, with Kerensky was transformed into a system of pandering to evil camouflaged by phrases about 'the revolutionary leap' and the good of the state, while with Lenin it was transformed into a system of openly serving evil clothed in the form of merciless class warfare and the destruction of all those displeasing to the authorities. Each of the three mentioned persons had his utopian dreams, and history dealt with all of them in the same way: it turned their dreams into nothing and made of them playthings of the blind elements. The one who most appealed to mass instincts and passions acquired the firmest power over the masses. In conditions of general anarchy the path to power and despotism was most open to the worst demagoguery. Hence it turned out that the legalized anarchy of Prince Lvov and Kerensky naturally and inevitably gave way to the demagogic despotism of Lenin."¹⁶³

In an article written in 1923 G. Mglinsky explained why the government proved so weak: "Understanding the absence of firm ground under their feet because of the absence of those layers of the population on which it was possible to rely, the new government fell immediately into dependence on the 'Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies' which had been formed even before the abdication of his Majesty the Emperor, and behind which there stood the capital's working masses who had been propagandized by the same Russian intelligentsia. Although it did not really sympathize with the content of Order Number 1, which destroyed the army, and understood all its danger, the Provisional Government nevertheless allowed the carrying out of this order – so criminal in relation to the fatherland – by the hands of its Minister of War Guchkov.

"Fearing a reaction in the Russian people, which, as it well understood, would hardly be likely to be reconciled with the seizure of power by a bunch of intriguers, the Provisional Government from the very beginning of its activity tried hard to destroy the state-administrative apparatus. With a stroke

¹⁶² Darby, "Kerensky in Hindsight", *History Today*, July, 2017, p. 51.

¹⁶³ Novgorodtsev, "Vostanovlenie svyatyn" ("The Restoration of the Holy Things"), *Put'* (The Way), N 4, June-July, 1926, p. 4.

of the pen all administrative power in Russia was destroyed. The governors were replaced by *zemstvo* activists, the city commanders – by city-dwellers, the police – by militia.

“But, as is well known, it is always easy to destroy, but very difficult to create. And so it was here: having destroyed the old state apparatus, the Provisional Government did not think of, or, more likely, was simply not able to create anything in its place. Russia was immediately handed over to itself and nepotism was introduced as a slogan for the whole of the state administration, and this at precisely the moment when a strong power was required as never before.

“When representatives of the old and new administrations came to the head of the Provisional Government, Prince [G.E.] Lvov, and demanded directions, they unfailingly received the same refusal which Prince Lvov gave to the representatives of the press in his interview of 7 March, that is, five days after the coup. ‘This is a question of the old psychology. The Provisional Government has removed the old governors and is not going to appoint anybody. They will be elected on the spot. Such questions must be resolved not from the centre, but by the population itself... We are all boundlessly happy that we have succeeded in living to this great moment when we can create a new life of the people – not for the people, but together with the people... The future belongs to the people which has manifested its genius in this historical days. What great happiness it is to live in these great days!...’

“These words, which sound now like pure irony, were not invented, they are found in the text of the 67th page of the first volume of *A History of the Second Russian Revolution* written, not by any die-hard or black-hundredist, but by Paul Milyukov ‘himself’, who later on the pages of his history gives the following evaluation of the activity of the head of the government which he himself joined as Minister of Foreign Affairs:

“‘This world-view of the leader of our inner politics,’ says Milyukov, ‘led in fact to the systematic cessation of activity of his department and to the self-limitation of the central authority to a single task – the sanctioning of the fruits of what in the language of revolutionary democracy is called the revolutionary creation of rights. The population, left to itself and completely deprived of protection from the representatives of the central power, necessarily had to submit to the rule of party organizations, which acquired, in new local committees, a powerful means of influence and propagandizing certain ideas that flattered the interests and instincts of the masses, and for that reason were more acceptable for them.’ ”¹⁶⁴

¹⁶⁴ Mglinsky, “Grekhi russkoj intelligentsii” (The Sins of the Russian Intelligentsia), *Staroe Vremia* (Old Times), 1923; in Prince N.D. Zhevakhov, *Vospominania* (Reminiscences), Moscow, 1993. Zhevakhov, who was assistant over-procurator during the February Revolution, comments on these words: “If Milyukov, who took the closest participation in the overthrow of Tsarist Power in Russia, could talk like this, then what was it like in reality! ‘Things were no better in other departments. Everywhere complete chaos reigned, for none of the departmental

There was no real opposition to this wanton destruction of old Russia because the forces on the right were in a state of shock and ideological uncertainty that left them incapable of undertaking any effective counter-measures. We search in vain for a leader, in Church or State, who called for the restoration of the Romanov dynasty at this time. Perhaps the deputy over-procurator, Raev, who called on the Synod to support the monarchy, was an exception to this rule, or the only Orthodox general who remained faithful to his oath, Theodore Keller. Or perhaps Archimandrite Vitaly (Maximenko) of Pochaev monastery, the future Archbishop of Eastern America, who, "having found out about the emperor's abdication... travelled to the Tsar's military headquarters in Mogilev in order to plead with the sovereign to rescind his abdication. He was not allowed a meeting..."¹⁶⁵

Orthodox monarchism, it seemed, was dead... The abdication of the Tsar was greeted with joy by people of all classes – even the peasantry. As Oliver Figes writes, "the news from the capital was joyously greeted by huge assemblies in the village fields. 'Our village,' recalls one peasant, 'burst into life with celebrations. Everyone felt enormous relief, as if a heavy rock had suddenly been lifted from our shoulders.' Another peasant recalled the celebrations in his village on the day it learned of the Tsar's abdication: 'People kissed each other from joy and said that life from now on would be good. Everyone dressed in their best costumes, as they do on a big holiday. The festivities went on for three days.' Many villages held religious processions to thank the Lord for their newly won freedoms, and offered up prayers for the new government. For many peasants, the revolution appeared as a sacred thing, while those who had laid down their lives for the people's freedom were seen by the peasants as modern-day saints. Thus the villagers of Bol'she-Dvorskaya volost in the Tikhvinsk district of Petrograd province held a 'service of thanksgiving for the divine gift of the people's victory and the eternal memory of those holy men who fell in the struggle for freedom'. The villagers of Osvyshi village in Tver province offered, as they put it, 'fervent prayers to thank the Lord for the divine gift of the people's victory... and since this great victory was achieved by sacrifice, we held a requiem for all our fallen brothers'. It was often with the express purpose of reciprocating this sacrifice that many villages sent donations, often amounting to several hundred roubles, to the authorities in Petrograd for the benefit of those who had suffered losses in the February Days."¹⁶⁶

This confusion of the values of Christianity with those of the anti-Christian revolution was also evident in contemporary literature – in, for example, Blok's

bosses, nor the government as a whole, had any definite, systematically realizable plan. They broke down everything that was old, they broke it down out of a spectral fear of a return to the old. Without thinking of tomorrow, with a kind of mad haste, they broke down everything that the whole Russian people is now beginning to sorrow over...' (*Staroe Vremia*, December 18/31, 1923, N 13)." (*op. cit.*).

¹⁶⁵ "Archbishop Vitaly Maximenko", *Orthodox Life*, March-April, 2010, p. 15.

¹⁶⁶ Figes, *op. cit.*, pp. 347-348.

poem *The Twelve*, in which Christ is portrayed at the head of the Red Guards. The prevalence of this confusion among all classes of society showed how deeply the democratic-revolutionary ideology had penetrated the masses in the pre-revolutionary period. For those with eyes to see it showed that there could be no quick return to normality, but only a very long, tortuous and tormented path of repentance through suffering...

*

In February, 1917 Lenin was living in Switzerland. He had been on the German payroll as an agent of the Reich for some time. The plan to smuggle him into Russia went back to 1915, when Alexander Helphand, code-named Parvus, a German Jewish agent, persuaded the German Foreign Ministry that they might engineer a mass strike in Russia. On December 29, 1915 he recorded receiving a million rubles to support the revolution in Russia from the German envoy in Copenhagen. Still larger sums were given by Jewish bankers in the West. The leading American Jewish banker who bankrolled the Bolsheviks was Jacob Schiff, a member of Bnai Brith, a cabbalistic sect founded in 1843 in America.¹⁶⁷ Schiff was related to the German Jewish banker Warburg, who financed the Bolsheviks from Germany. Lilia Shevstova writes: "Germany provided the Bolsheviks with substantial funds for 'revolutionary purposes': prior to October 1917, the Germans had paid them 11 million German gold marks; in October 1917, the Bolsheviks received another 15 million marks."¹⁶⁸

"It has been estimated," writes Niall Ferguson, "that 50 million gold marks (\$12m) were channelled to Lenin and his associates, much of it laundered through a Russian import business run by a woman named Evgeniya Sumenson. Adjusting on the basis of unskilled wage inflation, that is equivalent to £800m today."¹⁶⁹

In March, 1917, Arthur Zimmermann convinced the Kaiser and the army that the Bolsheviks' leader, Lenin, who was living in exile in Switzerland, should be smuggled back into Russia.¹⁷⁰ On April 2 Count Brockdorff-Rantzau wrote to the German Foreign Office that they should smuggle Lenin into Russia with a lot of money "in order to create... the greatest possible chaos. We should do all we can... to exacerbate the differences between the moderate and extremist parties, because we have the greatest possible interest in the latter gaining the upper hand".¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁷ See <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TwavvYnzCKE&feature=related>.

¹⁶⁸ Shevtsova, "Russia's Love Affair with Germany", <http://www.the-american-interest.com/2015/08/27/russias-love-affair-with-germany/>, *The American Interest*, August 27, 2015.

¹⁶⁹ Ferguson, *The Square and the Tower*, London: Penguin, 2018, p. 213, note.

¹⁷⁰ Huw Strachan, *The First World War*, London: Pocket Books, 2006, p. 256.

¹⁷¹ Brockdorff-Rantzau, in M.J. Cohen and John Major, *History in Quotations*, London: Cassell, p. 726.

On April 16 Lenin returned to Russia in the famous sealed train and immediately published his "April theses" demanding an end to the war and all power to the Soviets. However, his time had not yet come...

The removal of the "annexationist" Guchkov and Milyukov left the government in the hands of a group of leftist Masons: Kerensky (the link with the Petrograd Soviet), Nekrasov, Konovalov, Tereshchenko and Efremov. Together with the Soviet, they immediately passed a series of laws: political prisoners and revolutionaries were amnestied, trade unions were recognized, an eight-hour day for workers was introduced, the replacement of the Tsarist police by a "people's militia", full civil and religious freedoms, the abolition of the death penalty and the removal of all restrictions on the Jews. "In a breathtaking reversal," writes Adam Tooze, "Russia, formerly the autocratic bubear of Europe, was remaking itself as the freest, most democratic country on earth."¹⁷²

In order to gain the support of the Soviet, as Douglas Smith writes, the Provisional Government "had to agree to eight conditions, including amnesty for all political prisoners; freedom of speech, press, and assembly; and the abolition of all restrictions based on class, religion, and nationality... The new government also agreed to immediately abolish the police, the Okhrana, and the Corps of Gendarmes. This step, together with the dissolution of the tsarist provincial bureaucracy, was to have fatal consequences, for without new institutions to take their place, the Provisional Government was left with no means to effectively govern the country at the very moment it was descending into ever greater disorder..."¹⁷³

This orgy of liberal freedoms - accompanied by an orgy of violence throughout the country - earned the government the plaudits, not only of deadly enemies of Tsarism such as the Jewish banker Jacob Schiff in New York, but also of the western governments, whose democratic prejudices blinded them to the fact that the revolution was turning Russia from their most faithful ally into their deadliest enemy...

As time passed and the chaos spread throughout the country, it became clear that neither the Provisional Government, nor even the Soviets, nor even a coalition between the two on a pro-war platform, would be able to control the revolutionary masses, who wanted peace at any price with the Germans abroad and the most radical social revolution at home. Of all the parties represented in the Soviets, it was only the Bolsheviks (for the soldiers and workers) and the Left Social Revolutionaries (for the peasants) who understood this, who had their fingers on the nation's revolutionary pulse...

¹⁷² Tooze, *The Deluge*, London: Penguin, 2014, p. 69.

¹⁷³ Smith, *Former Persons: The Last Days of the Russian Aristocracy*, London: Macmillan, 2012, p. 73.

Anarchy was the order of the day, and the only “justice” was imposed by lynchings. Thus Gorky claimed to have seen 10,000 cases of summary justice in 1917 alone.¹⁷⁴ The Church suffered particularly in this period, with the killing of many priests...

Meanwhile, the Justice Minister Kerensky was visiting the troops. On May 13 he came to Podgaytsy, and Sister Florence witnessed his speech: “He spoke for about twenty minutes, but time seemed to stand still. His main theme was freedom; that great, mystical Freedom which had come to Russia. His words were often interrupted by wild applause, and, when he pointed out that the war must, at all costs, continued to a victorious end, they acclaimed him to the echo. ‘You will fight to a victorious end!’ he adjured them. ‘We will!’ the soldiers shouted as one man. ‘You will drive the enemy off Russian soil!’ ‘We will!’ they shouted again with boundless enthusiasm. ‘You, free men of a Free Country; you will fight for Russia, your Mother-Country. You will go into battle with joy in your hearts!’ ‘We are free men,’ they roared. ‘We will follow you into battle. Let us go now! Let us go now!’

“When he left, they carried him on their shoulders to his car. They kissed him, his uniform, his car, the ground on which he walked. Many of them were on their knees praying; others were weeping. Some of them cheering; others singing patriotic songs. To the accompaniment of this hysterical outburst of patriotic fervor, Kerensky drove away...”¹⁷⁵

The soldiers had been promised that the Offensive (originally planned under Tsar Nicholas) would not long be delayed. But time passed, the order did not come, discipline collapsed, desertions began... Then came the Bolshevik agitators who harangued the troops with a new message: surrender! Farmborough describes one such meeting: “It was a most extraordinary meeting! Never, in our wildest dreams did we imagine that we should listen to such an outpouring of treachery. We sat in a group among the trees, surrounded on all sides by soldiers. Some of our hospital Brothers were there and I caught sight of several of our transport drivers.

“The man who had come to speak to the soldiers had an ordinary face and was dressed in ordinary Russian clothes; dark trousers and a dark shirt, buttoned on the left and worn outside his trousers, with a black belt around the waist. His face was serious and pale, but he smiled and nodded once or twice to one or another of the audience, as though he recognized friends. He spoke for a time about Russia, her vast territory, her wealth and the many overlords who, possessing enormous estates and resources, were revered on account of their riches throughout the western world. Then he described the impoverished peasantry who, unschooled, uncared for and half-starved, were eking out a miserable existence by tilling and cultivating the land belonging to those same overlords. War had burst upon Russia and enemies had invaded

¹⁷⁴ Orlando Figes, *A People's Tragedy*, London: Pimlico, 1997, p. 400.

¹⁷⁵ Farmborough, *op. cit.*, pp. 269-270.

her territory, and who were the men who had sacrificed themselves to fight the ruthless invaders and drive them off Russian soil! Not the wealthy overlords, not the despotic land-owners; no! – they were safely installed in their fortress-homes. It was those downtrodden countrymen who had been roped in in their thousands, in their millions, to stem the tide of invasion; when they had been killed, others had been quickly collected and sent to replace them. There had been no end to the slaughter and sacrifice of the Russian peasant. Enemy guns had devoured them daily, hourly; every minute of the day and night, the heavy guns had feasted on them and every minute new recruits were being seized and thrust like fodder into the voracious jaws of the enemy's cannon. But now a tremendous even had taken place! The Tsar – that arch-potentate, that arch-tyrant – had been dethroned and dismissed. Russia had been pronounced a free country! – the Russian citizens a free people! Freedom had come at last to the downtrodden people of Russia.

“Our doctors were moving restlessly. They were, as always, in officers' uniform. I wondered if they were thinking it was high time to leave, but they stayed. Undoubtedly, it was the wisest thing to do. I glanced around. Most of the soldiers were young and raw, inexperienced and impressionable; all of them drawn from far-off corners of what, until recently, had been known as the Russian Empire. What easy prey they would be for seditious guile! New ideas could so readily take hold of their gullible minds and a cunning speaker would soon be aware that he could sway them this way and that with his oratory.

“The speaker was harping on the theme of freedom. Freedom, he declared, was a possession so great, so precious, one dared not treat it lightly. But war was an enemy of freedom, because it destroyed peace, and without peace there could be no freedom. It was up to the Russian soldier to do all in his power to procure peace. And the best and quickest way to bring about a guaranteed peace was to *refuse to fight*. War could not be fought if there were no soldiers to fight! War was never a one-sided operation! Then, when peace had at last come to Russia, freedom could be enjoyed. The free men of Free Russia would own their own land. The great tracts of privately-owned territory would be split up and divided fairly among the peasantry. There would be common ownership of all properties and possessions. Once the Russian soldier had established peace in his homeland, he would reap benefits undreamt of. Peace above all else! Down with war!

“The soldiers were all astir; they were whispering, coughing, muttering. But there all in full accord with the orator; he held them in his hand! Their stolid faces were animated and jubilant. ‘*Tovarishchi!* You free men of Free Russia! You will demand peace!’ ‘We will!’ they shouted in reply. ‘You will assert your rights as free Russian citizens!’ ‘We will assert our rights,’ they echoed with one voice. ‘You will never allow yourselves to be pushed into the trenches to sacrifice your lives in vain!’ ‘Never!’ they roared in unison...”¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁶ Farmborough, *op. cit.*, pp. 309-311.

The success of the Bolsheviks' propaganda against the war deprived the army of the minimum discipline required for any successful offensive. In the event, while General Alexeyev calculated that the losses from the July offensive would be about 6000, they turned out to be 400,000.¹⁷⁷

"The key to Russia's military defeat," writes Niall Ferguson, "was the huge number of surrenders in that year. Overall, more than half of total Russian casualties were accounted for by men who were taken prisoner."¹⁷⁸ An offensive that had been designed by Kerensky and the liberals to bolster the state by bringing all classes together on a patriotic wave ended by opening the path to the final destruction of the state.

The offensive was crushed, and on September 3 the Germans entered Riga...

Nobody was more saddened by the Russian rout than the imprisoned Tsar Nicholas, who had abdicated precisely in order to avoid civil strife and thereby guarantee the army's successful offensive. "In the words of the children's tutor, Pierre Gilliard, this caused the Emperor 'great grief'. As always, however, Nicholas's optimism struggled against bad news. 'I get a little hope from the fact that in our country people love to exaggerate. I can't believe that the army at the front has become as bad as they say. It couldn't have disintegrated in just two months to such a degree.'"¹⁷⁹

On July 17 military units around Petrograd marched into the centre of the city, demanding an end to the war. The Bolsheviks had not led this "semi-insurrection", as Trotsky called it, but now they assumed the leadership of it, setting up a separate government by the Bolshevized sailors of Kronstadt. But the insurrection failed, the mutinous soldiers were suppressed (but not disarmed), Kerensky became prime minister and a crackdown on the Bolsheviks began. Lenin fled, disguised as a woman, to Finland, and many party members were arrested. It was left to Stalin and Sverdlov, working underground, to keep the party afloat... The Mensheviks and other socialists to the right of the Bolsheviks also helped at this critical point. Believing that there were "no enemies to the Left", and fearing a counter-revolution, they protected the Bolsheviks from treason charges. A year later, the Bolsheviks proved their ingratitude by imprisoning the Mensheviks...¹⁸⁰

In spite of this setback, support for the Bolsheviks continued to grow, especially after they adopted the SR slogan, "Land to the Peasants!" legalizing the peasants' seizure of the landowners' estates. As their wars against the peasantry in 1918-22 and 1928-1934 were to show, the Bolsheviks were never a pro-peasant party, and really wanted to nationalize the land rather than give it

¹⁷⁷ Orlando Figes, *op. cit.*, p. 408.

¹⁷⁸ Ferguson, *The Pity of War, 1914-1918*, London: Penguin Books, 1999, p. 368. Prisoners of war as a percentage of total casualties in the war were 51.8% for Russia, as opposed to 9.0% for Germany and 6.7% for Britain (*op. cit.*, p. 369).

¹⁷⁹ Lieven, *Nicholas II*, p. 236.

¹⁸⁰ Figes, *op. cit.*, p. 436.

to the peasants. This was in accordance with Marxist teaching, which saw the industrial proletariat as the vanguard of the revolution, but looked down on the peasants, with their religiosity, old-fashioned ways and rejection of state interference, as being relics of the old order. However, towards the end of his life, in 1881, Marx had entered into correspondence with the *narodnik* Vera Zasulich, and had recognized the possibility that the revolution in Russia could begin with the agrarian socialists.¹⁸¹ So Lenin had some precedent in making tactical concessions to the SRs at this point – concessions he was soon to take back once he was in power. It paid off: many Left SRs joined the party, and others voted for the Bolsheviks in the Soviets.

In late August, alarmed by the increasing power of the Bolsheviks, and by the German advance on Petrograd, which was creating chaos in the rear, General Kornilov, the new commander-in-chief of the Russian armies, ordered his troops to march on Petrograd in order to restore order. As he said on August 11: “It is time to put an end to all this. It is time to hang the German agents and spies, with Lenin at their head, to dispel the Council of Soviet of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies and scatter them far and wide, so that they should never be able to come together again!”¹⁸² Right-wing forces in politics (Rodzyanko, Guchkov, Milyukov), in business and in the army (the Officers’ Union and the Union of Cossacks) soon rallied around him, hoping to prevent the Russian revolution from following the pattern of the French revolution and passing from a bourgeois, liberal phase to a Jacobin, terrorist one. It may be that Kerensky originally invited Kornilov to save the Provisional Government from the Bolsheviks. Be that as it may, Kerensky soon renounced Kornilov, and Kornilov renounced the Provisional Government. But on the approaches to Petrograd, Bolshevik agitators and railwaymen managed to infiltrate Kornilov’s troops and persuade them to give up the coup attempt.

Figs writes: “The social polarization of the summer gave the Bolsheviks their first real mass following as a party which based its main appeal on the plebeian rejection of all superordinate authority. The Kornilov crisis was the critical turning point, for it seemed to confirm their message that neither peace nor radical social change could be obtained through the politics of compromise with the bourgeoisie. The larger factories in the major cities, where the workers’ sense of class solidarity was most developed, were the first to go over in large numbers to the Bolsheviks. By the end of May, the party had already gained control of the Central Bureau of the Factory Committees and, although the Menshevik trade unionists remained in the ascendancy until 1918, it also began to get its resolutions passed at important trade union assemblies. Bolshevik activists in the factories tended to be younger, more working class and much more militant than their Menshevik or SR rivals. This made them more attractive to those groups of workers – both among the skilled and the unskilled – who were becoming increasingly prepared to engage in violent strikes, not just for better pay and working conditions but also for the control of the factory

¹⁸¹ Robert Service, *Comrades*, London: Pan Books, 2007, p. 30.

¹⁸² Kornilov, in Cohen and Major, *op. cit.*, p. 727.

environment itself. As their network of party cells at the factory level grew, the Bolsheviks began to build up their membership among the working class, and as a result their finances grew through the new members' contributions. By the Sixth Party Conference at the end of July there were probably 200,000 Bolshevik members, rising to perhaps 350,000 on the eve of October, and the vast majority of these were blue-collar workers."¹⁸³

Similar swings to the Bolsheviks took place in the city Duma elections of August and September, and in the Soviets. "As early as August, the Bolsheviks had won control of the Soviets in Ivanovo-Voznesensk (the 'Russian Manchester'), Kronstadt, Yekaterinburg, Samara and Tsaritsyn. But after the Kornilov crisis many other Soviets followed suit: Riga, Saratov and Moscow itself. Even the Petrograd Soviet fell to the Bolsheviks... [On September 9] Trotsky, appearing for the first time after his release from prison, dealt the decisive rhetorical blow by forcing the Soviet leaders to admit that Kerensky, by this stage widely regarded as a 'counter-revolutionary', was still a member of their executive. On 25 September the leadership of the Petrograd Soviet was completely revamped, with the Bolsheviks occupying four of the seven seats on its executive and Trotsky replacing Chkheidze as its Chairman. This was the beginning of the end. In the words of Sukhanov, the Petrograd Soviet was 'now Trotsky's guard, ready at a sign from him to storm the coalition'."¹⁸⁴

On October 10 Lenin returned secretly to Petrograd from Finland determined that an armed insurrection should be launched now, even before the convening of the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets on October 20; for he did not want to share power with the other parties represented at the Congress. On October 10, by a margin of ten to two (Zinoviev and Kamenev voted against) his views prevailed in the Central Committee, and on October 16 Trotsky set up the Petrograd Revolutionary Military Committee, which was theoretically under the control of the Petrograd Soviet but was in fact designed to be the spearhead of the Bolsheviks' seizure of power.

Trotsky's support for the Leninist line was crucial to the success of the revolution. For a long time he had not seen eye-to-eye with Lenin. Originally a Menshevik, in 1904 he accurately summed up Lenin's dictatorial aims: "The party organization is substituted for the party, the Central Committee is substituted for the party organization, and finally a 'dictator' is substituted for the Central Committee".¹⁸⁵ And as late as March, 1917, Lenin had expressed his wariness of Trotsky: "The main thing is not to let ourselves get caught in stupid attempts at 'unity' with social patriots, or still more dangerous... with vacillators like Trotsky & Co."¹⁸⁶ Nevertheless, by 1917 there were no major differences between the two revolutionaries, so it was logical that Trotsky should join - it was probably his vanity and ambition that had prevented him

¹⁸³ Figes, *op. cit.*, p. 457.

¹⁸⁴ Figes, *op. cit.*, p. 459.

¹⁸⁵ Trotsky, *Our Political Tasks* (1904); in Cohen and Major, *op. cit.*, p. 679.

¹⁸⁶ Lenin, Letter to Alexandra Kollontai, March 15, 1917; in Cohen and Major, *op. cit.*, p. 726.

from surrendering to the party he had criticized for so long. And now his oratorical power to sway the mob, and the key position he occupied in the Petrograd Soviet and its Revolutionary Military Committee, supplied the vital element that propelled the Bolsheviks to power.

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Figes continues: "The rising fortunes of the Bolsheviks during the summer and autumn were essentially due to the fact that they were the only major political party which stood uncompromisingly for Soviet power. This point bears emphasizing, for one of the most basic misconceptions of the Russian Revolution is that the Bolsheviks were swept to power on a tide of mass support for the party itself. The October insurrection was a *coup d'état*, actively supported by a small minority of the population (and indeed opposed by several of the Bolshevik leaders themselves). But it took place amidst a social revolution, which was centred on the popular realization of Soviet power as the negation of the state and the direct self-rule of the people, much as in the ancient peasant ideal of *volia*. The political vacuum brought about by this social revolution enabled the Bolsheviks to seize power in the cities and consolidate their dictatorship during the autumn and winter. The slogan 'All Power to the Soviets!' was a useful tool, a banner of popular legitimation covering the nakedness of Lenin's ambition (which was better expressed as All Power to the Party). Later, as the nature of the Bolshevik dictatorship became apparent, the party faced the growing opposition of precisely those groups in society which in 1917 had rallied behind the Soviet slogan..."¹⁸⁷

The lack of opposition to the Bolshevik coup was almost farcical. First, the Petrograd garrison mutinied, leaving the government no substantial forces in the capital. Then, on the night of the 24th, Kerensky fled in a stolen car to the West, never to return.

A week before his death he said to an acquaintance: "My own children are ashamed of me. They say that I have entered into history as the father of 'Kerenshchina'. Forgive me and forget me. I destroyed Russia..." He exaggerated: he alone did not destroy Russia. But he was certainly one of the leading destroyers...

The rest of the ministers huddled in the Winter Palace guarded by some Cossacks, cadets and 200 women from the Shock Battalion of Death – about 3000 people in all. But such was their lack of morale that by the evening only 300 of these were left. Very little fighting actually took place.

The Bolsheviks' most potent weapon was the blank round fired by the cruiser *Aurora* at 9.40 p.m. "The huge sound of the blast, much louder than a live shot, caused the frightened ministers to drop at once to the floor. The women from the Battalion of Death became hysterical and had to be taken away

¹⁸⁷ Figes, *op. cit.*, pp. 460-461.

to a room at the back of the palace, where most of the remaining cadets abandoned their posts.”¹⁸⁸ When the Bolsheviks finally stormed into the Palace, their first act was to break open the wine cellars and get drunk...

The only real drama took place at the Soviet Congress, which finally convened at 10.40 p.m. The delegates at first supported the formation of a Soviet government, which, if the Bolsheviks had really believed their slogan: “All Power to the Soviets!” should have stopped their coup in its tracks. “Martov proposed the formation of a united democratic government based upon all the parties in the Soviet: this, he said, was the only way to avert a civil war. The proposal was met with torrents of applause. Even Lunacharsky was forced to admit that the Bolsheviks had nothing against it – they could not abandon the slogan of Soviet Power – and the proposal was immediately passed by a unanimous vote. But just as it looked as if a socialist coalition was at last about to be formed, a series of Mensheviks and SRs bitterly denounced the violent assault on the Provisional Government. They declared that their parties, or at least the right-wing sections of them, would have nothing to do with this ‘criminal venture’, which was bound to throw the country into civil war, and walked out of the Congress hall in protest, while the Bolshevik delegates stamped their feet, whistled and hurled abuse at them.

“Lenin’s planned provocation – the pre-emptive seizure of power – had worked. By walking out of the Congress, the Mensheviks and SRs undermined all hopes of reaching a compromise with the Bolshevik moderates and of forming a coalition government of all the Soviet parties. The path was now clear for the Bolshevik dictatorship, based on the Soviet, which Lenin had no doubt intended all along. In the charged political atmosphere of the time, it is easy to see why the Mensheviks and SRs acted as they did. But it is equally difficult not to draw the conclusion that, by their actions, they merely played into Lenin’s hands and thus committed political suicide...”¹⁸⁹

Trotsky shouted after the departing delegates: “You are miserable bankrupts, your role is played out; go where you ought to go – into the dustbin of history.” Then he proposed a resolution condemning the “treacherous” attempts of the Mensheviks and SRs to undermine Soviet power. The mass of the remaining delegates (Bolsheviks and Left SRs) fell into the trap and voted for the motion, thereby legitimizing the Bolshevik coup in the name of the Soviet Congress.

At 2 a.m. the ministers in the Winter Palace were arrested and cast into the Peter and Paul fortress. Kamenev announced the arrest of the ministers to the Congress.

“And then Lunacharsky read out Lenin’s Manifesto ‘To All Workers, Soldiers and Peasants’, in which ‘Soviet Power’ was proclaimed, and its

¹⁸⁸ Figes, *op. cit.*, p. 488.

¹⁸⁹ Figes, *op. cit.*, pp. 489-490.

promises on land, bread and peace were announced. The reading of this historic proclamation, which was constantly interrupted by the thunderous cheers of the delegates, played an enormous symbolic role. It provided the illusion that the insurrection was the culmination of a revolution by 'the masses'. When it had been passed, shortly after 5 a.m. on the 26th, the weary but elated delegates emerged from the Tauride Palace. 'The night was yet heavy and chill,' wrote John Reed. 'There was only a faint unearthly pallor stealing over the silent streets, dimming the watch-fires, the shadow of a terrible dawn rising over Russia...'"¹⁹⁰

"We have it on the authority of Trotsky himself," writes Richard Pipes, "that the October 'revolution' in Petrograd was accomplished by 'at most' 25,000-30,000 persons - this in a country of 150 million and a city with 400,000 workers and a garrison of over 200,000 soldiers.

"From the instant he seized dictatorial power Lenin proceeded to uproot all existing institutions so as to clear the ground for a regime subsequently labelled 'totalitarian'. This term has fallen out of favour with Western sociologists and political scientists determined to avoid what they consider the language of the Cold War. It deserves note, however, how quickly it found favour in the Soviet Union the instant the censor's prohibitions against its use had been lifted. This kind of regime, unknown to previous history, imposed the authority of a private but omnipotent 'party' on the state, claiming the right to subject to itself all organized life without exception, and enforcing its will by means of unbounded terror..."¹⁹¹

As just one example of how the Bolsheviks were prepared to destroy even the most important and essential leaders of the nation, we may consider the beating to death by revolutionary soldiers of the Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Army, Nikolai Nikolaievich Dukhonin, on December 3, 1917, in Mogilev. The lynching was watched with indifference by Krylenko, who the previous day had announced that he was taking Dukhonin's place and that Dukhonin was to be sent to Petrograd at the disposal of the Council of People's Commissars. The body was mocked and mutilated, and it was not until two years later that Dukhonin's wife was able to obtain it for burial...

"On the day after the coup," writes Adam Tooze, "Lenin proposed that the Constituent Assembly elections be cancelled altogether. There was no need for such an exercise in 'bourgeois democracy'. But he was overruled by the Bolshevik Executive Committee, which decided that to flout the democratic hopes of the February revolution so openly would do more harm than good."¹⁹²

In the elections to the Constituent Assembly, the turnout was large (60%), and Russians voted in large numbers for the main socialist party of the SRs

¹⁹⁰ Figes, *op. cit.*, p. 492.

¹⁹¹ Pipes, *Russia under the Bolshevik Regime, 1919-1924*, London: Fontana, 1995, p. 499.

¹⁹² Tooze, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

(58%). The Bolsheviks polled only 25%, the Ukrainian Mensheviks - 12%, and other national parties - 4%. In all, socialist or revolutionary parties received 80% of the vote, while the liberal Cadets received 5%.¹⁹³ There is no question about it: the revolution was not imposed upon the Russian people, in their great majority they called it upon themselves...

According to Solzhenitsyn, "More than 80% of the Jewish population of Russia voted' for Zionist parties. Lenin wrote that 550,000 were for Jewish nationalists. 'The majority of the Jewish parties formed a single national list, in accordance with which seven deputies were elected - six Zionists and Gruzenberg. 'The success of the Zionists' was also aided by the [published not long before the elections] Declaration of the English Foreign Minister Balfour [on the creation of a 'national centre' of the Jews in Palestine], 'which was met by the majority of the Russian Jewish population with enthusiasm'."¹⁹⁴ Thus in many cities there were festive manifestations, meetings and religious services.

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The Constituent Assembly was convened in January, 1918. On the first day, "between 3 and 4 a.m. on the 6th, the Chairman of the Assembly and leader of the SRs, Victor Chernov (1873-1952), was trying to pass a law for the abolition of landed property when he was tapped on the shoulder by a sailor, the commander of the Bolshevik Guard. 'I have been instructed to inform you that all those present should leave the Assembly Hall,' the sailor announced, 'because the guard is tired'."¹⁹⁵ The Assembly never reconvened.

So the supreme authority in the Russian republic disappeared because *the guard was tired...* Thus was Russian democracy brought to an abrupt and inglorious end... And with it disappeared the last chance that the Russian people would have to reinstate the monarchy in a peaceful and orderly fashion and avoid the great catastrophe that now overtook them...

March 27 / April 9, 2019.

15. FROM BREST-LITOVSK TO EKATERINBURG

At the end of November, 1917, the Bolsheviks sought to come to terms with the Germans in accordance with their promise (the only one they ever kept) to end the war. The Germans' overwhelming military superiority since the failure of Kerensky's July offensive meant that they could more or less dictate the terms of the peace, which were truly humiliating: the treaty of Brest-Litovsk that was eventually signed in March, 1918 deprived Russia of about a quarter of her territory, a third of her population and a half of her industry... Many Bolsheviks, not to mention patriots in other parties, wanted to reject the terms

¹⁹³ Tooze, *op. cit.*, p. 85; Pipes, *op. cit.*, pp. 5, 149.

¹⁹⁴ Solzhenitsyn, *Dvesti let vmeste* (Two Hundred Years Together), Moscow, 2001, p. 73.

¹⁹⁵ Norman Davies, *Europe*, London: Pimlico, 1996, p. 921.

and fight on, but Lenin claimed that this was just romanticism. The treaty would provide some essential respite for the Bolsheviks while allowing Germany and the Western powers to continue destroying each other. And indeed, with the Germans only a few hours' march from Petrograd, the Bolsheviks had no choice but to kow-tow to the Germans if they were to cling on to power.

The treaty was immediately denounced by Patriarch Tikhon. The Tsar had promised that he would never sign a unilateral truce with Germany – and kept his promise. Lenin promised to take Russia out of the war – and did so on the worst possible terms. His aim was to turn the international war into a civil war fought, not against Germans (of whom Lenin was, after all, a paid agent¹⁹⁶), but against Russians. That war had already begun in the south of the country, where the White armies, having survived a difficult first winter, were gathering their strength.

Everybody was now against the Bolsheviks, even the other socialist parties. The Left SRs abandoned them after Brest-Litovsk. Only the Latvian riflemen propped up the regime until Trotsky started building up the Red Army by the most ruthless methods of forced conscription and blackmail.

This was a great opportunity for the West to snuff out Bolshevism. The US Secretary of State Lansing was certainly ready to intervene; he saw Bolshevism “in precisely the terms that Lenin imagined – as a natural ideological enemy of the US that must be stamped out. What was ‘coming to the surface’ in Russia, Lansing presciently observed, was ‘in many ways more to be dreaded than autocracy’.”¹⁹⁷ And indeed, if the abdication of the Tsar had gladdened the hearts of the liberals, the Bolsheviks' dissolution of the Constituent Assembly must have appalled them. For all those with eyes to see, it was obvious that the Bolsheviks were not only no democrats and no less despotic than the German militarists, but probably much worse.

However, for the Americans to intervene would have meant making peace with Germany first – and the moment for that had passed with America's joining the war on the Allied side. In any case, the American president in 1918, as later in 1945, was blind to the threat posed by Bolshevism... It was one of Wilson's most radical advisors, William Bullitt, who dissuaded him from a decisive intervention against the Bolsheviks. “‘In Russia today,’ Bullitt insisted, ‘there are the rudiments of a government of the people, by the people, and for the people.’ The real threat to democracy lay not in Lenin's *Sovnarkom* (Council of People's Commissars), but in the forces of reactionary imperialism that were alive within the Entente as much as in the Central Powers. ‘Are we going to

¹⁹⁶ Even after smuggling Lenin and his men into Russia in the sealed train, the Germans continued to pay him vast sums of money. Thus a “top secret” document of the Reichsbank in Berlin dated January 8, 1918 informed the Foreign Affairs Commissar that 50 million rubles were to be sent to the Sovnarkom (*Istoki Zla*, p. 39).

¹⁹⁷ Adam Tooze, *The Deluge. The Great War and the Remaking of Global Order*, London: Penguin, 2014, p. 144.

make the world safe for this Russian democracy,' Bullitt demanded, 'by allowing the allies to place [the Japanese] Terauchi in Irkutsk, while Ludendorff establishes himself in Petrograd?' On 4 March 1918, Bullitt's arguments prevailed. The President swung firmly against any Allied intervention, on the advice of Bullitt and Colonel House he renewed the attempt to enlist the Russian revolution in a democratic alliance against reactionary Germany. Wilson appealed directly to the Congress of Soviets, which was meeting on 12 March to hear Lenin's arguments for ratification of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty. Under even more incongruous circumstances than in January, Wilson restated the message of the 14 Points. Ignoring the fact that the Congress of Soviets was standing in for the repressed Constituent Assembly, Wilson expressed 'every sympathy' for Russia's effort to 'weld herself into a democracy'. He demanded that she be left free of 'any sinister or selfish influence, which might interfere with such development'."¹⁹⁸

The Japanese took the hint, and in April countermanded the order to land troops in Vladivostok. In any case, the Congress of Soviets rejected Wilson's overtures. For Lenin had decided that the only chance of survival for the Bolshevik regime lay in an alliance with – or rather, in humiliating subjection to – the German militarists. For even after the signing of the Treaty, the military situation continued to deteriorate from the Bolsheviks' point of view. In the south, the Germans, furious at the Ukrainian Rada's refusal to cultivate all its land so as to feed starving Germans and Austrians, had overthrown it and installed in its place a former tsarist cavalry officer, Skoropadsky. Thus "only six weeks after the ratification of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, under the pressure of economic necessity the German military had unilaterally abandoned any residual claim to be acting as the protector of the legitimate cause of self-determination. Skoropadskyi spoke virtually no Ukrainian and filled his cabinet with conservative Russian nationalists. The real power-holders in Germany seemed to have lost interest in the project of creating a viable Ukrainian nation state. Instead, they appeared to be readying Kiev as the launching pad for a conservative conquest of all of Russia..."¹⁹⁹

This was indeed a great threat to the Bolsheviks, and if the German armies had not begun to falter at precisely that moment on the western front, then a German-sponsored restoration of Tsarism in Russia (let us remember that both the Tsars, Nicholas and Michael, were still alive) was a distinct possibility...

"If these threats were not menacing enough, by May Lenin's regime faced an even more direct threat from the north. Along with the other Baltic states, Finland had declared independence from Russia in December, 1917. In line with Lenin's nationalities policy, Petrograd had given its blessing. But at the same time it directed local Bolsheviks with strong trade union support to seize control of Helsinki. By the last week of January, Finland was plunged into civil war. In early March 1918 as German troops marched into Ukraine, the Kaiser

¹⁹⁸ Tooze, *op. cit.*, p. 145.

¹⁹⁹ Tooze, *op. cit.*, p. 150.

and Ludendorff settled on a plan for a joint German-Finnish force that would first wipe out the Finnish Bolsheviks before continuing the march south towards Petrograd. Icy weather delayed the arrival of General von der Goltz's German expeditionary force until early April. But when they joined up with the Finnish White Guards of General Mannerheim they made up for lost time. By 14 April, after heavy fighting, they had cleared Helsinki of Red Guards. As a token of German appreciation, von der Goltz distributed food aid to the cheering burghers of the city. The civil war ended on 15 May, but the killing did not. Following a reprisal shooting of White prisoners of war by Red Guards, the Finnish-German combat group unleashed a 'White terror' that by early May had claimed the lives of more than 8,000 leftists. At least 11,000 more would die of famine and disease in prison camps. In the spring of 1918 Finland became the stage for the first of a series of savage counter-revolutionary campaigns that were to open a new chapter in twentieth-century political violence.

"In the first week of May 1918, with the terror in full swing, Mannerheim and his German auxiliaries pushed menacingly towards the Russian fortress of Ino guarding the northern gateway to Petrograd. To the Soviets it seemed as though the Kaiser and his entourage had thought better of the compromise they had settled for at Brest. Why after all should Germany allow itself to be constrained by a mere treaty, one furthermore that the Soviets themselves had dismissed as nothing more than a scrap of paper? If Lenin's strategy of balancing between the imperialist powers was to work, he would have to go beyond merely ratifying Brest. After signing the treaty he had tacked away from the Germans, encouraging Trotsky to cultivate close contacts with emissaries of the Entente and the United States in Petrograd and Moscow. Now in early May he embarked on a second desperate gamble. If the Brest-Litovsk Treaty was no longer enough to satisfy German imperialism, Lenin would put more flesh on the bare bones of the peace."²⁰⁰

Lenin proposed large-scale economic concessions in order to buy off the Germans. And the German militarists and big businessmen were interested. But the liberals in the Reichstag were not. "On 18 May after an urgent intercession by Chancellor Hertling, Ludendorff agreed to halt the Finno-German march on Petrograd. As in Japan, civilian political control asserted itself as a basic safety catch against the more radical fantasies of the German imperialists..."²⁰¹

Like another Houdini, Lenin had again escaped the coils of his enemies...

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The Bolsheviks had been very fortunate. At one time the Party had once been so thoroughly penetrated by Tsarist agents as to make its success

²⁰⁰ Tooze, *op. cit.*, pp. 150-151.

²⁰¹ Tooze, *op. cit.*, p. 155.

extraordinarily improbable.²⁰² But Kornilov's attempted coup, and Kerensky's reaction to it, had played into their hands at a critical time. Now "useful idiots" in the German Reichstag and the American White House, together with Lenin's absolute willingness to sacrifice Russian national interests on the blood-stained altar of the revolution, had saved them again.

That the Bolsheviks hung on to power in their first nine months in power was probably owing to three factors. First, they decided very quickly not to nationalize the land that the peasants had seized from the landowners, thus neutralizing the appeal of their main political opponents, the Social Revolutionaries. Secondly, on December 20, 1917 the Cheka, with Felix Dzerzhinsky at its head, was founded in order to defend "the fruits of October" by all means possible, including the most extreme cruelties. And thirdly, in spite of strong opposition within the Party and throughout the country, Lenin moved, as we have seen, to neutralize the external threat coming from the Germans by the most humiliating and drastic concessions...

Nevertheless, no deal with Germany had been done, and Bolshevik Russia remained on the verge of economic and military collapse as the Germans, angry at Bolshevik violations of the truce, continued to threaten Petrograd. The SRs and Mensheviks had been forced out of the government, and were now part of a militant opposition; one SR would make an attempt on Lenin's life. Moreover, the anti-Bolshevik White Russians were forming armies under General Denikin in the south, General Yudenich in the North-West and Admiral Kolchak in Siberia. To cap the Bolsheviks' woes, the Western Allies, fearing that Russia was turning into a colony of Germany, finally decided on intervention on the side of the Whites. The British in particular, fearing that the Germans could use Russian slave-labour and natural resources in order to continue the war at least until the end of 1919²⁰³, sent spies to Moscow and troops to Murmansk, and urged the Americans to intervene in Siberia, as the Japanese were intending to do.

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The most unexpected combatant in the vast conflict that was now unfolding from the Baltic to the Black Sea to the Pacific Ocean was the Czech legion. They were, according to different sources, 38,000 or 50,000 soldiers of the Austro-Hungarian empire who had been taken prisoner by the Tsar and then recruited by Kerensky against the Germans. Their leader was a Czech professor, Tomas Masaryk, who was in exile in America.

²⁰² Alan Bullock writes: "One of the most celebrated Okhrana agents, Roman Malinovski, became Lenin's trusted chief agent in Russia and led the Bolshevik deputies in the Fourth Duma. In 1908-10, four out of five members of the Bolsheviks' St. Petersburg Committee were Okhrana agents. Persistent rumours that Stalin was one as well have never been confirmed..." (*Hitler and Stalin: Parallel Lives*, London: HarperCollins, 1991, p. 435, note)

²⁰³ Tooze, *op. cit.*, p. 156.

“To advocates of intervention in Britain and France,” writes Tooze, “the Czechs seemed like an army parachuted from heaven. However, with an eye to the post-war peace, Masaryk would not act without approval from President Wilson, whose position on the question of Czech independence was notoriously ambiguous. In the 14 Points, in the hope of keeping open the door to a separate peace with Vienna, Wilson had abstained from any mention of the Czech cause. It was not until the ratification of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, and the even more draconian peace imposed on Romania in May 1918, that Wilson was willing openly to endorse national autonomy for the Czechs and their South Slav brethren. Even then, this did not translate into any eagerness to see the Czechs in Siberia used against the Bolsheviks. Wilson was seconded in this reluctance by Masaryk, who continued to profess his sympathy for the ‘revolutionary democracy’ in Russia. It was not until early June, with the drastic British strategic appreciations in hand, that Secretary of State Lansing managed to persuade Masaryk that the Czech Army, rather than withdrawing towards Vladivostok, could do a vital service to the Allies by establishing a blocking position along the Trans-Siberian railway. Coached by Lansing, Masaryk demanded as his quid pro quo a Wilsonian death sentence on the Habsburg Empire.

“The stakes of the intervention in Siberia were growing ever higher. Just as Lansing and Masaryk were bartering the end of the Habsburg dynasty against Czech assistance in Siberia, William Bullitt, Wilson’s radical advisor, was making one last effort to stop the intervention. ‘We are about to make one of the most tragic blunders in the history of mankind,’ Bullitt wrote to Colonel House. The advocates of intervention were typical exponents of imperialism. Following a violent counter-revolutionary intervention, ‘how many years and how many American lives’ would it ‘take to re-establish democracy in Russia?’ There was no question that Bullitt was closer to Wilson in spirit than was Lansing. But whereas less than six weeks earlier, with regard to Japanese intervention, Wilson had boasted of his grip over the Japanese, Lenin’s abrupt embrace of Germany had robbed him of his grip. He could not hold back the momentum for intervention if its principal rationale was anti-German rather than anti-Soviet.

“On 30 June 1918 Britain and France publicly proclaimed their support for Czech national aspirations, citing as their justification the ‘sentiments and high ideals expressed by President Wilson’. Once more, Wilson was entangled in the logic of his own ideological programme and the experience drove him to the point of distraction. Speaking to his cabinet in June 1918 he remarked that the Allied war advocacy of intervention in Russia left him lost for words. ‘They propose such impractical things to be done immediately that he often wondered whether he was crazy or whether they were..’ When a US Treasury official reported after a visit to Europe that the British Prime Minister, Lloyd George, was openly mocking the idea of a peace based on the League of Nations, the President replied: ‘Yes, I know that Europe is still governed by the same reactionary forces which controlled this country until a few years ago. But I am satisfied that if necessary I can reach the peoples of Europe over the

heads of their rulers.' Once more, Wilson's reluctance to intervene was bringing to the fore the politics of 'peace without victory'. But with Germany apparently about to establish control over all of western Russia, Wilson could not uphold the position of moral equivalence that this stance implied. On 6 July he took the initiative. Without prior consultation with either Japan or Britain, Wilson announced that the Allied intervention would be directed through Siberia and would take the form of two contingents of 7,000 men, supplied by the US and Japan. Their mission was neither to take the offensive against Germany nor to overthrow the Bolsheviks, but simply to screen a Czech withdrawal to Vladivostok."²⁰⁴

The British were furious. Lloyd George said that such an intervention would provoke the Bolsheviks without overthrowing them, while Bruce Lockhart called it a "paralytic half-measure, which in the circumstances amounted to a crime". In any case, the Czechs did not withdraw but, as S.A. Smith writes, "seized control of a vast area east of the Volga and helped the SRs to set up governments committed to overthrowing the Bolsheviks, restoring the Constituent Assembly, and resuming war with Germany. The revolt threw the Bolsheviks into panic. Secret orders were given by Lenin to execute the imperial family in Ekaterinburg lest they be liberated by the insurgents."²⁰⁵

The question of the imperial family was critical both for the Whites and for the Reds. For the Whites was: were they going to fight under the banner of Orthodoxy and Tsarism or not? "Some such as General Wrangel of the Volunteer Army were committed monarchists but most favoured some type of military dictatorship, possibly paving the way for a new Constituent Assembly. In an effort to keep political differences at bay, the Whites advanced the principle of 'non-determination', i.e. the postponement of all policy-making until the war was over. What kept them united in the meantime was little more than detestation of the Bolsheviks and outrage at the 'German-Jewish' conspiracy inflicted on the Russian people."²⁰⁶

Tsarism meant for the Whites, not Tsar Nicholas necessarily, who had, of course, abdicated, but the monarchical principle. And to that they never committed themselves unequivocally... However, as long as the Tsar was alive, the possibility of a just and successful war against Bolshevism under the banner of Orthodoxy and Tsarism still existed. That is why the attempts to rescue the Tsar from captivity were not romantic side-shows, but critically important.

And that is why the Bolsheviks decided to kill the Tsar. As Trotsky wrote: "In essence this decision was inevitable. The execution of the tsar and his family was necessary, not simply to scare, horrify and deprive the enemy of hope, but also to shake up our own ranks, show them that there was no going back. If the

²⁰⁴ Tooze, *op. cit.*, pp. 158-159.

²⁰⁵ Smith, *The Russian Revolution. A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press, 2002, pp. 49-51.

²⁰⁶ Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

White Guardists had thought of unfurling the slogan of the kulaks' Tsar, we would not have lasted for two weeks..."²⁰⁷

And so, on the night of July 17, 1918 Blessed Maria Ivanovna, the fool-for-Christ of Diveyevo, began to shout and scream: "The Tsar's been killed with bayonets! Cursed Jews!" That night the tsar and his family and servants were shot in Yekaterinburg.²⁰⁸ As Edward Radzinsky writes, there is a certain "mysticism of history" in the last dwelling-place of the Royal Family: "the monastery whence the first Romanov was called upon to rule, was the Ipatiev; the house where the last ruling Romanov, Nicholas II, parted with his life was the Ipatiev, named after the building's owner, the engineer N.N. Ipatiev."²⁰⁹

The Royal Family had given a wonderful example of truly Christian love, displaying exemplary piety and frugality while doing innumerable acts of mercy, especially during the war. And in their deaths they showed exemplary patience and love for their enemies. Thus Martyr-Great-Princess Olga Nikolayevna wrote from Tobolsk: "Father asks the following message to be given to all those who have remained faithful to him, and to those on whom they may have an influence, that they should not take revenge for him, since he has forgiven everyone and prays for everyone, that they should not take revenge for themselves, and should remember that the evil which is now in the world will be still stronger, but that it is not love that will conquer evil, but only love..."

And in the belongings of the same holy martyr were found these verses by S. Bekhteyev:

*Now as we stand before the gates of death,
Breathe in the lips of us Thy servants
That more than human, supernatural strength
To meekly pray for those that hurt us.*

²⁰⁷ Trotsky, in Edward Radzinsky, *The Last Tsar*, London: Arrow Books, 1993, p. 297.

²⁰⁸ It has been claimed that the murders were Cabbalistic and ritualistic. Strange cabbalistic symbols were supposedly found on the walls of the room where the crime took place which have been deciphered to mean: "Here, by order of the secret powers, the Tsar was offered as a sacrifice for the destruction of the state. Let all peoples be informed of this." See Nikolai Kozlov, *Krestnij Put'* (The Way of the Cross), Moscow, 1993; Enel, "Zhertva" (Sacrifice), *Kolokol'* (Bell), Moscow, 1990, N 5, pp. 17-37, and Michael Orlov, "Ekaterinburgskaia Golgofa" (The Golgotha of Yekaterinburg), *Kolokol'* (Bell), 1990, N 5, pp. 37-55; Lebedev, *op. cit.*, p. 519; Prince Felix Yusupov, *Memuary* (Memoirs), Moscow, 1998, p. 249. However, doubt is cast on the ritual murder hypothesis by the fact that when Sokolov's archive was sold at Sotheby's in 1990, the critical piece of evidence - the symbols on the wall-paper - were missing (Bishop Ambrose of Methone, personal communication, June 4, 2010). Other problems with the ritual murder hypothesis are discussed in Dmitri Lyskov, "U Versii o Ritual'nom ubijstve tsarskoj sem'i est' serieznie problem" (There are Serious Problems with the Hypothesis of the Ritual Murder of the Royal Family", *Vzgliad*, December 8, 2017).

²⁰⁹ Radzinsky, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

The next day, at Alapayevsk, Grand Duchess Elizabeth was killed together with her faithful companion, the Nun Barbara, and several Romanov princes.

Tsar Michael had already been shot in June with his English secretary...

On hearing of the Tsar's murder, Patriarch Tikhon immediately condemned it. He had already angered the government by sending the Tsar his blessing in prison; and he now celebrated a *pannikhida* for him, blessing the archpastors and pastors to do the same. Then, on July 21, he announced in the Kazan cathedral: "We, in obedience to the teaching of the Word of God, must condemn this deed, otherwise the blood of the shot man will fall also on us, and not only on those who committed the crime..." And truly, the murder of the Tsar and his family was not the responsibility of the Bolsheviks only, but of all those who, directly or indirectly, connived at it. As St. John Maximovich explained: "The sin against him and against Russia was perpetrated by all who in one way or another acted against him, who did not oppose, or who merely by sympathizing participated in those events which took place forty years ago. That sin lies upon everyone until it is washed away by sincere repentance..."²¹⁰

However, the people as a whole did not condemn the evil deed. The result was a significant increase in their suffering... For since "he who restrains" the coming of the Antichrist, the Orthodox Autocrat, had been removed, the world entered the era of the collective Antichrist...

March 28 / April 10, 2019.

16. THE LIE OF LIBERALISM

The middle decades of the nineteenth century (approximately 1830-1870) constitute the highwater mark of liberalism in its most naïve, attractive form (as opposed to the far more alarming and extreme varieties that have appeared in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries).

On the one hand, the struggle between the French revolution and the monarchist counter-revolution appeared to have ended in a draw, in the compromise known as constitutional monarchy, which preserved the forms of monarchism and Christianity while recognizing that ultimate sovereignty rested with the people. This uneasy compromise was not destined to last – no

²¹⁰ St. John, "Homily before a Memorial Service for the Tsar-Martyr", in *Man of God: Saint John of Shanghai and San Francisco*, Richfield Springs, N.Y., 1994, p. 133. Archbishop Averky of Syracuse continues the theme: "It is small consolation for us that the Royal Family was killed directly by non-Russian hands, non-Orthodox hands and non-Russian people. Although that is so, the whole Russian people is guilty of this terrible, unprecedented evil deed, insofar as it did not resist or stand against it, but behaved itself in such a way that the evil deed appeared as the natural expression of that mood which by that time had matured in the minds and hearts of the undoubted majority of the unfortunate misguided Russian people, beginning with the 'lowers' and ending with the very 'tops', the upper aristocracy" ("Religiozno-misticheskij Smysl Ubienija Tsarkoj Sem'i" (The Religious-Mystical Meaning of the Killing of the Royal Family), http://www.ispovednik.org/fullest.php?nid=59&binn_rubrik_pl_news=132).

compromise with the revolution can ever last for long – but at least relative peace was attained and the extremes of barbarism excluded. On the other hand, the more extreme offshoots of humanism – what Yuval Noah Harari calls “socialist humanism” (Communism) and “evolutionary humanism” (Fascism) – were still in the stage of theoretical development and had not yet displayed their full, bloody potential. All that would change with the Paris Commune of 1870 and the rise of the New Germany in 1871. But for the time being, Europeans could deceive themselves into thinking that they could be both liberal and Christian, both progressive and civilized.

As the German Jewish poet Heinrich Heine wrote: “Freedom is the new religion, the religion of our time. If Christ is not the god of this new religion, he is nevertheless a high priest of it, and his name gleams beatifically into the hearts of the apostles. But the French are the chosen people of the new religion, their language records the first gospels and dogmas. Paris is the New Jerusalem, the Rhine is the Jordan that separates the consecrated land of freedom from the land of the Philistines.

What all the liberals failed to see was that that the revolution was not a rational human desire for limited, reasonable reform that could be satisfied once those limited reforms had been granted, but an irrational, elemental, *satanic* force whose ultimate aim was simply *total destruction*. The liberals thought that this demon could be tamed by constitutional reform and limited monarchy. As Adolphe Thiers put it, a king who would reign but not rule.

But the vanity of this liberal hope of “constitutional monarchy” and “limited revolution” was demonstrated by Hieromonk Seraphim (Rose): “In the Christian order, politics... was founded upon absolute truth... The principal providential form government took in union with Christian Truth was the Orthodox Christian Empire, wherein sovereignty was vested in a Monarch, and authority proceeded from him downwards through a hierarchical social structure... On the other hand... a politics that rejects Christian Truth must acknowledge 'the people' as sovereign and understand authority as proceeding from below upwards, in a formally 'egalitarian' society. It is clear that one is the perfect inversion of the other; for they are opposed in their conceptions both of the source and of the end of government. Orthodox Christian Monarchy is government divinely established, and directed, ultimately, to the other world, government with the teaching of Christian Truth and the salvation of souls as its profoundest purpose; Nihilist rule - whose most fitting name... is Anarchy - is government established by men, and directed solely to this world, government which has no higher aim than earthly happiness.

"The Liberal view of government, as one might suspect, is an attempt at compromise between these two irreconcilable ideas. In the 19th century this compromise took the form of 'constitutional monarchies', an attempt - again - to wed an old form to a new content; today the chief representatives of the Liberal idea are the 'republics' and 'democracies' of Western Europe and

America, most of which preserve a rather precarious balance between the forces of authority and Revolution, while professing to believe in both.

"It is of course impossible to believe in both with equal sincerity and fervor, and in fact no one has ever done so. Constitutional monarchs like Louis Philippe thought to do so by professing to rule 'by the Grace of God and the will of the people' - a formula whose two terms annul each other, a fact as evident to the Anarchist [Bakunin] as to the Monarchist.

"Now a government is secure insofar as it has God for its foundation and His Will for its guide; but this, surely, is not a description of Liberal government. It is, in the Liberal view, the people who rule, and not God; God Himself is a 'constitutional monarch' Whose authority has been totally delegated to the people, and Whose function is entirely ceremonial. The Liberal believes in God with the same rhetorical fervor with which he believes in Heaven. The government erected upon such a faith is very little different, in principle, from a government erected upon total disbelief; and whatever its present residue of stability, it is clearly pointed in the direction of Anarchy.

"A government must rule by the Grace of God *or* by the will of the people, it must believe in authority *or* in the Revolution; on these issues compromise is possible only in semblance, and only for a time. The Revolution, like the disbelief which has always accompanied it, cannot be stopped halfway; it is a force that, once awakened, will not rest until it ends in a totalitarian Kingdom of this world. The history of the last two centuries has proved nothing if not this. To appease the Revolution and offer it concessions, as Liberals have always done, thereby showing that they have no truth with which to oppose it, is perhaps to postpone, but not to prevent, the attainment of its end. And to oppose the radical Revolution with a Revolution of one's own, whether it be 'conservative', 'non-violent', or 'spiritual', is not merely to reveal ignorance of the full scope and nature of the Revolution of our time, but to concede as well the first principle of the Revolution: that the old truth is no longer true, and a new truth must take its place."²¹¹

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Liberalism as a political theory is a compromise, a compromise between the barbarism of the revolutionaries, the crude and violent men known as the *sans-culottes* (literally, those "without trousers"), and the decency of the liberals themselves, the gentlemen who wore both trousers and top hats, who paid their taxes and their respects to the ideals of Christian civilization. It took the slogan of the revolution, "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity" and sought to give it a Christian gloss. In essence, however, this slogan encapsulates, not merely a political doctrine, but *a new religion*, the religion of liberty.

²¹¹ Rose, *Nihilism*, Platina, Ca.: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood Press, 1994, pp. 28-30.

For, as James Stephens said, "this phrase... is indeed something more than a motto. It is the creed of a religion, less definite than any one of the forms of Christianity, which are in part its rivals, in part its antagonists, and in part its associates, but not on that account the less powerful. It is, on the contrary, one of the most penetrating influences of the day. It shows itself now and then in definite forms, of which Positivism is the one best known to our generation, but its special manifestations give no adequate measure of its depth or width. It penetrates other creeds. It has often transformed Christianity into a system of optimism, which has in some cases retained and in others rejected Christian phraseology. It deeply influences politics and legislation. It has its solemn festivals, its sober adherents, its enthusiasts, its Anabaptists and Antinomians. The Religion of Humanity is perhaps as good a name as could be found for it, if the expression is used in a wider sense than the narrow and technical one associated with it by Comte. It is one of the commonest beliefs of the day that the human race collectively has before it splendid destinies of various kinds, and that the road to them is to be found in the removal of all restraints on human conduct, in the recognition of a substantial equality between all human creatures, and in fraternity or general love. These doctrines are in very many cases held as a religious faith. They are regarded not merely as truths, but as truths for which those who believe in them are ready to do battle, and for the establishment of which they are prepared to sacrifice all merely personal ends. Such, stated of course in the most general terms, is the religion of which I take 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity' to be the creed."

But is Stephens right to suppose that the liberals were as passionate about their religion of liberalism as the revolutionaries about their religion of revolution? Yes, because in essence they are *the same religion*. The French Revolution gave birth *both* to liberalism with its slogan of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity and its Declaration of Human Rights *and* to Jacobinism with its bloody guillotine and regicide. If the earlier phase seems more reasonable and civilized to contemporary westerners than the later, it nevertheless gave birth to the later and cannot be separated from it logically or historically. If "true" liberals stop short in horror at cutting off the heads of kings and aristocrats, this is not because their teaching forbids it. Christianity forbids it – but Christianity is something quite different. If the path to liberty and equality lies through a pool of blood, then so be it. The French liberal Prime Minister Guizot hoped that the July Days could be more like the English revolution of 1649 than the French revolution of 1789. But the English revolution, too, culminated in regicide, and even its less violent and supposedly "glorious" reprise in 1689 involved an armed invasion and a pitched battle. Where is the axiom in liberal theory that will prevent it taking the road to war and barbarism? In truth, it does not exist. Immediately it is accepted that the first step towards liberty and equality involves rebellion against the powers that be, at that moment the potential for violence and barbarism is present. For while the English might deceive themselves that their own revolution was "glorious" and "bloodless", in truth there is no such thing as a glorious and bloodless revolution whose aims are those of liberalism. The degree of violence will vary depending on the

situation, the degree of resistance and the temperament of the liberators; but violence there will undoubtedly be...

The same applies to the concept of the "liberal empire" which the British boasted in having. In India, for example, the British Raj, while more liberal in some respects than its Mughal predecessor, and having some justifications for its rule that were not trivial, was nevertheless *not* liberal. How could it be if it ruled over a vastly more numerous population who did not want to be ruled by foreigners? Only if one nation *asks* to be ruled by another – as, for example, the Russians asked to be ruled by Rurik in 862, or the Georgians asked to be ruled by the Tsar in 1801 – can we entertain the *possibility*, albeit highly unlikely, of a liberal imperium. In India, the fiction of liberal empire was exposed during the Indian Mutiny in 1859 and again during the Amritsar massacre of 1919.

Contrary to popular belief, no ruler in history was more liberal in intent than Tsar Nicholas II. 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."²¹² 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."²¹³

And yet in the face of revolutionary mobs baying for still more freedom, the Tsar was placed before a stark choice: agree to still more freedom, or abandon all pretence at rule. Liberty or imperium – but not both together. In 1917, the Tsar chose to abandon his rule, to abdicate. This was the choice the liberals wanted him to make. And it led to the greatest bloodbath in history...

The truth which all liberals refuse to face is the fallenness of human nature, which cannot be coaxed or bribed into disappearing, but can only be extirpated by true faith, prayer and fasting. Freedom beyond a certain limit is not good for fallen man; it spoils him and leads him further away from God and the truth. The Lord did not say, "Ye shall be free, and that will lead you into truth", but the opposite: "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth will set you free." (John 8.32). The liberals do not know the truth, which is why they are incapable of truly freeing a single human being.

April 4/17, 2019.

²¹² Meyendorff, in Archpriest Lev Lebedev, *Velikorossia* (Great Russia), St. Petersburg, 1999, p. 405.

²¹³ Baring, in Eugene Lyons, *Our Secret Allies*, 1953.

17. THE RENOVATIONIST SCHISM

“By the end of 1922,” writes Niall Ferguson, “a new Russian Socialist Federal Republic extended from the Baltic to the Bering Straits. It, along with the far smaller Byelorussian, Transcaucasian and Far Eastern republics, made up the new Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Apart from a westward strip running from Helsinki down to Kishinev, remarkably little of the old Tsarist edifice had been lost – an astonishing outcome given the weakness of the Bolshevik position in the initial phase of the Revolution, and testament to the effectiveness of their ruthless tactics in the civil war... The 1926 census revealed that slightly less than 53 per cent of the citizens of the Soviet Union regarded themselves as of Russian nationality, though nearly 58 per cent gave Russian as the language they knew best or most often used.

“Some cynics added that the political system had not changed much either; for what was Lenin if not a Red Tsar, wielding absolute power through the Politburo of the Russian Communist Party (which, crucially, maintained direct control over the parties in the other republics)? Yet that was to miss the vast change of ethos that separated the new empire from the old. Though there had been ‘terrible’ Tsars in Russia’s past, the empire established by Lenin and his confederates was the first to be based on terror itself since the short-lived tyranny of the Jacobins in revolutionary France. At the same time, for all the Bolsheviks’ obsession with Western revolutionary models, theirs was a revolution that looked east more than it looked west. Asked to characterize the Russian empire as it re-emerged under Lenin, most Western commentators would not have hesitated to use the word ‘Asiatic’. That was also Trotsky’s view: ‘Our Red Army,’ he argued, ‘constitutes an incomparably more powerful force in the Asiatic terrain of world politics than in European terrain.’ Significantly, ‘Asiatic’ was precisely the word Lenin had used to describe Stalin...”²¹⁴

By 1922, the Bolsheviks had tamed most of their opponents: the politicians had been suppressed, the philosophers – expelled. The only group that remained untamed was *the Orthodox Church*. She had suffered terribly, but the anti-religious organizer S. Krasikov felt that she had been let off lightly: “In October we beat up and destroyed the old state machine. We destroyed the old army, the old law-courts, the schools, the administrative and other institutions. And we created and our creating our own, new ones. This process is difficult... we are making mistakes. However, it turns out that, having overthrown all this landowners’ gendarmerie, etc., we have not destroyed the Church, which constitutes a part of this old state exploitative machine. We have only deprived it of its state content...we have not deprived it of its state power. But still this chunk of the old state landowner-capitalist machine has been preserved, tens of thousands of priests, as well as monks, metropolitans and bishops still exist.

²¹⁴ Ferguson, op. cit., pp. 158-159.

Why has Soviet power acted with such undeserved caution to this chunk of the old machine?"²¹⁵

The problem for the Bolsheviks was: the Church had grown stronger under persecution; physical force had failed. So a more subtle approach was required.

The Bolsheviks believed that the roots of religion lay in poverty and ignorance, so that the elimination of these evils would naturally lead to the withering away of religion. This being the case, they could not believe that religious belief had any deeper roots in the nature of things. Therefore, writes Edward E. Roslof, "the party explicitly rejected 'God-building', an attempt by its own members to develop a 'socialist religion of humanity'. Led by A.V. Lunacharskii, Leonid Krasin, and Bogdanov (A.A. Malinovskii), Bolshevik God-builders maintained that the proletariat would create a non-transcendent, earth-centered religion to complement its formation of the ultimate human society. Only this group within the party 'recognized that religion's power lay in its response to people's psychic needs and argued that a revolutionary movement could not afford to ignore these'."²¹⁶

In May, 1921 Lenin supported a resolution calling for the replacement of the religious world-view by "a harmonious communist scientific system embracing and answering the questions to which the peasants' and workers' masses have hitherto sought answers in religion." At the same time he said that the Bolsheviks must "definitely avoid offending religious sensibilities". The result was the suspension of the "dilettantist" anti-religious commissions (Lenin's phrase) that had existed thereto, and their replacement by a Commission on the Separation of Church and State attached to the Politburo which lasted until 1929 under the Jew Emelian Yaroslavsky and whose aim was clearly the extirpation of all religion. The importance of this Commission in the Bolsheviks' eyes was clearly indicated by the extreme secrecy in which its protocols were shrouded and by the active participation in it, at one time or another, of all the top party leaders. The strategy of the Commission was directly defined, at the beginning by Lenin, and later - by Stalin.²¹⁷

An important aspect of the Commission's strategy was "divide and rule". For while physical methods continued to be applied, the Bolsheviks recognized that the Church could not be defeated by physical assault alone. They needed subtler methods including the recruitment of agents among the clergy and the creation of schisms among them. Thus already in December, 1920, T. Samsonov, head of a secret department of the Cheka, the forerunner of the KGB, wrote to Dzerzhinsky that "communism and religion are mutually exclusive... No machinery can destroy religion except that of the [Cheka]. In its plans to demoralize the church the Cheka has recently focussed its attention

²¹⁵ Krasikov, in *Tserkov' i Revoliutsia* (The Church and Revolution), 1919, N 1, p. 3.

²¹⁶ Roslof, *Red Priests: Renovationism, Russian Orthodoxy, and Revolution, 1905-1946*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002, p. 28.

²¹⁷ S. Savelev, "Bog i komissary" (God and the Commissars), in Bessmertny A.R. and Filatov, S.B., *Religia i Demokratia* (Religion and Democracy), Moscow: Progress, 1993, pp. 164-216.

on the rank and file of the priesthood. Only through them, by long, intensive, and painstaking work, shall we succeed in destroying and dismantling the church completely.”²¹⁸

Samsonov was supported by Lunacharsky, who since the early 1900s had been instrumental in developing a more subtle, less physically confrontational approach to the problem of eradicating religion.²¹⁹ And at the beginning of the 1920s Trotsky said: “Let those popes who are ready to cooperate with us become leaders in the Church and carry out all our instructions, calling on the believers to serve Soviet power”.²²⁰ In a protocol of the secret section of the Cheka Trotsky discussed recruiting clergy with money to report on themselves and others in the Church and to prevent anti-Bolshevik agitation...²²¹

The Bolsheviks were counting on a modernist or “renovationist” faction in the Russian Church to provide them with their “loyal” clergy. Already in the revolutionary years of 1905 and 1917, the renovationists-to-be had reared their heads with a long list of demands for modernist reform of the Church. And in March, 1918, Professor Titlinov, who was later to become one of the main ideologists of renovationism, founded a newspaper in Petrograd which criticized the Patriarch’s anathematization of Soviet power.²²²

Philip Walters writes: “In pre-revolutionary Russia, many groups of intellectuals, philosophers and churchmen began voicing their concern over the plight of the Orthodox Church in its enforced alliance with a reactionary State. It is possible to discover many lines of continuity between the democratic and socialist aims of these men and the aims of the men of the Living Church (also known as Renovationists). There is also a certain amount of personal continuity: for example, the so-called ‘Group of Thirty-Two’ reformist priests, who were active between 1905 and 1907, reappeared after the February Revolution of 1917 as the ‘League of Democratic Orthodox Clergy and Laymen’, a group which stood against the increasing conservatism of the Orthodox Church, and which included among its members one or two men who later became prominent in the Living Church.

“B.V. Titlinov’s book, *Novaia Tserkov’* (*The New Church*), written in 1922, contains an apology for Renovationist ideology. Titlinov declares that the new movement is not a revolution or a reformation, which would imply a definite break with the historical Church, but a reform which remains true to the original spirit of Orthodoxy. The basic task of the Living Church is to ‘do away with those accretions which have been introduced into Orthodox worship during the period of union between the Church and the [Tsarist] State’.

²¹⁸ Quoted in Edward Radzinsky, *Stalin*, New York: Doubleday, 1996.p. 244.

²¹⁹ Richard Pipes, *Russia under the Bolsheviks*, p. 338.

²²⁰ Protopriest Benjamin Zhukov, *Russkaia Pravoslavnaia Tserkov’ na Rodine i za Rubezhom* (The Russian Orthodox Church in the Homeland and Abroad), Paris, 2005, p. 33, footnote 19.

²²¹ Bishop Gregory Grabbe, *Russkaia Tserkov’ pered litsom gospodstvuiushchego zla* (The Russian Church in the Face of Dominant Evil), Jordanville, 1991, p. 42.

²²² Grabbe, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

Titlinov calls for 'priestly creativity' in the liturgy and for its celebration as in the early Church amidst the congregation. There must be ethical and moral reform in society, involving opposition to capitalism. Bishops should be elected from the lower clergy and should be allowed to marry. The Living Church, he claims, accepts the October Revolution as consonant with the aims of Christian truth.

"There are three basic ideological strands in Renovatism: a political strand, concerned with promoting loyalty to the Soviet regime; an organizational strand, concerned with the rights of the lower clergy and with the administration of the Church; and an ethical strand, concerned with making Church services more accessible to the masses and with moral and social reform. The first strand was characteristic of the Living Church movement as a whole...When the Living Church movement split into various factions, the second ideological strand was taken up chiefly by the followers of V.D. Krasnitsky, and the third by the groups which followed Bishop Antonin Granovsky and A.I. Vvedensky."²²³

As the future hieromartyr and Archbishop of Riga John (Pommer) said of the Bolsheviks: "They have put Marx in the dust-jacket of the Gospel and think that the people will accept it instead of the Gospel. They have dressed commissars in sacred vestments and think the Orthodox will accept them as their pastors and follow them. They have substituted the portrait of Lenin for the icon of Christ in the icon-cases and expect the people to come up to kiss it. Ilyich is not at all like Christ. It is impossible to put Marxism in the place of Christianity, whatever vestments the preachers of Marxism put on. The blasphemous utterance of the name of Marx from the church kathedra only emphasizes more vividly the irreconcilable contradiction between Christ and Marx. Here is love incarnate, pouring out its blood for its guilty brethren. There - satanic malice pouring out the blood of brothers guilty of nothing like water."

All three of the major political ideologies of the inter-war years - liberalism, fascism and communism - undermined traditional Christianity in their different ways. However, it was communism that showed the most obsessive hatred of it. Nor was this manifested only in the slaughter of millions of Orthodox Christians and the destruction of thousands of churches. The worst aspect of Soviet rule, as Archimandrite Cyril (Zaitsev) pointed out, was its creation of a Soviet church, a parody and inner corruption of "the one thing necessary" for man's salvation...

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It was the Volga famine of 1921-22, in which about 25 million people were starving, 15 million more were under threat, but - thanks to the American Red

²²³ Walters, "The Living Church 1922-1946", *Religion in Communion Lands*, vol. 6, N 4, Winter, 1978, pp. 235-236.

Cross – not many more than one million actually died²²⁴, that provided the Bolsheviks with their first opportunity to create a major schism in the Church.

Alexander Solzhenitsyn writes: “At the end of the civil war, and as its natural consequence, an unprecedented famine developed in the Volga area... V.G. Korolenko, in his *Letters to Lunacharsky* explains to us Russia’s total, epidemic descent into famine and destitution. It was the result of productivity having become reduced to zero (the working hands were all carrying guns) and the result, also, of the peasants’ utter lack of trust and hope that even the smallest part of the harvest might be left to them...

“There was a direct, immediate chain of cause and effect. The Volga peasants had to eat their children because we were so impatient about putting up with the Constituent Assembly.

“But political genius lies in extracting success even from the people’s ruin. A brilliant idea was born: after all, three billiard balls can be pocketed with one shot. *So now let the priests feed the Volga region!* They are Christians. They are generous!

“1. If they refuse, we will blame the whole famine on them and destroy the Church.

“2. If they agree, we will clean out the churches.

“In either case, we will replenish our stocks of foreign exchange and precious metals.

“Yes, and the action was probably inspired by the actions of the Church itself. As Patriarch Tikhon himself had testified, back in August, 1921, at the beginning of the famine, the Church had created diocesan and all-Russian committees for aid to the starving and had begun to collect funds. But to have permitted any *direct* help to go straight from the Church into the mouths of those who were starving would have undermined the dictatorship of the proletariat. The committees were banned, and the funds they had collected were confiscated and turned over to the state and to the treasury. The Patriarch had also appealed to the Pope in Rome and the Archbishop of Canterbury for assistance – but he was rebuked for this, too, on the grounds that only the Soviet authorities had the right to enter into discussions with foreigners. Yes, indeed. And what was there to be alarmed about? The newspapers wrote that the government itself had all the necessary means to cope with the famine.

“Meanwhile, in the Volga region they were eating grass, the soles of shoes and gnawing at door jambs. And, finally, in December [27], 1921, *Pomgol* – the State Commission for Famine Relief – proposed that the churches help the

²²⁴ N.N. Pokrovsky, S.G. Petrov, *Arkhivny Kremlia: Politburo i Tserkov’ 1922-1925gg.* (The Kremlin Archives: the Politburo and the Church, 1922-1925), Moscow: Rosspen, 1997, vol. 1, p. 7.

starving by donating church valuables – not all, but those not required for liturgical rites. The Patriarch agreed. *Pomgol* issued a directive: all gifts must be strictly voluntary! On February 19, 1922, the Patriarch issued a pastoral letter permitting the parish councils to make gifts of objects that did not have liturgical and ritual significance.

“And in this way matter could again have simply degenerated into a compromise that would have frustrated the will of the proletariat, just as it once had been by the Constituent Assembly, and still was in all the chatterbox European parliaments.

“The thought came in a stroke of lightning! The thought came – and a decree followed! A decree of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee on February 26: *all* valuables were to be requisitioned from the churches – for the starving!”²²⁵

This decree annihilated the voluntary character of the offerings, and put the clergy in the position of accessories to sacrilege. And so on February 28, in order to resolve the perplexities of the faithful, the Patriarch decreed: “... In view of the exceptionally difficult circumstances, we have admitted the possibility of offering church objects that have not been consecrated and are not used in Divine services. Now again we call on the faithful children of the Church to make such offerings, desiring only that these offerings should be the response of a loving heart to the needs of his neighbour, if only they can provide some real help to our suffering brothers. But we cannot approve of the requisitioning from the churches, even as a voluntary offering, of consecrated objects, whose use for purposes other than Divine services is forbidden by the canons of the Ecumenical Church and is punished by Her as sacrilege – laymen by excommunication from Her, and clergy by defrocking (Apostolic Canon 73; Canon 10 of the First-Second Council).”²²⁶

This compromise decree represented the first major concession made by the Church to Soviet power. Thus no less an authority than the holy Elder Nektary of Optina said: “You see now, the patriarch gave the order to give up all valuables from the churches, but they belonged to the Church!”²²⁷

On March 13, the Politburo (Lenin, Molotov, Kamenev and Stalin) accepted Trotsky’s suggestion to form a “completely secret” commission to mastermind the requisitioning. “Moreover,” writes Gregory Ravich, “the commission was ordered ‘to act with maximal cruelty, not stopping at anything, including executions on the spot (that is, without trial and investigation), in cases of necessity summoning special (for which read: punitive) units of the Red Army, dispersing and firing on demonstrations, interrogations with the use of torture’

²²⁵ Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago*, London: Fontana, vol. 1, pp. 342-344.

²²⁶ M.E. Gubonin, *Akty Sviateishago Patriarkha Tikhona*, Moscow, 1994, p. 190.

²²⁷ Matushka Evgenia Grigorievna Rymarenko, “Remembrances of Optina Staretz Hieroschemamonk Nektary”, *Orthodox Life*, vol. 36, N 3, May-June, 1986, p. 39.

and so on. The commission's members were, besides Trotsky, Sapronov, Unschlicht, Medved and Samoilov-Zemliachka. It literally rushed like a hurricane through Russia, sweeping away... everything in its path."²²⁸

Soon clashes with believers who resisted the confiscation of church valuables took place. 1414 such clashes were reported in the official press. The first took place in the town of Shuye on March 15. Five Christians were killed and fifteen wounded, as a result of which two priests and a layman were condemned and executed. In 1921-23, 2,691 married priests, 1,962 monks, 3,447 nuns and an unknown number of laymen were killed on the pretext of resistance to the seizure of church valuables in the country as a whole.²²⁹

On March 19, Lenin sent a long letter to the Politburo marked "Top Secret. No Copies to be Made": "It is precisely now and only now, when there is cannibalism in the famine-stricken areas and hundreds if not thousands of corpses are lying along the roads, that we can (and therefore must) carry out the confiscation of valuables with fanatical and merciless energy and not hesitate to suppress any form of resistance... It is precisely now and only now that the vast majority of the peasant masses will either support us or at least will be unable to give any decisive support to those... who might and would want to try to resist the Soviet decree. We must confiscate in the shortest possible time as much as possible to create for ourselves a fund of several hundred million roubles... Without this fund, government work.. and the defence of our positions in Genoa are absolutely unthinkable... Now our victory over the reactionary clergy is guaranteed... It is precisely now that we must wage a decisive and merciless war with the black-hundreds clergy and crush their opposition with such cruelty that they will not forget it for many decades... The more members of the reactionary bourgeoisie we manage to shoot the better."²³⁰

Concerning the Patriarch, however, Lenin said: "I think it is expedient for us not to touch Patriarch Tikhon himself, although he is undoubtedly heading this entire rebellion of slave-owners." As leader of the campaign, Lenin wanted Trotsky - "but he should at no time and under no circumstances speak out [on this matter] in the press or before the public in any other manner". This was probably, as Richard Pipes suggests, "in order not to feed rumors that the campaign was a Jewish plot against Christianity."²³¹ For Trotsky was a Jew, and

²²⁸ Ravich, "Ograblenij Khristos, ili brillianty dlia diktatury proletariata" (Christ Robbed, or Diamonds for the Dictatorship of the Proletariat), *Chas-Pik* (Rush Hour), N 18, pp. 24-25.

²²⁹ Ravich, *op. cit.*, p. 26. According to another estimate, up to 10,000 believers were killed (V. Petrenko, "Sv. Patriarkh Vserossijskij Tikhon" (His Holiness Patriarch Tikhon of All Russia), *Vestnik I.P.Ts.* (Herald of the True Orthodox Church), Odessa, N 1 (11), 1998, p. 27). Donald Rayfield writes that in the parishes some 2,700 priests and 5,000 monks and nuns perished (*Stalin and his Hangmen*, London: Viking, 2004, p. 122).

²³⁰ Lenin, *Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenij* (Complete Works), vol. 45, p. 666, cited in *Vestnik Russkogo Khristianskogo Dvizhenia* (The Herald of the Russian Christian Movement), N 94, pp. 54-60; Richard Pipes, *The Unknown Lenin*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996, p. 134.

²³¹ Pipes, *The Unknown Lenin*, p. 155; Rayfield, *op. cit.*, pp. 121-122.

the high proportion of Jews in the Bolshevik party had aroused the people's wrath against them.

At a Politburo session the next day Trotsky himself insisted: "The agitation must not be linked with the struggle against religion and the Church, but must be wholly directed towards helping the starving" (point 5); "we must take a decisive initiative in creating a schism among the clergy", taking the priests who speak in support of the measures undertaken by Soviet power "under the protection of state power" (point 6); "our agitation and the agitation of priests loyal to us must in no case be mixed up", but the communists must refer to "the significant part of the clergy" which is speaking against the inhumanity and greed "of the princes of the Church" (point 7); spying is necessary "to guarantee complete knowledge of everything that is happening in various groups of clergy, believers, etc." (point 8); the question must be formulated correctly: "it is best to begin with some church led by a loyal priest, and if such a church does not exist, then with the most significant church after careful preparation" (point 9); "representatives of the loyal clergy must be allowed to be registered in the provinces and in the centre, after the population is well informed that they will have every opportunity to check that not one article of the church heritage goes anywhere else than to help the starving" (point 13). In actual fact, according to a secret instruction all church valuables taken from "the enemies of Soviet power" were to be handed over, not to *Pomgol* or the starving, but to the Economic administration of the OGPU.²³²

In addition to being the head of the requisitioning commission, Trotsky also headed the commission for their monetary realization. And in a submission to this commission he wrote on March 23: "For us it is more important to obtain 50 million in 1922-23 for a certain mass of valuables than to hope for 75 million in 1923-24. The advance of the proletarian revolution in just one of the large countries of Europe will put a stop to the market in valuables... Conclusion: we must proceed as fast as possible..."²³³

However, the Bolsheviks failed to get the money they wanted – the sale of church valuables fetched only about \$1.5 million, or between \$4 and \$10 million according to another estimate.²³⁴

²³² N.A., "Ne bo vragom Tvoim tajnu poviem..." (I will not give Thy Mystery to Thine enemies), *Vestnik Germanskoj Eparkhii Russkoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi za Granitsej* (Herald of the German Diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad), 1992, N 1, p. 17.

²³³ "Mucheniki Shuiskiye", *Vestnik Russkogo Khristianskogo Dvizhenia* (Herald of the Russian Christian Movement), N 170, III-1994, p. 190.

²³⁴ Pipes, *op. cit.*, p. 355. According to Rayfield, "barely four million gold roubles were realized of which one million was spent on famine relief" (*op. cit.*, pp. 120-121). For another estimate, see Volkogonov, *op. cit.*, p. 381. *Rukh* (N 34, November 4, 1996) reports that the Bolsheviks received a "profit" of 2.5 million gold rubles. At the same time, Bukharin admitted to having spent nearly \$14 million on propaganda during the famine (Richard Joseph Cooke, *Religion in Russia and the Soviets*, p. 149). But the Bolsheviks already had the Russian crown jewels, worth one billion gold roubles, and jewels from the Kremlin museum, worth 300 million gold roubles – far more than the market price of the church valuables (Pipes, *op. cit.*, p. 355).

If the Bolsheviks' primary motive in the requisitioning campaign was in fact to destroy the Church, then they failed – the Church emerged even stronger spiritually from her fiery ordeal. The blood of the martyrs was already starting to bring forth fruit as thousands of previously lukewarm Christians returned to the Church.

The struggle between the patriarchate and the Bolsheviks over church valuables gave the renovationists their chance to seize power. It began in Petrograd, a stronghold of renovationism as it had been of Bolshevism. The initiative here came from the Petrograd party chief, Zinoviev, who suggested to Archpriest Alexander Vvedensky that his group would be the appropriate one for an eventual concordat between the State and the Church. Vvedensky then joined Archpriest Vladimir Krasnitsky and Bishop Antonin Granovsky in plotting to overthrow the Patriarch.

The leader of the Patriarchal Church in Petrograd was Metropolitan Benjamin, who had actually come to an agreement with the local authorities concerning the voluntary handing over of church valuables. These authorities evidently did not yet understand that the real purpose of the Soviet decree was not to help the starving but to destroy the Church. Having conferred with the central authorities in Moscow, however, they reneged on their agreement. Then, on March 24, a letter signed by the future renovationist leaders Krasnitsky, Vvedensky, Belkov, Boyarsky and others, appeared in *Petrogradskaia Pravda*. It defended the measures undertaken by the Soviet government and distanced the authors from the rest of the clergy. The latter reacted strongly against this letter at a clergy meeting, during which Vvedensky gave a brazen and threatening speech. However, the metropolitan succeeded in calming passions sufficiently so that it was decided to enter into fresh negotiations with the authorities, the conduct of these negotiations being entrusted to Vvedensky and Boyarsky. They proceeded to win an agreement according to which other articles or money were allowed to be substituted for the church valuables...

On March 22-23 Trotsky wrote: "The arrest of the Synod and the Patriarch is necessary, but not now, but in about 10-15 days... In the course of this week we must arrange a trial of priests for stealing church valuables (there are quite a few facts)... The press must adopt a frenzied tone, giving [evidence of] a heap of priestly attempts in Smolensk, Petrograd, etc."²³⁵

On April 1 the Patriarch was placed under house arrest. Then he was called as a witness for the defence in the trial of 54 Moscow Christians, which began on April 26. In an effort to save the accused, he took the whole responsibility upon himself. And in one of the exchanges the essence of the relationship between the Church and the State was expressed.

The Presiding Judge: "Do you consider the state's laws obligatory or not?"

²³⁵ Monk Benjamin (Gomareteli), *Letopis'*, p. 67.

The Patriarch: "Yes, I recognize them, *to the extent that they do not contradict the rules of piety.*"

Solzhenitsyn comments: "Oh, if only everyone had answered just that way! Our whole history would have been different."²³⁶

And yet the Patriarch's words constituted a distinct weakening of his position vis-à-vis Soviet power when compared with the absolutely irreconcilable position he and the Council had adopted in 1917-18; for they implied that Soviet power was legitimate, the power of Caesar rather than that of the Antichrist... The first instinct of the Russian Church in the face of Soviet power, as manifested in the 1917-18 Council, has never been extinguished among Russian Christians. It continued to manifest itself both at home and abroad (for example, in the First All-Emigration Council of the Russian Church Abroad in 1921), both in the early and the later decades of Soviet power (for example, among the "passportless" Christians of the Catacomb Church). However, it was very soon tempered by the realisation that such outright rejection of Soviet power on a large scale could be sustained only by *war* - and after the defeat of the White Armies in the Civil War there were no armies left to carry on the fight against the Bolsheviks.

Therefore from the early 1920s a new attitude towards Soviet power began to evolve among the Tikhonite Christians: loyalty towards it as a political institution ("for all power is from God"), and acceptance of such of its laws as could be interpreted in favour of the Church (for example, the law on the separation of Church and State), combined with rejection of its atheistic world-view (large parts of which the renovationists, by contrast, accepted). In essence, this new attitude involved accepting that the Soviet State was not Antichrist, as the Local Council of 1917-18 and the Russian Church Abroad had in effect declared, but Caesar, no worse in principle than the Caesars of Ancient Rome, to whom the things belonging to Caesar were due. This attitude involved the assertion that it was possible, in the Soviet Union as in Ancient Rome, to draw a clear line between politics and religion.

But in practice, even more than in theory, this line proved very hard to draw. For to the early Bolsheviks there was no such dividing line; for them, *everything* was ideological, everything had to be in accord with their ideology, there could be no room for disagreement, no private spheres into which the state did not pry. Bolshevism demanded the *totality* of human life; they were true totalitarians. Thus unlike most of the Roman emperors, who allowed the Christians to order their own lives so long as they showed loyalty to the state (which the Christians were eager to do), the Bolsheviks insisted in imposing their own ways upon the Christians in every sphere: in family life (civil marriage only, divorce on demand, children spying on parents), in education (compulsory Marxism), in economics (dekulakization, collectivization), in

²³⁶ Gubonin, op. cit., p. 198; Solzhenitsyn, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 348.

military service (the oath of allegiance to Lenin), in science (Lysenkoism), in art (socialist realism), and in religion (the requisitioning of valuables, registration, commemoration of the authorities at the Liturgy, reporting of confessions by the priests). Resistance to any one of these demands was counted as "anti-Soviet behaviour", i.e. *political* disloyalty. Therefore it was no use protesting one's political loyalty to the regime if one refused to accept just one of these demands. According to the Soviet interpretation of the word: "Whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one has become guilty of all of it" (James 2.10), such a person was an *enemy of the people*.

In view of this, it is not surprising that many Christians came to the conclusion that there was no gain, and from a moral point of view much to be lost, in accepting a regime that made such impossible demands, since the penalty would be the same whether one asserted one's loyalty to it or not. And if this meant living as an outlaw, so be it... Nevertheless, the path of total rejection of the Soviet state required enormous courage, strength and self-sacrifice, not only for oneself but also (which was more difficult) for one's family or flock. It is therefore not surprising that, already during the Civil War, the Church began to soften her anti-Soviet rhetoric and try once more to draw the line between politics and religion. This is what Patriarch Tikhon tried to do in the later years of his patriarchate - with, it must be said, only mixed results. Thus his decision to allow some, but not all of the Church's valuables to be requisitioned by the Bolsheviks in 1922 not only did not bring help to the starving of the Volga, as was the intention, but led to many clashes between believers and the authorities and many deaths of believers.

The decision to negotiate and compromise with the Bolsheviks only brought confusion and division to the Church. Thus on the right wing of the Church there were those, like Archbishop Theodore of Volokolamsk, who thought that the patriarch had already gone too far; while on the left wing there were those, like Archbishop Hilarion of Verey, who wanted to go further. The basic problem was that the compromises were always one-sided; the Bolsheviks always took and never gave; their aim was not peaceful co-existence, but the complete conquest of the Church. And so, as a "Letter from Russia" put it many years later: "It's no use our manoeuvring: there's nothing for us to preserve except the things that are God's. For the things that are Caesar's (if one should really consider it to be Caesar and not Pharaoh) are always associated with the quenching of the Spirit..."²³⁷

However, the Patriarchal Church remained Orthodox under Patriarch Tikhon and his successor, Metropolitan Peter, for two major reasons: first, because the leaders of the Church did not sacrifice the lives of their fellow Christians for the sake of their own security or the security of the Church organisation; and secondly, because, while the Soviet regime was recognised to be, in effect, Caesar rather than Pharaoh, no further concessions were made with regard to the communist *ideology*.

²³⁷ *Russkaia Mysl'* (Russian Thought), N 3143, March 17, 1977.

Early in May, the Patriarch was placed under house arrest. According to his will, the temporary administration of the Church should now have passed to Metropolitan Cyril of Kazan. But since he was in prison, the next hierarch according to the will, Metropolitan Agathangel of Yaroslavl, should have taken over.

On May 12, accompanied by two chekists, the renovationist priests Vvedensky, Belkov and Kalinovsky (who, as the Patriarch pointed out, had but a short time before renounced holy orders), visited the Patriarch at the Troitsky *podvorye*, where he was confined, and told him that they had obtained permission for the convening of a Council, but on condition that he resigned from the patriarchal throne.

The Patriarch replied that the patriarchy weighed on him like a cross. "I would joyfully accept it if the coming Council removed the patriarchy from me, but now I am handing power to one of the oldest hierarchs and will renounce the administration of the Church." The Patriarch rejected the candidacies of some modernist bishops and appointed Metropolitan Agathangel as his deputy.²³⁸

"However," writes Krivova, "the authorities did not allow Metropolitan Agathangel to leave for Moscow. Already on May 5, 1922 V.D. Krasnitsky had arrived at the Tolga monastery where the metropolitan was living, and demanded that he sign the appeal of the so-called 'Initiative Group of Clergy'. The metropolitan refused to sign the appeal. Then, two days later, his signature declaring that he would not leave was taken from him, and a guard was placed outside his cell and a search was carried out.

"After Agathangel there remained in Moscow only three of the members of the Holy Synod and HCA, but they were not empowered to take any kind of decision that would be obligatory for the whole Church. Thus the path to the seizure of Church power by the renovationists was open. Using Tikhon's temporary concession and the impossibility of Metropolitan Agathangel's taking the place of the Patriarch, the renovationists declared that Tikhon had been removed and in an arbitrary manner seized power. Arriving on May 15, 1922 at a reception with M.I. Kalinin, they understood that Metropolitan Agathangel's departure to Moscow was hardly possible. The next day the renovationists sent a letter to M.I. Kalinin, in which they declared that 'in view of Patriarch Tikhon's removal of himself from power, a Higher Church Administration is formed, which from May 2 (15) has taken upon itself the conducting of Church affairs in Russia."²³⁹

²³⁸ Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

²³⁹ N.A. Krivova, *Vlast' i Tserkov' v 1922-1925gg.* (The Authorities and the Church in 1922-1925), Moscow, 1997.

On May 18 the renovationists again presented the Patriarch with a written statement complaining that in consequence of the existing circumstances, Church business remained unattended to. They demanded that he entrust his chancery to them until Metropolitan Agathangel's arrival in Moscow, in order that they might properly classify the correspondence received. The Patriarch yielded, and inscribed their petition with the following resolution: "The undersigned persons are ordered to take over and transmit to the Right Reverend Metropolitan Agathangel, upon his arrival in Moscow, all the Synodical business with the assistance of secretary Numerov."²⁴⁰

The next day, the Patriarch was transferred to the Donskoj monastery, and the renovationists took over his residence in the Troitsky *podvorye*.

However, the renovationists and communists still had to neutralize the threat posed by Metropolitan Agathangel. So Krasnitsky was sent to Yaroslavl and placed a number of conditions before the Patriarch's lawful deputy that amounted to his placing himself in complete dependence on the renovationists. When the metropolitan rejected these conditions, the renovationists spread the rumour that he "was not hurrying" to fulfil the Patriarch's command.

On June 5/18, "Metropolitan Agathangel unexpectedly addressed the Russian Church with an appeal, which was printed by some underground printing-press and very quickly distributed in Moscow and the other cities...

"E.A. Tuchkov was taken completely by surprise. The HCA was also shocked. Metropolitan Agathangel was immediately arrested and sent into exile, to the Narymsk region. However, the appearance of this appeal showed that the unprincipled line of V.D. Krasnitsky was meeting with a sharp rejection in ecclesiastical circles..."²⁴¹

Agathangel was arrested for writing that the renovationists had "declared their intention to revise the dogmas and moral teaching of our Orthodox Faith, the sacred canons of the Holy Ecumenical Councils and the Orthodox Typicon of Divine services given by the great ascetics of Christian piety", and gave the bishops the right to administer their dioceses independently until the restoration of a canonical Higher Church Authority.²⁴²

The metropolitan's reference to the renovationists' revising the dogmas and moral teachings of the Faith, as well as the canons and services, was correct. Thus in its "Reform Programme", the renovationists called for "the re-establishment of the evangelical teaching of the first Christians, with a deliberate development of the teaching concerning the human nature of Christ the Saviour and a struggle with the scholastic corruption of Christianity." And

²⁴⁰ J.S. Curtiss, *The Russian Church and the Soviet State*, Boston: Little, Brown, 1953, pp. 159-160; Gubonin, *op. cit.*, p. 290.

²⁴¹ Levitin, A. and Shavrov, V. in Gubonin, *op. cit.*, p. 813.

²⁴² Gubonin, *op. cit.*, pp. 219-221.

one of the subsections of the programme bore the title: "The terrible judgement, paradise and hell as moral concepts".²⁴³

Fr. Basil Redechkin writes that the renovationists "united the leaders of various rationalist tendencies. Therefore various voices were heard: some denied the Holy Icons, others - the sign of the Cross, others - the Holy Relics, others denied all the sacraments except baptism, while yet others tried to overthrow the veneration of our Most Holy Lady the Mother of God and even the Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ. They said about the All-holy Virgin Mary: 'She is a simple woman, just like all women, and her son was, of course, only a man, and not God!' And the 'livers' created a completely atheist 'symbol of faith' to please the God-fighting, antichristian authorities. It was published in the journal *Zhivaia Tserkov'* in 1925, and was composed of thirty articles. This 'symbol' began with the words: '1. I believe in one power that created the world, the heavens and the earth, the visible and invisible worlds. 2. In one catholic humanity and in it (in the man) Jesus Christ.'

"And it is completely understandable that after this they should declare that the Canonical rules by which the Holy Church has been guided for two thousand years: the rules of the Holy Apostles, of the Ecumenical and Local Councils and of the Holy Fathers - 'have become infinitely outdated' and have 'repealed' themselves... So the 'liver-renovationists', wanting to walk 'in step with the times',... introduced a married episcopate, allowed widowed priests to marry a second and even a third time, and took other liberties."²⁴⁴

The focus now shifts back to Petrograd. On May 25 Vvedensky appeared before Metropolitan Benjamin with a document signed by the renovationist Bishop Leonid, which said that he, "in accordance with the resolution of Patriarch Tikhon, is a member of the HCA and is sent to Petrograd and other cities on Church business". The metropolitan, not seeing the signature of the Patriarch, refused to accept it.

The next day, at the Sunday Liturgy, an Epistle from the metropolitan was read in all the churches of Petrograd, in which he anathematised the rebellious priest Alexander Vvedensky and Eugene Belkov and also those with them. "According to the teaching of the Church," it said in the Epistle, "a diocese that is for some reason deprived of the possibility of receiving instructions from its Patriarch, is ruled by its bishops, who remains in spiritual union with the Patriarch... The bishop of Petrograd is the Metropolitan of Petrograd. By obeying him, you will be in union with him and will be in the Church."

The next day chekists arrived at the residence of the metropolitan and arrested him. Meanwhile, Vvedensky took over the chancellery. Without

²⁴³ *Zhivaia Tserkov'*, N 10, October 1, 1922; Zhukov, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

²⁴⁴ Redechkin, "Pojmi vremia: Iskazhenie Pravoslavnogo Uchenia Moskovskoj Patriarkhii" (Understand the Time: The Distortion of Orthodox Teaching by the Moscow Patriarchate), Moscow, 1992, *samizdat*, p. 5.

turning a hair, he went up to the hierarch for a blessing. “Fr. Alexander,” said the metropolitan peacefully, “you and I are not in the Garden of Gethsemane”. And without blessing the schismatic, he calmly listened to the statement about his arrest.²⁴⁵

On May 29, the administration of the diocese passed to his vicar, Bishop Alexis (Simansky) of Yamburg, the future false-patriarch.

On the same day, Metropolitan Benjamin was brought to trial together with 86 others. They were accused of entering into negotiations with Soviet power with the aim of annulling or softening the decree on the requisitioning of church valuables, and that they were “in a plot with the worldwide bourgeoisie and the Russian emigration”. He was given many chances to save himself in a dishonourable manner. Thus even before the trial Vvedensky and the Petrograd commandant Bakaiev had come to him and given him the choice: either revoke the anathema against Vvedensky or face trial. But the metropolitan refused to revoke the anathema. (His deputy, Bishop Alexis, having recognised the HCA to be lawful, did revoke the anathema, on June 4. According to A. Levitin and V. Shavrov, he did this because the chekists threatened him that if he disobeyed Metropolitan Benjamin would be shot.²⁴⁶) Again, during the trial, the judges hinted that he save himself by naming “the authors” of the proposition he had sent to *Pomgol*. The metropolitan again refused, saying: “I alone did it – I thought everything over; I formulated, wrote and sent the proposition myself. I did not allow anybody else to participate in deciding matters entrusted to me as archpastor.”

The renovationists Krasnitsky and Vvedensky testified against Metropolitan Benjamin during the trial, which was staged in what had been the Club of the Nobility. Three witnesses came forward to defend the metropolitan. They were immediately arrested, so no-one else came forward. On July 5, the metropolitan was convicted of “organizing a counter-revolutionary group having set himself the aim of struggling with Soviet power”. Ten people were condemned to be shot; the others were given prison sentences of varying lengths. The metropolitan himself was shot on the night of August 12 to 13, 1922.

In a letter written from prison, the metropolitan expressed the essence of what was to become the position of the Catacomb Church a few years later: “The reasonings of some, perhaps outstanding pastors are strange... – ‘we must preserve the living forces’, that is, for their sake, we must abandon everything! Then what is Christ for? It is not the Platonovs, the Chuprins, the Benjamins and their like who save the Church, but Christ. That point on which they are trying to stand is destruction for the Church; it is not right to sacrifice the Church for oneself...”

²⁴⁵ Protopriest Vladislav Tsy-pin, *Istoria Russkoj Tserkvi, 1917-1918*, chapter 2; Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 76.

²⁴⁶ Levitin and Shavrov, op. cit.; Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 77.

The renovationist schismatics continued to gain ground throughout 1922. On June 16, three important hierarchs joined them, declaring: "We, Metropolitan Sergius [Stragorodsky] of Vladimir and Shuya, Archbishop Eudocimus of Nizhegorod and Arzamas and Archbishop Seraphim of Kostroma and Galich, having studied the platform of the Temporary Church Administration and the canonical lawfulness of its administration, consider it the only lawful, canonical, higher church authority, and all the instructions issuing from it we consider to be completely lawful and obligatory. We call on all true pastors and believing sons of the Church, both those entrusted to us and those belonging to other dioceses, to follow our example."²⁴⁷

Metropolitan John (Snychev) wrote: "We do not have the right to hide from history those sad and staggering apostasies from the unity of the Russian Church which took place on a mass scale after the publication in the journal 'Living Church' of the epistle-appeals of the three well-known hierarchs. Many of the hierarchs and clergy reasoned naively. Thus: 'If the wise Sergius has recognized the possibility of submitting to the Higher Church Administration, then it is clear that we, too, must follow his example.'"²⁴⁸

The GPU gave valuable aid to the renovationists, arresting and sending into exile all the clergy who remained faithful to the Patriarch. Also, they handed over to them nearly two-thirds of the functioning churches in the Russian republic and Central Asia, as well as many thousands in the Ukraine, Belorussia and Siberia. However, these figures exaggerated the true strength of the renovationists, in that their churches were almost empty while the patriarchal churches were filled to overflowing.

In April, the government announced that the Patriarch was about to go on trial on charges arising from the trials of the 54 in Moscow and of Metropolitan Benjamin in Petrograd the previous year. At about this time, international opinion began to make itself felt in support of Patriarch Tikhon. On April 10, 1923 G.V. Chicherin reported to Stalin that the Anglo-Saxons were as interested in Orthodoxy as they were in Catholicism, and that the execution of the Patriarch would be disadvantageous in all respects.²⁴⁹ On April 21, Dzerzhinsky proposed to the Politburo that the Tikhon's trial be postponed. The Politburo agreed and backed down.²⁵⁰ The trial was postponed to June 17. On May 8, the British foreign minister Lord Curzon issued an ultimatum to the Soviets, demanding, among other things, a cessation of religious persecution and the liberation of Patriarch Tikhon, otherwise there would be a new intervention against the USSR. This was supported by an outcry in the British

²⁴⁷ Gubonin, *op. cit.*, pp. 218-219.

²⁴⁸ Snychev, "Mitropolit Sergij i Obnovlenneskij Raskol" (Metropolitan Sergius and the Renovationist Schism), in M.B. Danilushkin, *Istoria Russkoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi* (A History of the Russian Orthodox Church), vol. I, St. Petersburg, 1997, p. 182.

²⁴⁹ "G. Chicherin and L. Trotsky told the Petrograd and Moscow Soviets: 'Do nothing and say nothing that could close the path to a peaceful resolution of the conflict with England'" (S. Bychkov, *Moskovskij Komsomolets* (Muscovite Komsomolian), May 16, 1990).

²⁵⁰ Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, p. 94.

and American press. The conflict was resolved by the end of June, when the Patriarch was released from prison.²⁵¹

One of the reasons why the Soviets postponed the trial of the Patriarch was their desire that the renovationists condemn him first. They were not disappointed... At their second All-Russian council, which met in Moscow on April 29, 1923, the renovationists first heaped praises on the revolution, which they called a "Christian creation", on the Soviet government, which they said was the first government in the world that strove to realize "the ideal of the Kingdom of God". And they were no less generous to Lenin: "First of all, we must turn with words of deep gratitude to the government of our state, which, in spite of the slanders of foreign informers, does not persecute the Church... The word of gratitude and welcome must be expressed by us to the only state in the world which performs, without believing, that work of love which we, believers, do not fulfil, and also to the leader of Soviet Russia, V.I. Lenin, who must be dear also to church people..."

Patriarch Tikhon was tried *in absentia*, and deprived both of his orders and of his monasticism, being called thenceforth "layman Basil Bellavin". Then the restoration of the patriarchate was called a counter-revolutionary act; so it was abolished and replaced by a synod. The council proceeded to decree: "Church people must not see in Soviet power the power of the Antichrist. On the contrary, the Council draws their attention to the fact that Soviet power, alone in the whole world, is able by state methods to realize the ideals of the Kingdom of God. Therefore every believing churchman must not only be an honourable citizen, but also must struggle in every way, together with Soviet power, for the realization on earth of the ideals of the Kingdom of God."²⁵²

Some further resolutions were adopted allowing white clergy to become bishops and priests to remarry, and introducing the Gregorian calendar.

When the decisions of the council were taken to the Patriarch for his signature, he calmly wrote: "Read. The council did not summon me, I do not know its competence and for that reason cannot consider its decision lawful."²⁵³ Forty-six "bishops" (out of the seventy-three who attended the council) signed the decree condemning the Patriarch. One of them, Joasaph (Shishkovsky), told Fr. Basil Vinogradov how this happened. "The leaders of the council Krasnitsky and Vvedensky gathered all those present at the 'council' of bishops for this meeting. When several direct and indirect objections to these leaders' proposal to defrock the Patriarch began to be expressed, Krasnitsky quite openly declared to all present: 'He who does not immediately sign this resolution will only leave this room straight for the prison.' The terrorized bishops (including Joasaph himself) did not find the courage to resist in the face of the threat of a new prison sentence and forced labour in a concentration camp and... signed,

²⁵¹ Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

²⁵² Zhukov, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

²⁵³ Gubonin, *op. cit.*, p. 224.

although almost all were against the resolution. None of the church people had any doubt that the 'council's' sentence was the direct work of Soviet power and that now a criminal trial and bloody reprisal against the Patriarch was to be expected at any time."²⁵⁴

However, already at this 1923 council the renovationist movement was beginning to fall apart. The 560 deputies were divided into four groups: the supporters of Krasnitsky (the Living Church), of Vvedensky (the Ancient-Apostolic Church), of Antonin (Church Regeneration) and of Patriarch Tikhon. When Krasnitsky tried to take control of the council and reject any coalition between his group and the other renovationists, a schism amidst the schismatics was avoided only by strong behind-the-scenes pressure on his supporters from the communists, who succeeded in regrouping them under a "Holy Synod" led by Metropolitan Eudocimus.²⁵⁵

At the beginning of June, the Patriarch fell ill, and was transferred from the Donskoy monastery to the Taganka prison. There he was able to receive only official Soviet newspaper accounts of the Church struggle, which greatly exaggerated the successes of the renovationists. But the newspapers said otherwise - and the Patriarch was deceived. As he said: "Reading the newspapers in prison, with each passing day I was more and more horrified that the renovationists were taking the Church into their hands. If I had known that their successes were so meagre and that the people was not following them, I would never have come out of prison."

Feeling that his presence at the helm of the Church was absolutely necessary, and that of his two enemies, the renovationists and the communists, the former were the more dangerous, the Patriarch decided to make concessions to the government in order to be released. Thus on June 16 and again on July 1 he issued his famous "confession", in which he repented of all his anti-Soviet acts (including the anathema against the Bolsheviks), and "finally and decisively" set himself apart "from both the foreign and the internal monarchist White-guard counter-revolutionaries".²⁵⁶

The Patriarch's position was extremely difficult. Nevertheless, his "repentance" was undoubtedly a blow to the Church. Thus in a report dated December 12, 1923 to his superior, T.D. Deribas, Tuchkov wrote: "The second

²⁵⁴ Cited in Archbishop Nikon (Rklitsky), *Zhizneopisanie Blazhenneishago Antonia, mitropolita Kievskogo i Galitskogo*, vol. VI, p. 114. The council also consecrated the married Protopriest John (Kedrovsky) as Metropolitan of the Aleutian Islands and North America. On returning to America, he conducted a stubborn struggle against Metropolitan Plato, drawing 115 churches to his side (Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, p. 96).

²⁵⁵ Savelev, *op. cit.*, p. 195.

²⁵⁶ Gubonin, *op. cit.*, pp. 280, 286. There is some evidence that Patriarch Tikhon's release from prison was linked with the fact that in June, 1923 the Bolsheviks finally accepted that Lenin was too ill to return to politics. A. Rykov took over from Lenin as president of the Sovnarkom, and on entering office immediately received the Patriarch and promised to reduce the pressure on religious organizations, reduce the taxes on the clergy and churches and release some hierarchs from prison - a promise that he kept. See Latyshev, *op. cit.*

significant moment in the work of the Section was the accomplishment of the 'repentance of Tikhon', which as you are probably aware, made an extremely unfavourable impression on the Russian monarchists and the right-leaning elements in general, who had seen in Tikhon, up to this time, an adamant anti-Soviet figure."²⁵⁷

We see a striking parallel between the destinies and decisions of Patriarch Tikhon and Tsar Nicholas here. Both were peacemakers, ready to lay down their own lives for the sake of their flock. Both, in the interests of saving lives, made fateful decisions which they came bitterly to regret – the Tsar his decision to abdicate the throne, and the Patriarch his decision to “repent” of his anti-Soviet behaviour. But in spite of these mistakes, both were granted the crown of life from the Lord, Who looks on the heart and intentions of men, forgiving them their unintended consequences...

Some have seen a less flattering parallel between Patriarch Tikhon and his successor, Metropolitan Sergius. We shall discuss Sergius in detail later. Suffice it to say at this point that, whatever compromises Patriarch Tikhon made, he never made them to spare himself, but only others, and he never betrayed his colleagues to death by calling them “counter-revolutionaries”...

Moreover, the Patriarch managed to write to Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky), as it were replying to the perplexities elicited by his words on “walling himself off” from the “counter-revolution” of the Church Abroad: “I wrote this for the authorities, but you sit and work”.²⁵⁸ In other words, the Church was not to take his words seriously...

²⁵⁷ Archpriest Alexander Lebedev, “[paradosis] Who is Really Behind the Schisms?” orthodox-tradition@yahooogroups.com, March 2, 2006. The second achievement Tuchkov claimed for himself as director of the 6th Section of the Secret Department of the OGPU was the splitting up of the Church and a decline in faith among the young. Here he exaggerates, failing to take into account the strengthening of the patriarchate’s position vis-à-vis the other groups since July: “The goal which had been placed before the Section at the end of 1922 to move the Orthodox Church from its moribund and anti-Soviet position and to deprive it of that strength which it had held prior to that time, has been completely accomplished by the Seciton. The Orthodox Church as a single apparatus does not exist any more at the present time; it has been broken into several separate groups which have their separate hierarchies, and which are found in constant enmity to one another and which are disposed to be completely irreconcilable to one another.

“At the present time there are four such groups that are fully formed and which have their own ecclesiastical apparatus, namely the Tikhonites, the Renovationists, the Renascenists, and the Working Church. All of these groups have been placed in such a state, that willingly or unwillingly they are bound to constantly be at war with one another and to curry favour from the organs of civil authority. The enmity between these groups deepens from time to time and more and more, and concurrently the authority of the servers of the cult is being lost, and from this, among the faithful, and especially among the youth, is created an extremely passive, and at time inimical attitude even to the Church itself, on the grounds of which there begins to develop the growth of atheism.

“The splitting up of the Orthodox Church into the above-indicated groups is the fulfilment of only one part of the work which was completed regarding the Orthodox churchmen in 1923.”

²⁵⁸ *Izvestia*, June 12, 1924; Lebedev, *Velikorossia*, p. 577.

In defence of the patriarch's "confession, Archbishop Nikon (Rklitsky) pointed out: "1) it did not annul the anathema in the name of the Russian Orthodox Church on Soviet power, 2) he did not declare himself a friend of Soviet power and its co-worker, 3) it did not invoke God's blessing on it, 4) it did not call on the Russian people to obey this power as God-established, 5) it did not condemn the movement for the re-establishment of the monarchy in Russia, and 6) it did not condemn the Whites' struggle to overthrow Soviet power. By his declaration Patriarch Tikhon only pointed to the way of acting which he had chosen for the further defence and preservation of the Russian Orthodox Church. How expedient this way of acting was is another question,... but in any case Patriarch Tikhon did not cross that boundary which had to separate him, as head of the Russian Orthodox Church, from the godless power." ²⁵⁹

April 6/19, 2019.

²⁵⁹ Rklitsky, *op. cit.*, pp. 151-152.

18. THE RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD

It is sometimes said that the Jews before Christ did not believe in the resurrection from the dead. That is not true. We read in the Gospels and in Acts that whereas the Pharisees believed in the resurrection, the Sadducees did not. Thus the Lord rebuked the Sadducees for their unbelief, saying: "You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven. But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living" (Matthew 22.29-31).

And there are other scriptural testimonies from the Old Testament. Thus in II Maccabees we read: "Under the tunic of each of the dead [after a major battle] they found sacred tokens of the idols of Jamnia, which the law forbids the Jews to wear. And it became clear to all that this was the reason these men had fallen... Judas... took a collection, man by man, to the amount of two thousand drachmas of silver, and sent it to Jerusalem to provide for a sin-offering. In doing so he acted very well and honourably, taking account of the resurrection. For if he were not expecting that those who had fallen would rise again, it would have been superfluous and foolish to pray for the dead. But if he was looking for the splendid reward that is laid up for those who fall asleep in godliness, it was a holy and pious thought." (12.40-45). Thus the making of sin-offerings for the dead is justified on the grounds that there will be a resurrection from the dead, and there would be no point in making offerings for the truly dead, who never rise again.

Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazarus, clearly believed in the resurrection. Thus when Martha told the Lord that their brother would not have died if He had been there, and affirmed her belief that even now He could raise him from the dead, the Lord did not disappoint her, but first told her: "Your brother will rise again", as if to say: "You do not need Me to raise him now. After all, you know that there will be the resurrection at the end of the world". To which she replied: "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." So she had true faith in the resurrection. But at this, the critical transition from the Old Testament to the New it was not enough to believe simply in the resurrection of the dead to a continuation of this fallen life. "Jesus said to her, I am the Resurrection and the Life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die." (John 11.25-26). Then, to prove the truth of His words, He raised Lazarus from the dead.

Many of those whose faith is weak believe that the Paschal message is that death is not the end, that the soul continues to live after death. But the doctrine of the immortality of the soul is not something new or specific only to Christianity. Yes, the soul continues to live after death. But mere continued existence is not life. Nor even is the resurrection of the body of the kind that

Lazarus received in this Gospel true life. *Life is Christ; He is the Way, the Truth and the Life, the Life and the Resurrection of all those who believe in Him.*

The Paschal message is that Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death. By which we mean not only that He rose from the dead, never to die again, but also that those who believe in Him, Who are joined to Him spiritually and bodily through faith and the Holy Mysteries, no longer live the carnal, corrupted life of the flesh that we now call "life", but are raised to a wholly different quality of life which the Lord calls "the resurrection of life", whose fulfilment, in both soul and body, will be the resurrection from the dead on the Day of judgement. For he who is joined to Life Himself cannot die. "For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, and has given Him authority to execute judgement also, because He is the Son of Man. Do not marvel at this, for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice, and come forth - those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of condemnation" (John 5.26-29).

So when the Lord cried: "Lazarus, come forth" this was only the first stage of his resurrection, the first manifestation of the glory of God. The real miracle would come only later, when Christ rose from the tomb on the third day, in the full glory of His incorrupt and resurrected body. And this in turn is only "the firstfruits of them that slept". The full in the sense of *universal* glory will come on the last Day, when at the trumpet of the archangel "the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And then we shall always be with the Lord..." (I Thessalonians 4.16-17).

*April 7/20, 2019.
Lazarus Saturday.*

19. THE CURSES OF HOLY AND GOOD FRIDAY

In mathematics, two minuses make a plus; and something analogous take place in God's economy, His calculus of salvation, as it were.

In the troparion for Good Friday we chant: "Thou hast redeemed us from the curse of the law". And St. Paul develops the thought: "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us" (Galatians 3.13). What is the curse of the law, and to what curse did Christ subject Himself in order to deliver us from that curse?

St. John Chrysostom explains: "'Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us' (Galatians 3.13). In reality, the people were subject to another curse, which says, 'Cursed is every man who continueth not in all the words of the law to do them' (Deuteronomy 27.26). To this curse, I say, people were subject, for none had continued in, or was a keeper of, the whole law; but Christ exchanged this curse for the other, 'Cursed by God is everyone who is hanged on a tree' (Deuteronomy 21.23). And then both he who hanged on a tree, and he who transgresses the law, is cursed, and as it was necessary for him who is about to relieve from a curse himself to be loosed from it, but to receive another instead of it, therefore Christ took upon Him such another, and thereby loosed us from the curse. *It was like an innocent man's undertaking to die for another condemned to death, and so rescuing him from punishment.* For Christ took upon Him not the curse of transgression, but the other curse, in order to remove that of others. For, 'He practiced no iniquity, nor was craft in His mouth' (Isaiah 53.9; I Peter 2.22). And as by dying He rescued from death those who were dying, so by taking upon Himself the curse, He delivered them from it."²⁶⁰

And again in his homily *On the Cross and the Thief* St. John says: "Today our Lord Jesus Christ is on the Cross, and we celebrate, so that you should know that the Cross is a feast and a spiritual triumph. Formerly the Cross was the name of a punishment, but now it has become an honourable work; before it was a symbol of condemnation, but now it has become the sign of salvation... It has enlightened those sitting in darkness, it has reconciled us, who were in enmity with God... Thanks to the Cross we do not tremble before the tyrant, because we are near the King. That is why we celebrate in commemorating the Cross.... In fact, one and the same was both victim and priest: the victim was the flesh, and the priest was the spirit. One and the same offers and was offered in the flesh. Listen to how Paul explained both the one and the other. 'For every high priest,' he says, 'chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins... Hence it is necessary for this priest also to have something to offer' (Hebrews 5.1, 8.3). So He Himself offers Himself. And in another place he says that 'Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation' (Hebrews 9.28)...."

²⁶⁰ St. John Chrysostom, *P.G.* 61:700, cols. 652, 653.

*April 13/26, 2019.
Holy and Great Friday.*

20. COSMOS, CHAOS AND THE CREATOR

Ever since the 1920s a gigantic paradox has opened up before the gaze of scientists. On the one hand, progress in discovering the laws of nature has increased apace; it would appear that there is no corner of the cosmos, and no aspect of its working, that cannot be understood in scientific terms. The Renaissance dream of universal knowledge appears within grasp. But on the other hand, the most fundamental science of all, quantum mechanics, which seeks to understand the sub-atomic particles and forces that underlie every material phenomenon, big and small, without exception, has discovered that the formulation of natural laws at the subatomic level is in principle impossible. The uncertainty or indeterminacy principle precludes any law governing the tiniest units of matter, space and time.

Thus it would appear that modern science has taken us back to the springs of paganism – that is, to the belief in fate, on the one hand, and chance, on the other. Fate, in the form of iron laws of nature to which there are no exceptions, governs everything at the higher level – that is, atoms, molecules and everything bigger and more complex up to the level of galaxies. In principle, therefore, given enough knowledge and intelligence and time, we should eventually be able to predict the behaviour of all things at this higher level. At the lower level, however, *nothing* is predictable – and not because of a lack of knowledge or intelligence, but simply because that is the way things are – fundamentally unpredictable. Thus *the universe is lawful and lawless at the same time*.

How is that possible? How can lawfulness be based on lawlessness, iron fate on insubstantial chance? A house that is built, not on rock, but on sand, cannot stand. And yet the house of modern science would appear to stand, at least as regards inorganic matter; otherwise how are we able to create such amazing technologies, which are rapidly transforming our world beyond recognition? In its own way, too, quantum physics appears to stand; while not a single event is predictable, in statistical groups precise predictions can be made. So the individual grains of sand are unpredictable; but in groups they are predictable. So fate appears to exist, as does chance; both are true, both must be affirmed if we are to do justice to what we see.

The solution to our dilemma is to be found in the first two verses of Genesis: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void... And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.” Here we see that God created both the cosmic order that characterizes the heavens and the earth, and the lack of order, or chaos, that characterizes the void and formless abyss. In the rest of the first chapter of Genesis the continents and the seas, the plants and the animals, and finally man are created. Nowhere are we told that the original chaos disappears. Could it be that while the cosmos is being formed, together with its laws, the lawlessness of chaos continues to exist as the underpinning of law, as it were?

If this is so, then God the Lawgiver is the essential and only possible link between the lawlessness of subatomic reality, over which He “hovers”, and the lawfulness of atomic and supra-atomic reality, which He brings into being through His Word. In that case, however, we must modify the conceptions of fate and chance that we have received from the pagans. For if the laws of nature, or fate, are in fact created by God, then they exist only in accordance with His will, and can be suspended by Him at any time. In other words, what we call *miracles, suspensions of the laws of nature, must be possible*. On the other hand, if the Spirit of God “hovers” also over the formless abyss, then the events that take place in the abyss can no longer be considered to be random; for they are determined by God in accordance with His will. These quantum seem to us to be random, and may indeed be so, in that they do not conform with any law of nature. But every single one of them is willed by God, and therefore are not lawless in relation to the Lawgiver Himself; for “God is not the author of confusion” (I Corinthians 14.33).

And so everything, both at the subatomic level and at the supra-atomic levels, is willed by God and for that reason is lawful, even if it seems lawless from a human point of view. There is no such thing as chance, real randomness! If there were, then there could be no meaning or law at any level; the lawlessness of subatomic particles would translate to lawlessness in every cosmic phenomenon. But in the beginning God created all things through His Word, or Logos, or Reason, and therefore is logical and reasonable – from the point of view of the Creator. He creates order out of chaos, law out of seeming lawlessness. This, if only they knew it, places a permanent check on the ambitions of scientists to know everything there is to know.

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Let us go further. The fundamental unit existence, according to the modern physicists, is not a thing or an event, but a spectrum of possible things or events. Moreover, it exists as such only while it is not being observed. When the wave function is observed (by a physical screen or a living being), it collapses into one and one only of the possibilities that define it.

Now this idea creates hardly less serious problems for the classical view of the world as the idea of indeterminism. For it suggests that the objective existence of the world is tied up to an extraordinary, almost solipsistic extent with the subjective perception of that world. Indeed, the fundamental unit of objective reality, the quantum wave function, becomes real – that is, a single actual event, as opposed to a multiple spectrum of possible events – only when it is observed, that is, when it becomes part of subjective reality, when it is in a relationship with an observer...

That this continues to disturb the minds of scientists even to this day is witnessed by a recent cover story in the prestigious scientific weekly *New Scientist*: “Before observation, such quantum objects are said to be in a superposition of all possible observable outcomes. This doesn’t mean that we

exist in many states at once, rather than we can only say that all the allowed outcomes of measurement remain possible. This potential is represented in the quantum wave function, a mathematical expression that encodes all outcomes and their relative possibilities.

“But it isn’t at all obvious what, if anything, the wave function can tell you about the nature of a quantum system before we make a measurement. That act reduces all those possible outcomes to one, dubbed the collapse of the wave function – but no one really knows what that means either. Some researchers think it might be a real physical process, like radioactive decay. Those who subscribe to the many-worlds interpretation think it is an illusion conjured by the splitting of the universe into each of the possible outcomes. Others still say that there is no point in trying to explain it – and besides, who cares? The maths works, so just shut up and calculate.

“Whatever the case, wave function collapse seems to hinge on intervention or observation, throwing up some huge problems, not least about the role of consciousness in the whole process. This is the measurement problem, arguably the biggest headache in quantum theory. ‘It is very hard,’ says Kelvin McQueen, a philosopher at Chapman University in California. ‘More interpretations are being thrown up every day, but all of them have problems.’”²⁶¹

Now it is obvious that the vast majority of quantum wave functions are not observed by men or any scientific instrument. And yet they are constantly being actualized, as it were, making the transition from possibility to actuality. So who is observing them, making our lives actual and not just possible? The answer can only be: God. But of course, God is not just a passive observer of His creation: He is its Creator. It would not exist in any form, possible or actual, without His creative act. For in Him “we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17.28).

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Man is said to be created in the image of God, and one of the aspects of the Divine image, according to the Holy Fathers, is man’s freedom. In other words, man, like God, is able to make choices, actualize one out of a number of possibilities, thereby bringing order out of chaos. Thus I choose to type the letters and words of the present article, and not any other. I could have written something different, but I didn’t, and that is my choice, the manifestation of my creative freedom.

At the same time, my freedom is strictly dependent on God’s. I could not choose to write these words if God had not created, and sustained in being, both my soul and my body, and all the natural laws that govern the process of writing an article. To think otherwise, to think, like Nietzsche and the

²⁶¹ Philip Ball, “Reality? It’s What You Make of It”, *New Scientist*, November, 2017, p. 29.

existentialists, that we are free in some absolute and godless way, is madness. And madness is chaos, the absence of reason, logic and law. Therefore I can deliver myself from this madness, and acquire sanity, only through faith – faith in God, and faith in myself as created in the image of God.

Let us pray, with the holy apostles, that God may strengthen our faith that God is the Creator, that He continues to be in complete control of even the very smallest of natural processes, and that without Him we can truly do nothing.

*April 30 / May 13, 2019.
St. James the son of Zebedee.
St. Erkenwald, Bishop of London.*

21. DNA AND GOD THE CREATOR

In the first half of the twentieth century, the major scientific discoveries had been made in the physical sciences and mathematics. In the second half, it was the turn of the biological sciences. For, as Eric Hobsbawm writes, “within ten years of the Second World War, the life sciences were revolutionized by the astonishing advances of molecular biology, which revealed the universal mechanism of inheritance, the ‘genetic code’.

“The revolution in molecular biology was not unexpected. After 1914 it could be taken for granted that life had to be, and could be, explained in terms of physics and chemistry and not in terms of some essence peculiar to living beings. Indeed, biochemical models of the possible origin of life on earth, starting with sunlight, methane, ammonia and water, were first suggested in the 1920s (largely with anti-religious intentions) in Soviet Russia and Britain, and put the subject on the serious scientific agenda. Hostility to religion, by the way, continued to animate researchers in this field: both Crick and Linus Pauling are cases in point. The major thrust of biological research had for decades been biochemical, and increasingly physical, since the recognition that protein molecules could be crystallized, and therefore analysed crystallographically. It was known that one substance, deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) played a central, possibly the central role in heredity: it seemed to be the basic component of the gene, the unit of inheritance. The problem of how the gene ‘caused the synthesis of another structure like itself, in which even the mutations of the original gene are copied’, i.e. how heredity operated, was already under serious investigation in the later 1930s. After the war it was clear that, in Crick’s words, ‘great things were just around the corner’. The brilliance of Crick and Watson’s discovery of the double-helical structure of DNA [in 1953] and of the way it explained ‘gene copying’ by an elegant chemico-mechanical model is not diminished by the fact that several workers were converging on the same result in the early 1950s.

“The DNA revolution, ‘the greatest single discovery in biology’ (J.D. Bernal), which dominated the life-sciences in the second half of the century, was essentially about genetics and, since twentieth-century Darwinism is exclusively genetics, about evolution. Both these are notoriously touchy subjects, both because scientific models are themselves frequently ideological in such fields – we remember Darwin’s debt to Malthus – and because they frequently feed back into politics (‘social Darwinism’). The concept of ‘race’ illustrates this interplay. The memory of Nazi racial policies made it virtually unthinkable for liberal intellectuals (which included most scientists) to operate with his concept. Indeed, many doubted that it was legitimate even to enquire systematically into the genetically determined differences between human groups, for fear that the results might provide encouragement for racist opinions. More generally, in the Western countries the post-fascist ideology of democracy and equality revived the old debates of ‘nature v. nurture’, or heredity v. environment. Plainly the human individual was shaped both by heredity and environment, by genes and culture. Yet conservatives were only

too willing to accept of society of irremovable, i.e. genetically determined inequalities, while the Left, committed to equality, naturally held that all inequalities could be removed by social action: they were at bottom environmentally determined. The controversy flared up over the question of human intelligence, which (because of its implications for selective or universal schooling) was highly political. It raised far wider issues than those of race, though it bore on these also. How wide they were, emerged with the revival of the feminist movement, several of whose ideologists came close to claiming that *all* mental differences between men and women were essentially culture-determined, i.e. environmental. Indeed, the fashionable substitution of the term 'gender' for 'sex' implied the belief that 'woman' was not so much a biological category as a social role. A scientist who tried to investigate such sensitive subjects knew himself to be in a political minefield. Even those who entered it deliberately, like E.O. Wilson of Harvard (b. 1929), the champion of 'sociobiology', shied away from plain speech..."²⁶²

However, the discovery of DNA had a far deeper and more fundamental effect than merely eliciting these debates on the relative roles of genes and environment in various human conditions and situations. Although this has not been recognized by most scientists to this day, *the discovery of DNA has completely undermined the theoretical basis of Darwinism itself*. For it revealed an information-based mechanism for the transmission of the genome that could not possibly have come into existence by chance, but must have been created by an intelligent designer – in other words, God. Information is a concept that makes no sense without a mind possessing it. And the amount of information contained in just the simplest reproducible cell points to an infinite Mind...²⁶³

Thus Bill Gates, the founder of Microsoft, says that DNA is like computer code – only much more complex and sophisticated than any computer code created by man. Now computer code is always created by an intelligent designer – man. So the question arises: who created the code of DNA?

As regards the complexity of DNA, Raymond G. Halvorson writes: "The human body contains some 100 million cells, with the DNA divided into forty-six chromosomes. The total length of the entire DNA in one cell is about three feet. The total DNA content in a human body is estimated to span the solar system. In terms of an analogy, human DNA is like a very large encyclopedia of forty-six volumes, with each one having 20,000 pages. Every one of the 100 million cells in a human body contains this entire library.

"As scientists began to decode the human genome they found it to be approximately three billion DNA base pairs long. 'One of the most

²⁶² Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes*, London: Abacus, 1994, pp. 552-554.

²⁶³ In spite of this undoubted fact, huge prizes are still offered to anyone who can produce a genetic code from inorganic material. See Megan Humphrey, "\$5 million Tech Prize Seeks Answer to Origin of Life", *Front Line Genomics*, March 1, 2018, <http://www.frontlinegenomics.com/blog/19919/5-million-tech-prize-seeks-answer-origin-life/>

extraordinary discoveries of the twentieth century,' says Dr. Stephen Meyer, director of the Center for Science and Culture at the Discovery Institute in Seattle, Washington, 'was that DNA actually stores information – the detailed instructions for assembling proteins – in the form a four-character digital code.'

"David Coppedge, a systems administrator for the Cassini Mission to Saturn and Titan at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, NASA, made the following observation: 'Life on the molecular level is incredibly complex. A symphony of proteins, enzymes and DNA work in harmony to permit rapid and precisely controlled chemical reactions. At least 239 proteins are required for the simplest conceivable living cell. The change of getting even one of these proteins, even under ideal conditions, is less than one in 10-161 (10 followed by 161 zeros). To get the simplest reproducible cell is one in 10-40,000. Anything less likely than 1 in 10-50 is virtually impossible, anywhere in the whole universe.' ...

"Coppedge calculated the probability that the 200 trillion molecules arranged in perfect order within the walls of a cell *would take trillions and trillions of years* to generate spontaneously. That is well beyond the actual age of the earth. The immense complexity of a single cell precludes all possibility of life ever happening by chance..."²⁶⁴

Kirk Durstan writes: "An essential, falsifiable prediction of Darwinian theory, therefore, is that *functional information must, on average, increase over time.*

"Interestingly, a prediction of intelligent design science is quite the opposite. Since information always degrades over time for any storage media and replication system, intelligent design science postulates that the digital information of life was initially downloaded into the genomes of life. It predicts that, *on average, genetic information is steadily being corrupted by natural processes.* The beauty of these two mutually incompatible predictions in science is that the falsification of one entails verification of the other. So which prediction does science falsify, and which does science verify?

"Ask computer programmers what effect ongoing random changes in the code would have on the integrity of a program, and they will universally agree that it degrades the software. This is the first problem for neo-Darwinian theory. Mutations produce random changes in the digital information of life. It is generally agreed that the rate of deleterious mutations is much greater than the rate of beneficial mutations. My own work with 35 protein families suggests that the rate of destruction is, at a minimum, 8 times the rate of neutral or beneficial mutations.

"Simply put, the digital information of life is being destroyed much faster than it can be repaired or improved. New functions may evolve, but the overall loss of functional information in other areas of the genome will, on average, be

²⁶⁴ Halvorson, *Evolution. The World's Fourth Great Religion*, Colorado Springs: Dawson Media, 2011, pp. 19, 105.

significantly greater. The net result is that the digital information of life is running down.

“The second series of falsifying observations is indicated by actual organisms we have studied most closely. First, the digital information for the bacterial world is slowly eroding away due to a net deletional bias in mutations involving insertions and deletions. A second example is the fruit fly, one of the most studied life forms in evolutionary biology. It, too, shows an ongoing, genome-wide loss of DNA across the entire genus.

“Finally, humans are not exempt. As biologist Michael Lynch points out in a paper in *PNAS*, ‘Rate, molecular spectrum, and consequences of human mutation’:

“‘Consideration of the long-term consequences of current human behaviour for deleterious-mutation accumulation leads to the conclusion that a substantial reduction in human fitness can be expected over the next few centuries in industrialized societies unless novel means of genetic intervention are developed.’

“We continue to discover **more examples** of DNA loss, suggesting that the biological world is slowly running down. Microevolution is good at fine-tuning existing forms within their information limits and occasionally getting something right, but the steady accumulation of deleterious mutations on the larger scale suggests that mutation-driven evolution is actually destroying biological life, not creating it.

“This is hardly a surprise, as every other area of science, except for evolutionary biology, grants that natural processes degrade information, regardless of the storage media and copying process. For neo-Darwinian macroevolution to work, it requires something that is in flat-out contradiction to the real world.”²⁶⁵

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New discoveries keep being made that are incompatible with Darwinism. Thus Eric Metaxas writes: “The Darwinian mechanism of mutation and natural selection explains everything about life, we’re told—except how it began. ‘Assume a self-replicating cell containing information in the form of genetic

²⁶⁵ Durston, “An Essential Prediction of Darwinian Theory Is Falsified by Information Degradation”, *Evolution News*, July 9, 2015, https://evolutionnews.org/2015/07/an_essential_pr/

code,' Darwinists are forced to say. Well, fine. But where did *that* little miracle come from?

"A new discovery makes explaining even that first cell tougher still. Fossils unearthed by Australian scientists in Greenland may be the oldest traces of life ever discovered. A team from the University of Wollongong recently published their findings in the journal *Nature*, describing a series of structures called 'stromatolites' that emerged from receding ice.

"'Stromatolites' may sound like something your doctor would diagnose, but they're actually biological rocks formed by colonies of microbes that live in shallow water. If you visit the Bahamas today, you can see living stromatolites.

"What's so special about them? Well, they appear in rocks most scientists date to 220 million years older than the oldest fossils, which pushes the supposed date for the origin of life back to 3.7 billion years ago.

"This, admits the *New York Times*, 'complicate[s] the story of evolution of early life from chemicals...' No kidding! According to conventional geology, these microbe colonies existed on the heels of a period when Earth was undergoing heavy asteroid bombardment, making it virtually uninhabitable. This early date, adds *The Times*, 'leaves comparatively little time for evolution to have occurred...'

"That is an understatement. These life forms came into existence virtually overnight, writes David Klinghoffer at *Evolution News and Views*. 'genetic code, proteins, photosynthesis, the works.'

"This appearance of fully-developed life forms so early in the fossil record led Dr. Abigail Allwood of Caltech to remark that 'life [must not be] a fussy, reluctant and unlikely thing.' Rather, "it will emerge whenever there's an opportunity.'

"Pardon me? If life occurs so spontaneously and predictably even under the harshest conditions, then it should be popping up all over the place! Yet scientists still cannot come close to producing even a single cell from raw chemicals in the lab.

"Dr. Stephen Meyer explains in his book *Signature in the Cell* why this may be Darwinism's Achilles heel. In order to begin evolution by natural selection, you need a self-replicating unit. But the cell and its DNA blueprint are too complicated by far to have arisen through chance chemical reactions. The odds of even a single protein forming by accident are astronomical. So Meyer and

other Intelligent Design theorists conclude that Someone must have designed and created the structures necessary for life."²⁶⁶

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With the discovery of DNA, in other words, Darwinism became *a statistical impossibility*. Unfortunately, however, the world continued as if nothing had happened. Darwinism remained, and remains at the time of writing, the corner-stone, not only of biological science, but of the whole modern world-view...

At the same time, an encouraging sign is the stubborn resistance to this corner-stone of the modern world view even among some highly educated people.

Thus Yuval Noah Harari writes: "According to a 2012 Gallup survey only 15 percent of Americans think that *Homo sapiens* evolved through natural selection alone, free of all divine intervention; 32 percent maintain that humans may have evolved from earlier life forms in a process lasting millions of years, but God orchestrated the whole show; 46 percent believe that God created humans in their current form sometime during the last 10,000 years, just as the Bible says. The same survey found that among BA graduates, 46 percent believe in the biblical creation, whereas only 14 percent think that humans evolved without any divine supervision. Even among holders of MA and PhD degrees, 29 percent believe the Bible, whereas only 29 percent credit natural selection alone with the creation of our species."²⁶⁷

The problem with Darwinism does not consist solely in its non-correspondence with the facts. As Fr. Seraphim Rose pointed out, it is *not falsifiable*, and therefore *not science* at all: it is in fact *philosophy*. More accurately, it is a *religion* – a modern, sophisticated form of paganism. Paganism believes in the spontaneous generation of higher life-forms, even gods and goddesses, out of lower forms, as if by magic. So does Darwinism.

The unfalsifiability of Darwinism has been demonstrated by Tom Bethell, who "wrote in *Darwin's House of Cards* that natural selection is unscientific no matter how it is formulated. After looking at the logic of it in Chapter 5, and the presumed evidence for it in Chapter 6, he concluded, 'Natural selection functions in the realm of philosophy, not science.' For support, he quotes none other than staunch Darwinian Richard Lewontin of Harvard, who at least had the intellectual rigor to critically examine the meaning of natural selection: 'For what good is a theory that is guaranteed by its internal logical structure to agree with all conceivable observations, irrespective of the real structure of the world? If scientists are going to use logically unbeatable theories about the

²⁶⁶ Metaxas, "New discovery makes Darwinists' case even harder to make", *LifeSiteNews*, September 14, 2016, <https://www.lifesitenews.com/opinion/evolutions-can-opener>

²⁶⁷ Yuval Noah Harari, *Homo Deus*, London: Vintage, 2015, p. 119.

world, they might as well give up natural science and take up religion. Yet is that not exactly the situation with Darwinism?

"Bethell began his journey as a Darwin skeptic by pondering the circular reasoning inherent in selection theory. Is there any way of deciding what is 'fit' other than seeing what survives?" he asks in the Introduction (p. 11). 'If not, maybe Darwin was arguing in a self-confirming circle: the survival of the survivors.' Throughout his journey, as he documents in the book, he found leading Darwinists admitting to this core flaw in the logic of natural selection..."²⁶⁸

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Towards the end of the twentieth century the word "creationism" began to be dropped in favour of the less religious-sounding "intelligent design".²⁶⁹ Those who teach intelligent design are as firmly opposed to evolution as the old-fashioned creationists, but it is not politically correct to say that you believe in a Creator God (you might lose your job). So you have to say that you believe in "intelligent design" instead - which comes to the same thing, for who could have intelligently designed the universe if not God?

Jim Holt provides some examples of "intelligent design" thinking. "Michael Behe attacks Darwinism at the molecular level. If you peer inside a cell, Behe says, you see intricate little machines, made out of proteins, that carry on the functions necessary for life. They are so precisely engineered that they exhibit what he calls 'irreducible complexity': alter a single part and the whole thing would grind to a halt. How could such machinery have evolved in piecemeal fashion through a series of adaptations, as Darwinism holds?

"Alwin Plantinga makes a philosophical assault on Darwinism, claiming that it is self-undermining. Suppose the Darwinian theory of evolution were

²⁶⁸ "No Controversies about Darwinism? Try this one", *Evolution News*, May 30, 2017; Lewontin, "Testing the Theory of Natural Selection," *Nature* 236, no. 543 (1972): 181-182, cited in Bethel, p. 65.

²⁶⁹ Of course, there were still some old-fashioned, but formidable scientists who preferred to talk about God. One of these was the Nobel Prize winner in Physics, Paul Dirac, who said in 1971: "It could be that it is extremely difficult to start life. It might be that it is so difficult to start life that it has happened only once among all the planets... Let us consider, just as a conjecture, that the chance life starting when we have got suitable physical conditions is 10^{-100} . I don't have any logical reason for proposing this figure, I just want you to consider it as a possibility. Under those conditions ... it is almost certain that life would not have started. And I feel that under those conditions it will be necessary to assume the existence of a god to start off life. I would like, therefore, to set up this connexion between the existence of a god and the physical laws: if physical laws are such that to start off life involves an excessively small chance, so that it will not be reasonable to suppose that life would have started just by blind chance, then there must be a god, and such a god would probably be showing his influence in the quantum jumps which are taking place later on." Of course, if the extreme improbability of the emergence of life is enough to make the existence of God probable, the existence of DNA makes it far more probable! (Helge Kragh, "The purest soul". *Dirac: A Scientific Biography*. Cambridge University Press, 1990, pp. 256-257)

true – our mental machinery, having developed from that of lower animals, would be highly unreliable when it came to generating true theories. (Darwin himself once confessed to the same doubt: ‘Would anyone trust in the convictions of a monkey’s mind?’) In other words, if our belief in Darwinism were true, then none of our theoretical beliefs would be reliable – including our belief in Darwinism. But theism escapes this difficulty: if we are made in the image of God, he can be counted on to have supplied us with reliable cognitive faculties.

“William Dembski bases his anti-Darwinian argument on what he calls ‘the law of conservation of information’. Our DNA contains a wealth of complex information, he observes. How did it get there? Natural causes can’t be responsible. Chance and necessity cannot create information. Therefore, the origin of genetic information ‘is best sought in intelligent causes’.”²⁷⁰

These are powerful arguments, and the creationist or intelligent design movement shows no signs of decline. Many thousand of Ph.D. scientists now reject Darwinism, and to many the arguments of leading evolutionists such as Richard Dawkins are no longer convincing. We come back to the question: if DNA is a code, and all known codes are created by intelligent designers, who created the code of DNA?

June 7/20, 2019.

²⁷⁰ Holt, “Divine Evolution”, *Prospect*, May, 2002, p. 13.

22. THE KAISER, NIETZSCHE AND THE FIRST WORLD WAR

A series of diplomatic incidents in the first decade of the twentieth century gradually increased Germany's isolation and brought her closer to the idea of the desirability of war as such, an idea made popular by her leading philosophers and historians...

In 1902 British and German naval forces undertook a joint action against Venezuela. The aim was to punish the Venezuelans for renegeing on their debts; but the methods used, against an almost defenceless people, caused revulsion – and it was the actions of the German vessels that seemed especially repellent. Thus in New York the *Evening Post* sneered: “As a method of maintaining German prestige the attack upon a mud fort and a collection of naked fishermen must be regarded as a failure.” Chancellor Bernhardt von Bülow claimed that “no American or British admiral would have done otherwise.” But the damage to German prestige was done; and resentment against the Anglo-Saxons was aroused. As Anthony Delano writes, “after the Venezuela adventure, the Kaiser was later to say, relations between Britain and Germany were never the same.”²⁷¹

In 1906, at a Great Power conference in Algeciras Germany suffered another major diplomatic defeat as Britain and Russia backed France's claim for domination over Morocco. The Anglo-French Entente was now stronger than ever; the “encirclement” by France and Russia that German diplomats feared appeared closer to reality. “After Algeciras,” writes Miranda Carter, “the German government seemed to be pulled in two directions: on the one hand, there were those who accepted that sabre-rattling hadn't worked, and that something needed to be done to defuse the tensions the conference had produced; and on the other, there was a feeling that Germany hadn't played hard enough, that the government had pusillanimously shied away from the logical consequence of its policy – war with France. [Most senior ministers] were in the first camp; many of the German officer class were in the second. After fifteen years under the command of General Alfred von Schlieffen, the senior army staff constituted of a small Junker elite obsessed with its own privileges and superiority, fearing and fending off dilution by the middle classes, utterly opposed to socialism which it regarded as degenerate, saturated in the ideas of the nationalist historian Treitschke – who saw Europe as a Hobbesian battlefield where might was everything and the Slav the enemy – actively welcoming war as a force that would cleanse Germany inside out. Wilhelm had just replaced the retiring Schlieffen – the appointment was entirely in his gift – with Helmuth von Moltke, who was the nephew of the elder Moltke who had delivered the Prussian victories of the 1860s. Within the army Moltke was regarded as a controversial choice: not quite tough enough, and a little too arty – he played the cello, liked to paint and read Goethe. In other respects he was absolutely a product of the solipsistic world of the

²⁷¹ Delano, “Crisis in Caracas”, *BBC History Magazine*, vol. 7, N 1, January, 2006, p. 31.

German General Staff; different only in that he didn't welcome the European war that he thought was inevitable."²⁷²

However, the Tsar, still smarting from his defeat at the hands of Japan, whose ally was Britain, was by no means inclined to favour Britain over Germany. And so in July, 1905 he met the Kaiser in secret at Björkö in the Gulf of Finland, and signed a treaty with him. However, when his advisers saw it, they persuaded him to make changes to it and therefore in effect abandon it on the not unreasonable grounds that, although the treaty was a defensive one, it would be bound to look different to the French – and the alliance with France was too important to endanger. The Kaiser suffered a similar experience from his ministers... And so "the Treaty of Björkö lived its brief shimmering day, and expired..."²⁷³

The similar experiences of the two monarchs showed how real one-man-rule was becoming rarer and more difficult in the early twentieth century. Of the three royal cousins – Tsar Nicholas of Russia, Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany and King George of England – the first two were both forced to abdicate by their generals, who betrayed their oaths to their sovereigns. Only King George survived with his crown intact – because, as a constitutional monarch he left politics to the politicians...

The next international incident took place in July, 1911. "Germany sent a gunboat, the *Panther*, to the port of Agadir, in Morocco, where the French had recently and illegally sent troops claiming they were needed to quell a local rebellion. By the terms of the Algeiras conference, Germany was entitled to compensation if the French changed the nature of their presence in Morocco. With the *Panther*... positioned threateningly on the coast, the Germany Foreign Office demanded the French hand over the whole of the French Congo, adding that if they did not respond positively Germany might be forced to extreme measures."²⁷⁴ The British saw this as a threat to their naval supremacy, and reacted strongly.

Eventually, the Germans backed down and were given a small part of the Congolese jungle in compensation. But the blow to their pride was considerable. "Senior German army officers sighed that the All Highest was so pusillanimous about taking supreme measures – Moltke had privately hoped for a 'reckoning with the English'. The German colonial minister resigned..."²⁷⁵

Germany was by now completely isolated diplomatically; she could look only to Turkey as a potential ally. Moreover, her sabre-rattling and armaments build-up had only encouraged the Entente to respond in kind. "In 1913, Britain, France

²⁷² Carter, *The Three Emperors*, London: Penguin, 2010, pp. 331-332.

²⁷³ Barbara Tuchman, *The Guns of August*, New York: Ballantine, 1962, p. 11.

²⁷⁴ Carter, *op. cit.*, p. 392.

²⁷⁵ Carter, *op. cit.*, p. 393.

and Russia spent in total more than twice as much on armaments as Germany..."²⁷⁶

Also in 1913, writes J.M. Roberts, "the Kaiser confided to the Austrian chief of staff that he was no longer against a great war (by which he meant one between several powers) in principle. One of his ministers even felt able to talk to members of parliament of the 'coming world War'. In an atmosphere of excited patriotism (it was the centenary of the so-called 'War of Liberation' with Napoleonic France) a special army bill was introduced that year into the Reichstag. The Russian modernization and rearmament programme (to be completed by 1917) had certainly alarmed the German soldiers. But by itself this can hardly explain the psychological deterioration in Germany that had brought about so dangerous a transformation of German policy as the acceptance of the inevitability of conflict with Russia - and therefore with France - if Germany's due weight in Europe was to be assured.

"Many Germans felt that 'encirclement' frustrated the exercise of German power, and should be broken, if only for reasons of prestige, and that such a step must involve a confrontation - though not necessarily war - with Great Britain. But this was not all that was happening in Germany in the decade before 1914. There had been a major inflammation of nationalist (and conservative) thinking and agitation in those years. It showed in the growth of societies and pressure-groups with different aims - safeguarding of the social hierarchy, anti-Semitism, patriotic support for armaments - but all contributing to a xenophobic and authoritarian atmosphere. Some Germans thought positively of possible territorial and material gains in the east and brooded on a supposed historic mission of Teuton to dominate over Slavs. Some were troubled by the colonial questions that had been so contentious and prickly before 1900 (yet colonies had proved disappointing and colonial rivalry played virtually no part in the final approach to war). Germany was dangerously ready psychologically for conflict, even if, when war came at last, it was to find its detonator in the South Slav lands..."²⁷⁷

Dominic Lieven points out that "whereas German discussions of American or British power were expressed in the coolly rational language of political economy and academic history, where Russia was concerned a much more vivid and sometimes even an apocalyptic tone was often present. This derived partly from a long-standing German sense of cultural superiority but also fear about a more primitive people who were often defined as semi-European at best. Most western Europeans shared the cultural arrogance but were less fearful than the Germans for the simple reason that Russian power lay further from their borders.

"Dislike of Russia was reinforced in the nineteenth century by liberal and socialist Germany's distaste for the tsarist regime. The German Jews had a

²⁷⁶ Bernard Simms, *Europe: The Struggle for Supremacy*, London: Allen Lane, 2013, p. 294.

²⁷⁷ Roberts, *The Penguin History of the Twentieth Century*, London: Penguin, 2000, pp. 205-206.

particular dislike for the land of the pogrom, but German émigrés in Berlin from Russia's Baltic Provinces (today's Estonia and Latvia) probably had a bigger overall impact on German perceptions of Russia. They brought to Germany a vision of racial conflict between Slavs and Germans that could then be applied to struggles between the German and the Slav peoples of the Austrian monarchy as well. This played a big role in pan-German thinking but had an influence beyond their ranks. Paul Rohrbach was a key 'public intellectual' of Baltic origin who strongly influenced German opinion about international relations and Russia. He disliked both tsarism and Russians. He stressed the glaring weaknesses of the Russian economy and society and argued that an aggressive foreign policy was almost the only means for the regime to cling to its fading legitimacy. But although he expected major convulsions in the near future in Russia, he did not doubt that in the longer run the country would be a formidable world power, noting that on current projections by the second half of the twentieth century Germany would face an eastern neighbour with a population of more than 300 million..."²⁷⁸

In the last analysis, therefore, it was Germany's desire to conduct a preventive war with Russia that produced the catastrophe. Thus in the spring of 1914 Germany's Chief of Staff Moltke held talks with her Foreign Minister, Gottlieb von Jagow. "Jagow noted that Moltke told him that in two or three years the 'military superiority of our enemies would... so great that he did not know how he could overcome them. Today we would still be a match for them. In his opinion there was no alternative to making preventive war in order to defeat the enemy while there was still a chance of victory. The Chief of the General Staff therefore proposed that I should conduct of policy with the aim of provoking a war in the near future...."²⁷⁹

Germany's path to war was not conditioned only by the political and military calculations of Moltke and others. No less important were *philosophical ideas*, such as Social Darwinism. Thus in 1912 Friedrich von Bernhardi wrote: "Either Germany will go into war now or it will lose any chance to have world supremacy... The law of nature upon which all other laws are based is the struggle for existence. Consequently, war is a biological necessity."²⁸⁰ Again, the Austrian Chief of Staff Conrad von Hötzendorff considered the struggle for existence to be "the basic principle behind all the events on this earth". Militarism was the natural consequence of this philosophy (if the philosophy was not an attempt to justify the militarism): "Politics consists precisely of applying war as method", said von Hötzendorff.²⁸¹

Even more important were Nietzsche's ideas of the Superman and the Triumph of the Will. But Nietzschean ideas needed Nietzschean - or, at any

²⁷⁸ Lieven, *Towards the Flame. Empire, War and the End of Tsarist Russia*, London: Allen Lane, 2015, p. 29.

²⁷⁹ David Fromkin, *Europe's Last Summer*, London: Vintage, 2005, p. 110.

²⁸⁰ Von Bernhardi, *Germany and the Next War*.

²⁸¹ Von Hötzendorff, in Hew Strachan, *The Outbreak of the First World War*, Oxford University Press, 2004, pp. 10-11.

rate, neurotic - characters in which the ideas could germinate and bring forth fruit. In the period leading up to the First World War such a personality was Kaiser Wilhelm II. The Kaiser was important not only in himself: he served as a symptom and symbol of the Nietzschean pathology of the German nation... For, as Felix Ponsonby said, the Kaiser "was the creation of the Germans themselves. They wanted a sabre-rattling autocrat with theatrical ways, attempting to dominate Europe, sending telegrams and making bombastic speeches, and he did his best to supply them with the superman they required."²⁸² Again, as Stuart Miller writes, "the real problem was that he was too typical of the new state which he was now called upon to rule. A very complex personality with a rather stunted body and a withered arm, he was very insecure and unsure of himself and over-compensated for these inadequacies with bumptious aggressiveness and flamboyant posing. 'Psychological' versions of history can be very dangerous, but it is not difficult to see the problems and responses of the Kaiser and the state as being identical."²⁸³

Wilhelm had had a difficult birth that gave him a withered arm; and he developed a hatred for his English mother and all things English. Mary Greene writes: "By the time his father died of cancer in 1888 at their palace in Potsdam, Wilhelm was set in his anglophobia and loathing for his mother and her liberal ideas. An English doctor had crippled his arm, he declared, and an English doctor had killed his father after misdiagnosing his cancer as benign: 'One cannot have enough hatred for England'..."²⁸⁴

The fallen passions of pride, vanity, envy and resentment have always been as important in international relations as strictly political and economic factors, and at no time more so than in the run-up to the First World War and in respect of Kaiser Wilhelm. "Envy of the older nations gnawed at him. He complained to Theodore Roosevelt that the English nobility on continental tours never visited Berlin but always went to Paris. He felt unappreciated. 'All the long years of my reign,' he told the King of Italy, 'my colleagues, the Monarchs of Europe, have paid no attention to what I have to say. Soon, with my great Navy to endorse my words, they will be more respectful.' The same sentiments ran through his whole nation, which suffered, like their emperor, from a terrible need of recognition. Pulsing with energy and ambition, conscious of strength, fed upon Nietzsche and Treitschke, they felt entitled to rule, and cheated that the world did not acknowledge their title. 'We must,' wrote Friedrich von Bernhardi, the spokesman of militarism, 'secure to German nationality and German spirit throughout the globe that high esteem which is due them... and has hitherto been withheld from them.' He frankly allowed only one method of attaining the goal; lesser Bernhardis from the Kaiser down sought to secure the esteem they craved by threats and show of power. They shook the 'mailed fist', demanded their 'place in the sun', and proclaimed the virtues of the sword

²⁸² Ponsonby, in Miranda Carter, *The Three Emperors*, London: Penguin, 2010, p. 365.

²⁸³ Miller, *Mastering Modern European History*, London: Palgrave, 1997, p. 226.

²⁸⁴ Greene, "Did Kaiser Bill's mother spark the Great War?", *Weekend*, November 16, 2013, p. 9.

in paeans to 'blood and iron' and 'shining armor'. In German practice Mr. Roosevelt's current precept for getting on with your neighbors was Teutonized into: 'Speak loudly and brandish a big gun'. When they brandished it, when the Kaiser told his troops departing for China and the Boxer Rebellion to bear themselves as the Huns of Attila (the choice of Huns as German prototypes was his own), when Pan-German Societies and Navy Leagues multiplied and met in congresses to demand that other nations recognize their 'legitimate aims' towards expansion, the other nations answered with alliances, and when they did, Germany screamed *Einfreisung!* – Encirclement! The refrain *Deutschland gunzlich einsuzkreisen* grated over the decade..."²⁸⁵

Unbalanced and aggressive to the point of illness (Tsar Nicholas II said he was "raving mad"), Wilhelm had much to do with dividing Europe into two armed camps and souring the relations between Germany and England, on the one hand, and between Germany and Russia, on the other. He dismissed Bismarck and allowed the "reinsurance" treaty with Russia to lapse, thereby introducing a dangerous note of insecurity into German foreign policy. His relative, St. Elizabeth the New Martyr, the sister of the Tsaritsa, blamed the outbreak of war partly on his departure from the policies of Bismarck. Others blamed the dominance of the Prussian spirit. Thus in 1914, just after the declaration of war, the Tsaritsa, - like her sister, of course, a German princess - told Pierre Gilliard: "Prussia has destroyed the unique character of Germany, and German citizens have been led astray. People have been imbued with feelings of hatred and vengefulness."²⁸⁶

"The monarch," writes W.H. Spellman, was moving Germany "into an aggressive and expansionist posture. In language reminiscent of eighteenth-century divine-right absolutism, he informed the Provincial Diet of Brandenburg in 1891, 'that I regard my whole position and my task as having been imposed on me from heaven, and that I am called to the service of a Higher Being, to Whom I shall have to give a reckoning later.' To Bismarck's successor William confided in 1892 that he was not interested in personal popularity (although his actions belied this), 'for, as the guiding principles of my actions, I have only the dictates of my duty and the responsibility of my clear conscience towards God'. In 1900 William told the future George V of England that as Kaiser he alone 'was master of German policy and my country must follow me wherever I go'. In the judgement of one recent observer the emperor personified the dynastic culture of later eighteenth-century Europe: 'He was a monarch by Divine Right yet always the parvenu; a medieval knight in shining armour and yet the inspiration behind that marvel of modern technology, the battle fleet; a dyed-in-the-wool reactionary yet also - for a time at least - the Socialist Emperor who supported basic accident and retirement insurance for the industrial worker.'"²⁸⁷

²⁸⁵ Tuchman, *op. cit.*, pp. 7-8.

²⁸⁶ She went on: "This will be a monstrous, improbable struggle; humanity will have to pass through heavy trisls" (Baroness Sophia Buxhöwden, *Ventsenosnaia Muchenitsa* (The Crown-Bearing Martyr), Moscow, 2020, pp. 302-303).

²⁸⁷ Spellman, *Monarchies*, London: Reaktion Press, 2001, p. 218.

Only the more pacifist and internationalist tendency of the powerful Social Democratic party stood out as a significant exception to the general mood. But in Germany's fractured political system the Social Democrats were not able to prevent the Kaiser and the Army from taking control of the general direction of German foreign policy.

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Archimandrite Cyril (Govorun) writes: "One of the most vivid commanders of the German empire and its co-founder was Field-Marshal Helmut von Moltke (1800-1891). Once he expressed himself as follows: 'Eternal peace is a dream, and not the most beautiful of dreams. War is part of the Divine world-order. In it we find the development of the best human virtues: courage, self-abnegation, faithfulness to duty and the readiness to offer one's own life in sacrifice. Without war the world would descend into the abyss of materialism.' This expresses the quintessence of the development of one of the directions of German idealism and German theology, which turned out to be very much in demand in the circle of German actors to which von Moltke belonged. Two basic postulates of this direction were, first, that war has its justification and is even necessary, if it is undertaken for the sake of lofty goals. And secondly, the most lofty goal is the struggle against the errors of the neighbouring peoples in their insufficient 'spirituality' - faithfulness to the Spirit (*der Geist*).

"For Germany, such a nation was first of all France, which had been infected, in the opinion of the Germans, by the virus of republicanism - 'democratism'. The victory of Prussia in the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71 became for her a sign of election - of God's having predestined her to be 'God's hammer' in history, placing her in the centre of 'the history of the salvation' of the European peoples. This victory allowed Germany to accomplish, in the expression of the German history Martin Greschat, 'a quantum jump' from the soulless 'national industry of war' (that was how Count Mirabeau put it about Prussia in the 18th century) to a messianic state. In this state the life of each citizen and his rights were subject to a higher goal, and the state was the incarnation of this goal and the fullest manifestation of what Hegel had called *Zeitgeist*.

"In the state's self-consciousness it was surrounded by enemies who could not understand it or accept its lofty mission because of their corruption. For that reason the given state had to count only on its army and fleet. At the slightest opportunity this state considered that it had the right to violate international agreements, insofar as it had a higher goal and higher authorization - God.

"The Churches of Germany in every way supported this 'self-consciousness' of the German people. By 1914 what Karl Hammer called 'the German theology of war' (*Deutsche Kriegstheologie*) had been formed. In the opinion of the investigator John Moses, the majority of German theologians before 1914 supported the military messianism, including such authorities as Albrecht

Richl and Adolf von Harnak. Several generations of theologians, beginning with Friedrich Schleiermacher, who thought that in the war with Napoleon God had been on the side of Prussia, developed the thought that the German nation was chosen by God (*Ausgewähltheit*). From Schleiermacher's idea that God was with the Germans at the loftiest moments of their history, the theologians passed to the conviction that the German state was itself a Divine institution.

"Patriotism as an unconditional justification of the state became practically a religious postulate. In 1902 the Kiel theologian Otto Baumgarten published a sermon that immediately became exceptionally popular: *Jesu Patriotismus*. In it he tried to prove that the religious duty of every person should become higher than his individual interests and that he should be ready to give everything for the homeland. His colleagues in every way supported the *Weltpolitik* – the colonial and imperialist strivings – of Kaiser Wilhelm and the growth, for the sake of this, of the military and naval might of Germany. Some, for example Friedrich Naumann (1860-1919), tried to unite the ideas of German nationalism and socialism. Naumann supposed that Germany's struggle to acquire a leading position in the world in the conditions of imperial competition had to have its value and justification, *die Ethisierung der Machtkämpfe*.

"One other authoritative theologian of the time, Ferdinand Kattenbusch (1851-1935), in his pamphlet *Das sittliche Recht des Kreiges* (The Moral Right to go to War), suggested, for the sake of justifying German imperialism, an idiosyncratic interpretation of the words of Christ on love for one's neighbour. In his words, individual people living in this world cannot fully carry out the commandment on love. Nevertheless, to the degree accessible to each the spirit of love for one's neighbour could be realized by the Christian in his desire to correct his neighbour. And this it was possible to do through compulsion. If it was necessary to correct one's neighbours in large numbers, then one could and should apply military force. Military force applied for the sake of correcting the infirmities and sins of one's neighbour, according to Kattenbusch, is the fulfilment of Christ's commandment on love. Kattenbusch believed that nations each have their soul. In some nations their soul is infected by vice, and so they need military intervention for the sake of their own correction. But the German soul was the purest and most radiant of all the European souls and for that reason had the right to judge who needed correction, including through military chastisement.

"As Klaus Fondung concludes in his very interesting study, *Deutsche Apokalypse 1914*: 'At the centre of the 'German Apocalypse' of the 1914 vintage lay a conception of war as the tribunal of the world (*Weltgericht*) – a tribunal at which God judged Germany's enemies. How God judged we know from the following sequence of events. The world paid too high a price for the path to 'the tribunal over Germany's enemies' until the 'Nuremberg tribunal' ...'"²⁸⁸

²⁸⁸ Govorun, "Zavtra byla Vojna" (Tomorrow there was War), *Religia v Ukraine*, March 10, 2014, in *Portal-Credo.ru*, March 12, 2014.

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The most influential German writer of the age was Nietzsche. He had been opposed to the new post-1871 Germany, but many of his nihilist ideas had penetrated deep into the German consciousness. Not for nothing have they been seen to foreshadow and influence the coming of Hitler, who visited his archive in 1934...

What drove Nietzsche, writes Margaret Macmillan, "was a conviction that Western civilization had gone badly wrong, indeed had been going wrong for the past two millennia, and that most of the ideas and practices which dominated it were completely wrong. Humanity, in his view, was doomed unless it made a clear break and started to think clearly and allow itself to feel deeply. His targets included positivism, bourgeois conventions, Christianity (his father was a Protestant minister) and indeed all organized religion, perhaps all organization itself. He was against capitalism and modern industrial society, and 'the herd people' it produced. Humans, Nietzsche told his readers, had forgotten that life was not orderly and conventional, but vital and dangerous. To reach the heights of spiritual reawakening it was necessary to break out of the confines of conventional morality and religion. God, he famously said, is dead... Those who embraced the challenge Nietzsche was throwing down would become the Supermen. In the coming century, there would be a 'new party of life' which would take humanity to a higher level, 'including the merciless destruction of everything that is degenerate and parasitical'. Life, he said, is 'appropriation, injury, conquest of the strange and weak, suppression, severity...' The young Serbian nationalists who carried out the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand and so precipitated the Great War were deeply impressed by Nietzsche's views..."²⁸⁹

Peter Watson writes: "Throughout the nineteenth century there had been endless arguments about what actually was and was not German (its borders did keep changing), and Nietzsche was press ganged into this debate. During the 1890s and thereafter more and more people began to adapt his Germanness and the Nietzsche-German relationship into an ideology. By this account, Germanness was an exclusive precondition for truly understanding him and what he was saying. Here, for example, is Oswald Spengler on Nietzsche:

"Goethe's life was a full life, and that means it brought something to completion. Countless Germans will honour Goethe, live with him, and seek his support; but he can never transform them. Nietzsche's effect is a transformation, for the melody of his vision did not end with his death... His work is not a part of our past to be enjoyed; it is a task that makes servants of us all... In an age that does not tolerate otherworldly idols... when the only thing of recognizable value is the kind of ruthless action that Nietzsche baptized with the name of Cesare Borgia - in such an age, unless we learn to

²⁸⁹ Macmillan, *The War that Ended the Peace*, London: Profile, 2014, pp. 237-238.

act as real history wants us to act, we will cease to exist as a people. We cannot live without a form that does not merely console in difficult situations, but helps one get out of them. This kind of hard wisdom made its first appearance in German thought with Nietzsche.'

"Carl Jung was no less impressed. He viewed Nietzsche as a development beyond Protestantism, just as Protestantism was itself an outgrowth beyond Catholicism. Nietzsche's idea of the Superman was, he believed, 'the thing in man that takes the place of the God.'

"Notwithstanding the enthusiasm of these and other luminaries, it was the youth and avant-garde of the 1890s who made up the bulk of Nietzsche's followers. This had a lot to do with the state of the Kaiserreich, which was perceived then to be both spiritually and politically mediocre. To these people, Nietzsche was seen as a pivotal, turn-of-the-century figure, 'a man whose stature was comparable only to Buddha, Zarathustra or Jesus Christ.' Even his madness was endowed by supporters with a spiritual quality. For here was Nietzsche like the madman in his own story, someone who had been driven crazy by his vision and the alienation of a society not yet able to comprehend him. The German Expressionists had a fascination with madness for its allegedly liberating qualities, as they did for all extreme forms of life, and they identified Nietzsche as both a spokesman and an exemplar. Opponents dismissed him, quite wrongly as it turned out, as a 'degenerate' who would 'rave for a season, and then perish'.

"Despite the divisions he aroused, his popularity grew. Novels and plays tried to capture and dramatize his already dramatic ideas. People all over Europe started to have 'intoxicating' Zarathustra experiences. Le Corbusier had a *Zarathustra-Erlebnis* (a Zarathustra 'experience' or 'insight') in 1908. Nietzschean concepts like the *will to power* and *Übermensch* entered the vocabulary. Richard Strauss's tone poem, *Also Sprach Zarathustra* was premiered in Frankfurt-am-Main in November 1896, the most famous but not the only major artwork stimulated by Nietzsche – Mahler's *Third Symphony* was another, originally entitled *The Gay Science*.

"The glossy illustrated magazine *Pan* featured Nietzschean poems in his honor but also printed drawings and sculptures of him, seemingly whenever they got the chance. Between 1890 and 1914 his portrait was everywhere, his bushy moustache becoming a widespread visual symbol, making his face as famous as his aphorisms. From the mid-1890s, encouraged by the Nietzsche archives (under the control of his sister), 'Nietzsche-cult products' were made available in generous amounts, a move that would certainly have maddened him had he been capable of such feelings. Hermann Hesse was just one well-known writer who had two images of Nietzsche on his study wall in Tübingen. His face was also a popular device on bookplates, one image showing him as a latter-day Christ, with a crown of thorns. The working-class press appropriated his image as a familiar and succinct way to mock the capitalist commercialization of culture.

“Some even adopted what they called Nietzschean ‘lifestyles’, the most striking example being the designer/architect Peter Behrens. Behrens designed his own ‘Zarathustrian’ villa as a centrepiece of the experimental Darmstadt artists’ colony. The house was adorned with symbols such as the eagle, and Zarathustra’s diamond, which radiated ‘the virtues of a world that is not yet here’. Behrens surpassed even this in the German pavilion he designed for the Turin 1902 Exposition. In a surreal cavern, light flooded the interior in which the industrial might of the Second Reich was on display. Zarathustra, cited explicitly, progresses toward the light.

“Bruno Taut (1880-1938), an Expressionist architect, became a prominent exponent of a cult of mountains that emerged and was associated with Nietzsche. Taut’s ‘Alpine Architecture’ attempted to envision an entire chain of mountains transformed into ‘landscapes of Grail-shrines and crystal-lined caves’, so that, in the end, whole continents would be covered with ‘glass and precious stones in the form of “ray-domes” and sparkling palaces.’

“In a similar vein was the Zarathustrian cult of *Bergeinsamkeit*, ‘the longing to escape the crowded cities and to feel the pristine mountain air’. Giovanni Segantini, a painter and another enthusiastic Nietzschean, specialized in views of the Engadine, the mountain region that inspired Nietzsche when he was writing *Also Sprach Zarathustra*. So popular did his work prove that pilgrims and tourists flocked to these mountains: ‘The *Einsamkeitserlebnis* – the experience of being alone – was transferred into a mass business!’ The flourishing of a Nietzschean-kitsch industry, which would have horrified Nietzsche himself, was another ironic indication of his popularity among the ‘philistines’. Paul Friedrich’s play *The Third Reich* was one of several that put Zarathustra onstage, in this case clad in a silver-and-gold costume flung insouciantly over his shoulder. At times, people worried that the Nietzsche cult was outdoing Nietzsche himself. In 1893, Max Nordau wrote about the Nietzsche Jugend – the Nietzsche youth – as if they were an identifiable group.

“As time went by it became increasingly clear that Germany, and to a lesser extent the rest of Europe, was now populated by Nietzsche generations – in the plural. Thomas Mann was one who recognized this:

“‘We who were born around 1870 are too close to Nietzsche, we participate too directly in his tragedy, his personal fate (perhaps the most terrible, most awe-inspiring fate in intellectual history). Our Nietzsche is Nietzsche militant. Nietzsche triumphant belongs to those born fifteen years after us. We have from him our psychological sensitivity, our lyrical criticism, the experience of Wagner, the experience of Christianity, the experience of ‘modernity’ – experiences from which we shall never completely break free... They are too precious for that, too profound, too fruitful.’

“Nietzsche was in particular looked upon as a new type of challenge, paradoxically akin to the forces of socialism, a modern ‘seducer’, whose

advocacy was even more persuasive than the 'odious equalizing of social democracy'. Georg Tantzsch thought Nietzscheanism fitted neatly the needs of the free-floating intelligentsia, trapped as they were 'between isolation and a sense of mission, the drive to withdraw from society and the drive to lead it.' In his 1897 book on the Nietzsche cult, the sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies accused Nietzscheanism of being 'pseudo-liberational'. People, he said, 'were captivated by the promise of the release of creative powers, the appeal to overcome narrow-minded authority and conventional opinions, and free self-expression.' But he condemned Nietzscheanism as superficial, serving elitist, conservative and 'laissez-faire functions' that went quite against the social-democratic spirit of the age.

"A little later, in 1908, in *The Nietzsche Cult: A Chapter in the History of the Aberrations of the Human Spirit*, the philosopher Wolfgang Becker also appeared puzzled that so many 'cultured luminaries' were attracted to the Nietzschean message, but he agreed with Mann that it meant different things to different people. To the young, Nietzsche's analysis seemed 'deep'; but the German colonial officials in Africa employed his *Herrenmoral* ideal practically every day, as they felt it was suited perfectly to 'the colonial mode of rule'.

"The sociologist and philosopher Georg Simmel also took his color from Nietzsche. His central concept, *Vornehmheit*, the ideal of 'distinction', owed everything to Nietzsche. Simmel looked upon *Vornehmheit* as the defining quality by which individuals 'could be separated from the crowd and endowed with "nobility"'. For Simmel, this was a new ideal stemming from the dilemma of how to create personal values in a money economy. Nietzsche had encouraged the pursuit of specific values – *Vornehmheit*, beauty, strength – each of which he said enhanced life and which, 'far from encouraging egoism, demanded greater self-control'.

"Marxists thought that Nietzscheanism nakedly served capitalism, imperialism and afterward fascism, and that Nietzscheans were no more than the ultimate in bourgeois pseudo-radicalism, never touching on the underlying exploitation, and leaving the socioeconomic class structure intact.

"People liked to observe the irony that Nietzsche was dead long before God, but Aschheim maintains that he was simply 'unburiable'. 'Nietzsche was not a piece of learning,' wrote Franz Servis in 1895, but a part of life, 'the reddest blood of our time'. He has not died: 'Oh, we shall all still have to drink of his blood! Not one of us will be spared that.'...

"Even the choice of Weimar as the location of the Nietzsche archive was intended to emulate – if not surpass – the similar shrine of that other self-styled protector of Germany spirituality, at Bayreuth. Nietzsche's sister, Elizabeth Förster-Nietzsche, and her colleagues played a deliberate role in the monumentalization and mythologizing of the philosopher. For example, his sister sought to create an 'authorized' Nietzsche, her main object being to

'depathologize' her brother, and in so doing remove the subversive from his ideas, making him – as she thought – 'respectable'.

"The most grandiose and monumental of plans – much more so than the archive – came from the more enlightened and cosmopolitan adherents. In 1911, for instance, Harry Graf Kessler, the Anglo-German patron of the arts and author of *Berlin in Lights*, envisaged building a huge festival area as a memorial, comprising a temple, a large stadium and an enormous sculpture of Apollo. In this space, intended to hold thousands, art, dance, theatre and sports competitions would be combined into a 'Nietzschean totality'. Aristide Maillol agreed to build the statue, using none other than Vaslav Nijinsky as the model. André Gide, Anatole France, Walther Rathenau, Gabriele d'Annunzio, Gilbert Murray and H.G. Wells joined the fund-raising committee. The project failed only when Elizabeth Förster-Nietzsche withdrew her support in 1913.

"Until the First World War, Nietzsche exerted a wide influence on the arts. However, the Great War... totally changed public attitudes toward Nietzsche and the impact of his ideas.

"Probably, Nietzsche's most explosive and enduring impact was on the intellectual, artistic and literary avant-garde – his invitation 'to be something new, to *signify* something new, to *represent* new values' was emblematic of what Steven Aschheim also calls the 'Nietzschean generation'. Nietzsche gave point to the *avant garde's* alienation from the high culture of the establishment. The two forces he favoured were radical, secular self-creation and the Dionysian imperative of self-submersion. This led to several attempts to fuse the individualist impulse within a search for new forms of 'total' community, the redemptive community...

"While Nietzsche's identification of the nihilist predicament was a starting point, people swiftly moved on. They sought a transformed civilization that encouraged and reflected a new *übermenschlich* type, creating excitement, authenticity, intensity, and in all ways superior to what had gone before. 'What I was engaged in,' recalled Ernst Blass, the Expressionist poet, referring to café life in imperial Berlin, was 'a war on the gigantic philistinism of those days... What was in the air? Above all Van Gogh, Nietzsche, Freud too, and Wedeking. What was wanted was a post-rational Dionysos.'

"Freud and Nietzsche had in common that both sought to remove the metaphysical explanation of experience, and both stressed 'self-creation' as the central meaningful activity of life. While Freud strained for respectability, Nietzscheanism reveled in notoriety; but in most ways they were compatible, being stridently... anti-rationalist; and, with its Dionysian rhetoric, the artistic production of the Nietzscheans sought to unlock the wild reaches of the unconscious. *Übermensch* strongmen feature prominently in the novels of Gabriele d'Annunzio and Hermann Conrad, where the characters are involved

in often brutal searches for innocence and authenticity, as often as not destroying in order to create..."²⁹⁰

In 1914, continues Watson, "a London bookseller denounced the war as 'the Euro-Nietzschean war'. He was referring to the (for him) surprising fact that the outbreak of war saw a marked rise in the sale of works by Nietzsche. This was partly because many of Germany's enemies thought that the German philosopher was the chief villain, the man most to blame for the war in the first place, and the individual responsible, as time wore on, for its brutalities.

"In his book *Nietzsche and the Ideals of Germany*, H.I. Stewart, a Canadian professor of philosophy, describes the Great War as a battle between 'an unscrupulous Nietzschean immoralism' and 'the cherished principles of Christian restraint'. Thomas Hardy was similarly incensed, complaining to several British newspapers: 'I should think there is no instance since history began of a country being so demoralized by a single writer'. Germany was seen as a nation of would-be supermen who, in Romain Rolland's words, had become a 'scourge of God'. To many it seemed as if the abyss had been plumbed, that the death of God, so loudly advertised by Nietzsche, had finally brought about the apocalypse many had predicted.

"In Germany, the theologian and historian Theodor Kappstein admitted that Nietzsche *was* the philosopher of the world war because he had educated a whole generation toward 'a life-endangering honesty, towards a contempt for death... to a sacrifice on the altar of the whole, towards heroism and quiet, joyful greatness.' Even Max Schuler, a better-known philosopher (and later a favourite of Pope John Paul II), in *The Genius of War and the German War* (1915) praised the 'ennobling' aspects of conflict. He welcomed the war as a return to 'the organic roots of human existence... We were no longer what we had been - alone! The sundered living contact between the series individual-people-nation-world-God was restored in an instant.' The communal 'we', Schuler said, 'is in our consciousness before the individualized self', the latter 'an artificial product of cultured tradition and a historic process'.

"Though the claims - both for and against Nietzsche's influence - may have been overblown, they were not without foundation. In Germany, together with Goethe's *Faust* and the New Testament, *Thus Spake Zarathustra* was the most popular work that literate soldiers took into battle, 'for inspiration and consolation'. More than that, according to Steven Aschheim, 150,000 copies of a specially durable wartime edition were distributed to the troops. Even one or two literate non-German soldiers took the book with them, notably Robert Graves and Gabriele d'Annunzio. Nor should we forget that the assassin of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, Gavrilo Princip, whose action precipitated the crisis of 1914, was fond of reciting Nietzsche's poem *Ecce Homo*: 'Insatiable as a flame, I burn and consume myself.'

²⁹⁰ Watson, *The Age of Atheists*, London: Simon & Schuster, 2014, pp.34-39.

“Whatever we make of all that, the second point still takes some getting used to. This is the fact that in 1914 so many people *welcomed* the war. This, too, had certain Nietzschean overtones, in that war was seen as the ultimate test of one’s heroic qualities, a test of will and an unrivalled opportunity for ecstatic experience. But it was more than that – far more. For many, the war was seen as *redemptive*.

“But redemption from what? One might ask. In fact, there was no shortage of candidates. Before 1914, the very appeal of Nietzsche lay in his widespread critique of the decadence people saw everywhere about them. Stefan George... argued in *Der Stern des Bundes* that a war would ‘purify’ a spiritually moribund society, while the German dramaturge Edwin Piscator agreed, claiming that the generation that went to war was ‘spiritually bankrupt’. Stefan Zweig saw the conflict as some kind of spiritual safety valve, referring to Freud’s argument that the release of ‘the instinctual’ could not be contained by reason alone. Typically, the Expressionists looked forward to the death of bourgeois society, ‘from whose ashes a nobler world would arise’.”²⁹¹

The old, spiritually moribund world did go up in flames. But out of its ashes there arose, not a nobler world, but an even more savage one. For the soldiers had to make a choice between the two books they took with them into battle: the New Testament or *Also Sprach Zarathustra*. And the tragedy was that, apart from some Orthodox soldiers on the Eastern front, it was the latter, antichristian work that triumphed in the minds of many, thereby making the age that followed truly that of the collective Antichrist...

The vital importance of Nietzscheanism was emphasized by the famous Serbian Bishop Nikolai Velimirovič, who was sent by Serbia as an unofficial ambassador to England during the war, and became very popular there.

The real struggle, said Velimirovič, was between the All-Man, Christ, and the Superman of Nietzsche, between the doctrine that Right is Might and the opposite one that might is right. For German Christianity with its all-devouring scientism and theological scepticism had already surrendered to Nietzscheanism: “I wonder... that Professor Harnack, one of the chief representatives of German Christianity, omitted to see how every hollow that he and his colleagues made in traditional Christianity in Germany was at once filled with the all-conquering Nietzscheanism. And I wonder... whether he is now aware that in the nineteen hundred and fourteenth year of our Lord, when he and other destroyers of the Bible, who proclaimed Christ a dreamy maniac [and] clothed Christianity in rags, Nietzscheanism arose [as] the real religion of the German race.”²⁹²

²⁹¹ Watson, *op. cit.*, pp. 187-189.

²⁹² Velimirovič, “The Religious Spirit of the Slavs”, in *Sabrana Dela* (Collected Works), volume 3, 1986, Khimelstir, 1986, pp. 221-222.

In another place Bishop Nikolai spread the blame more widely on Europe as a whole: "The spirit was wrong, and everything became wrong. The spirit of any civilization is inspired by its religion, but the spirit of modern Europe was not inspired by Europe's religion at all. A terrific effort was made in many quarters to liberate Europe from the spirit of her religion. The effort-makers forgot one thing, i.e. that no civilization ever was liberated from religion and still lived. Whenever this liberation seemed to be fulfilled, the respective civilization decayed and died out, leaving behind barbaric materialism in towns and superstitions in villages. Europe had to live with Christianity, or to die in barbaric materialism and superstitions without it. The way to death was chosen. From Continental Europe first the infection came to the whole white race. It was there that the dangerous formula [of Nietzsche] was pointed out: 'Beyond good and evil'. Other parts of the white world followed slowly, taking first the path between Good and Evil. Good was changed for Power. Evil was explained away as Biological Necessity. The Christian religion, which inspired the greatest things that Europe ever possessed in every point of human activity, was degraded by means of new watchwords: individualism, liberalism, conservatism, nationalism, imperialism, secularism, which in essence meant nothing but the de-christianization of European society, or, in other words, the emptiness of European civilization. Europe abandoned the greatest things she possessed and clung to the lower and lowest ones. The greatest thing was - Christ.

"As you cannot imagine Arabic civilization in Spain without Islam, or India's civilization without Hinduism, or Rome without the Roman Pantheon, so you cannot imagine Europe's civilization without Christ. Yet some people thought that Christ was not so essentially needed for Europe, and behaved accordingly without Him or against Him. Christ was Europe's God. When this God was banished from politics, art, science, social life, business, education, everybody consequently asked for a God, and everybody thought himself to be a god... So godless Europe became full of gods!

"Being de-christianized, Europe still thought to be civilized. In reality she was a poor valley full of dry bones. The only thing she had to boast of was her material power. By material power only she impressed and frightened the unchristian (but not antichristian) countries of Central and Eastern Asia, and depraved the rustic tribes in Africa and elsewhere. She went to conquer not by God or for God, but by material power and for material pleasure. Her spirituality did not astonish any of the peoples on earth. Her materialism astonished all of them... What an amazing poverty! She gained the whole world, and when she looked inside herself she could not find her soul. Where has Europe's soul fled? The present war will give the answer. It is not a war to destroy the world but to show Europe's poverty and to bring back her soul. It will last as long as Europe remains soulless, Godless, Christless. It will stop when Europe gets the vision of her soul, her only God, her only wealth."²⁹³

²⁹³ Velimirovich, "The Agony of the Church", in *Sabrana Dela* (Collected Works), volume 3, 1986, Khimelstir, pp. 83-84.

June 9/22, 2019.

23. THE EASTERN QUESTION, PAN-HELLENISM AND PAN-SLAVISM

If liberalism, socialism, anarchism and other false beliefs were sapping the foundations of Holy Russia in the nineteenth century, a different, albeit related disease was corrupting the rest of the Orthodox *oikoumene*: *nationalism*. Like many in the West, the Orthodox nations of the Balkans and the Middle East were thinking of one thing: *freedom!* The Balkan Orthodox had already started to liberate themselves from the weakening Turks. And the Greeks in the Free State of Greece wanted freedom for their fellow countrymen still under the Ottoman yoke in accordance with their "great idea" of the re-establishment of the Byzantine Empire. Whether the Greek dreams of the resurrection of Byzantium were compatible with the Slav dreams of their own liberation was a moot point...

These winds of freedom were less strongly felt by the Greeks still under the Ottoman yoke (as by the Serbs still under the Habsburg yoke). For one thing, the Ecumenical Patriarchate, together with the monks of Mount Athos over whom it had jurisdiction, stood for strict, traditional Orthodoxy, for which spiritual freedom is much more important than national freedom. As such, it resisted the liberal, westernizing trends that were gradually gaining the upper hand in Athens, Belgrade, Sophia and Bucharest. Another reason was that they already had considerable power. The Ecumenical Patriarch was the civil as well as the ecclesiastical head under the Sultan of all the Balkan Orthodox, and the rich Phanariots that supported the Patriarch were among the most privileged citizens of the Ottoman empire.

Orthodox traditionalism and anti-liberalism made the patriarchate a natural ally of the Russian government. However, after the Crimean War, Russia was no longer protector of the Christians at the Sublime Porte - and the Greeks felt the difference. And not only the Greeks. Thus in 1860 the Orthodox of Damascus were subjected to a massacre which the Russians were not able to prevent or avenge. According to A.P. Lopukhin, "the Christian subjects of the Sultan, whatever oppression and humiliation they were suffering, were now unable to rely on any outside help but were obliged to rely solely on their own resources... During the last years of the reign of Abdul Mecid [1839-61],... the Greeks... not only remained in a dreadful social and economic state, but even lost many of their former rights and privileges."²⁹⁴

The reason for this was a series of liberal reforms that the Western Powers imposed on Turkey at the Treaty of Paris in 1856, and which the Ottomans issued in the form of an Imperial Rescript. These were seen as supplementing and strengthening the policy of reform known as *tanzimat* that Turkey had begun in 1839. Their aim was to improve the lot of the Christians under Ottoman rule.

²⁹⁴ Lopukhin, *Istoria Khristianskoj Tserkvi v XIX veke* (A History of the Christian Church in the 19th Century), St. Petersburg, 1901, vol. II, pp. 47-48.

In fact, however, they made it worse. Thus both Christians and Muslims were promised equality before the law in place of their separate legal systems - which, however, both groups wanted to retain. Again, the economic reforms, which essentially involved the imposition of liberal free-trade principles on the empire, were harmful to both groups. For neither the Orthodox nor the Muslims could compete with the mass-produced products now pouring in from the West, while Ottoman industries were deprived of the protection they needed in order to survive. But the Ottomans were massively in debt to the West, so they were in no position to refuse the terms of trade imposed upon them.

As living conditions declined, and the power of the patriarch over his people weakened, national passions exploded. In 1861 rebellions broke out in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Bulgaria, Wallachia and Moldavia. In 1866 it was the turn of the island of Crete, where in an extraordinary outburst of nationalist passion reminiscent of the Russian Old Ritualists Abbot Gabriel of the monastery of Arkadiou blew up himself and nearly a thousand other Greeks rather than surrender to the Turks. Further rebellions broke out in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Bulgaria in the 1870s.

These events placed the Russian government in a quandary. Russia had been looking to liberate the Balkans and Constantinople from the Turkish yoke since the seventeenth century.²⁹⁵ Catherine the Great hoped to liberate Constantinople and place her grandson Konstantin on the throne there, and the liberation of Constantinople would continue to be seen as an imperial aim until the very fall of the Russian Empire in 1917. But it was only at two moments in the nineteenth century, 1829-30 and 1877-78, that its achievement looked a distinct possibility, even probability. "The Eastern Question" came down to: which power was to rule Constantinople? Or: were the Orthodox nations subject to the Ottoman empire to be liberated at their own hands, at the hands of the Russians, or through the concerted pressure of the great powers on Turkey?

For most of the nineteenth century Russia had been governed in her foreign policy by two not completely compatible principles or obligations: her obligations as a member of the Triple Alliance of monarchist states (Russia, Austria and Prussia) against the revolution, and her obligations as the Third Rome and the Protector of Orthodox Christians everywhere. As a member of the Triple Alliance Russia could not be seen to support any revolution against a legitimate power. That is why Tsar Alexander I refused to support the Greek Revolution in 1821 - the monarchist powers considered the Ottoman empire to

²⁹⁵ Thus "on April 12th, 1791," writes Roman Golicz, "a cartoon was published in London entitled 'An Imperial Stride!' depicting Catherine the Great with one foot in Russia and the other in Constantinople. The image recalls the empress's epic tour to the Crimea in 1787 when she entered Kherson through an arch inscribed 'The Way to Constantinople'" ("The Russians Shall Not Have Constantinople", *History Today*, September, 2003, p. 39.

be a legitimate power. On the other hand, as the Third Rome and Protector of all Orthodox Christians, Russia naturally wished to come to the aid of the Orthodox Greeks, Serbs, Bulgars and Romanians under the oppressive Turkish yoke.

In spite of Nicholas I's intervention in Greece in 1829, his priority was not the protection of Orthodox Christians from the Turkish authorities but the protection of all legitimate regimes against the revolution. In practice, this meant all the major powers including Turkey but excluding France. So it was from a legitimist position that he intervened in the Greek revolution in 1829 by invading the Ottoman empire, twice crushed uprisings of the Poles against his own rule, and in 1849 crushed the Hungarian rising against Austria-Hungary. However, the quarrels between the Greek Orthodox and the Roman Catholics over the Holy Sepulchre led him to take a more specifically "Third Rome" stand. As we have seen, this led eventually to the Crimean War against Turkey, Britain and France, which, as Oliver Figes' authoritative study of the war confirms, was essentially a religious war between Orthodoxy and Islam, with the Western states supporting the Muslims.²⁹⁶

Although the Crimean War constituted a defeat for the "Third Rome" policy, it inflicted even more damage on the legitimist principle; for illegitimate France was now legitimized again (the treaty ending the war was signed in Paris), while the Tsars never again fully trusted the legitimate monarchy of Austria-Hungary, which had not supported Russia in the war in spite of Russia's vital intervention to save it in the revolution of 1848-49.

So intervention for the sake of the Orthodox again became popular, especially as a new wave of rebellions against Turkish rule began in the Balkans.

Russian intervention under Alexander II was different from earlier interventions under Nicholas I. Under Nicholas, wrote Leontiev, "there was more talk of *the rights of Russian protection, of Russian power.*" However, from the 1860s "Russian diplomacy, the Russian press and Russian society began to speak more and more loudly in favour of the Christians of the East, without relying, as in the 50s, on the right of *our power*, but much more on *the rights of the Sultan's Christian subjects themselves.*" In other words, *human rights*, rather than *Russia's rights*. And so Turkey "was forced to make concessions to us constantly on the path of the liberal reforms that we suggested for the Christians. Because of this Turkey became weaker; the Christians became bolder and bolder, and we in the course of twenty years in all, step by step, destroyed the Turkish empire."²⁹⁷

²⁹⁶ Figes, *Crimea*, London: Allen Lane, 2010, p. 9.

²⁹⁷ Leontiev, "Pis'ma o vostochnykh delakh - I" (Letters on Eastern Matters - I), in *Vostok, Rossia i Slaviansstvo* (The East, Russia and Slavdom), Moscow, 1996, p. 354. Cf. Mansel, *Constantinople*, p. 248: "Wellington revealed the great truth: 'The Ottoman Empire stands not for the benefit of the Turks but of Christian Europe.' Metternich pronounced the preservation of the Ottoman Empire in Europe 'a political necessity for Austria!'"

But the paradoxical fact was that the gradual weakening of the Ottoman empire, and liberation of the Christians from under the Turkish yoke, while to be welcomed in itself, contained great spiritual dangers for the Orthodox commonwealth. For the removal of the yoke gave renewed strength to two diseases that had plagued the Orthodox since even before 1453: the inclination towards western humanist culture, and the nationalist rivalries between the Orthodox powers themselves.

Moreover, after the French revolution, and especially after the Greek revolution of 1821, the two diseases began to work on each other. Thus western ideas about freedom and the rights of individuals and nations began to interact with frictions among the Christians caused by Greek bishops' insensitivity to the needs of their Slavic, Romanian and Arabic flocks to produce a potentially revolutionary situation.

The Turkish conquest of the whole of the Balkans suppressed both diseases without completely eliminating either. On the one hand, western influence was seen as harmful by the Turks as it was by the Orthodox Christians, and the Ottoman authorities acted to cut it off.²⁹⁸ On the other hand, the *millet* system recognized only one Orthodox nation under the Ecumenical Patriarch, thereby cutting off the possibility of inter-Orthodox wars.

These two very important benefits of the Turkish yoke went some way to offsetting its disadvantages in the form of the restrictions on missionary activity, the forced induction of Bosnian boys into the Janissaries, and intermittent persecutions; just as the advantages of the pagan *pax Romana* had outweighed its disadvantages during the pagan Roman empire. The Christian leaders in both Church and State - specifically, the Tsar of Russia and the Patriarch of Constantinople - understood this. So they did not try to destroy the empire, while at the same time trying to mitigate its savagery.

Leontiev also understood this. Thus "it is necessary," he wrote, "as far as possible, to preserve the Porte; the Porte must be served; it must be defended. And I agree with this point of view of the Phanariots: the pasha is better than the Hellene democratic nomarch (prefect): the pasha is more monarchical, more statist, cleverer, broader."²⁹⁹

²⁹⁸ For example, "when in the eighteenth century the Orthodox in Syria complained to the Porte of Catholic propaganda, the following decree was issued: 'Some of the devilish French monks, with evil purposes and unjust intentions, are passing through the country and are filling the Greek rayah with their worthless French doctrine; by means of stupid speeches they are deflecting the rayah from its ancient faith and are inculcating the French faith. Such French monks have no right to remain anywhere except in those places where their consuls are located; they should not undertake any journeys or engage in missionary work' (in Fr. Alexander Schmemmann, *The Historical Road of Eastern Orthodoxy*, Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1963, p. 284).

²⁹⁹ Leontiev, "Pis'ma o vostochnykh delakh" (Letters on Eastern Affairs), *Vostok, Rossia i Slaviansstvo*, op. cit., p. 362.

Now the Greek "great idea" (μεγαλη ιδεα), otherwise known as *Pan-Hellenism*, consisted in the idea that all the traditionally Greek lands not yet freed from the Turks - Crete, Epirus, Macedonia, Thrace, even Constantinople and the vast territory of Asia Minor - should be united under Greek suzerainty. This idea dated from well before the Greek revolution of 1821; some say it began immediately after the fall of Constantinople in 1453; but it gathered headway after the foundation of the Free State of Greece, being nourished especially by western-educated liberal thinkers in Athens. It is not to be confused with the universalist idea of *Byzantinism*, the faith and culture of Christian Rome...

Unfortunately, Pan-Hellenism tended to enter into conflict with other Orthodox nationalisms, especially those of the Serbs and Bulgars. Thus in Macedonia and Thrace there were now more Slavs than Greeks - and the Slavs were not going to give up their lands to the Greeks without a fight. Moreover, Greek nationalist pressure was exerted not only in lands that had traditionally been inhabited mainly by Greeks, like Macedonia and Thrace, but also in originally Slavic (and Arab) lands, where Greek-speaking priests were imposed on non-Greek-speaking populations.

These injustices suffered by the Slavs at the hands of the Greeks elicited the sympathy of notable Russians such as Alexis Khomiakov and Bishop Theophan the Recluse. The latter, as archimandrite, was sent by the Russian government and the Holy Synod to Constantinople to gather information on the Greco-Bulgarian quarrel. On March 9, 1857 he presented his report, in which his sympathies for the Bulgarians were manifest. However, on the broader political plane he by no means rejected the Ecumenical Patriarchate, but called on "magnanimous" Russia to come to her aid - "we must not abandon our mother in the faith in this helpless situation of hers".³⁰⁰

The Greeks distrusted this movement in Russian society for the liberation of the Southern Slavs. Whereas earlier generations would have welcomed any incursion of Russia into the Balkans, hoping that the Tsar would liberate Constantinople and give it to the Greeks, the modern, more nationalist-minded Greeks rejected any such interference. For in Free Greece Russia was no longer seen as the liberator of the Balkans for the sake of the Orthodoxy that the Russian and Balkan peoples shared, but as the potential enslaver of the Balkans for the sake of Russian *Pan-Slavism*. More specifically, the Greeks suspected that Russia wanted to help Bulgaria take the ancient Greek lands of Thrace and Macedonia in which there was now a large Bulgarian population. Thus Pan-Slavism was seen as the great threat to Pan-Hellenism. True, many Greeks, especially in the Ottoman Empire and on Mount Athos, cherished more charitable views of Russia, which continued to support the Orthodox under the Turkish yoke in many ways. But the views of the western-educated liberals in Athens were gaining ground...

³⁰⁰ St. Theophan's *Life*, in Archimandrite Nikon (Ivanov) and Protopriest Nicholas (Likhomakov), *Zhitia Russkikh Sviatykh (Lives of the Russian Saints)*, Tutaev, 2000, vol. 2, p. 716.

A sign of the times was the court case that took place on Mount Athos in 1874-75 between the Russian and Greek monks of the monastery of St. Panteleimon with regard to the rights of the Russian monks to stay there. "The case divided the whole of Athos into two opposing camps: the Greek monks and the Russian monks. Only a few of the Greeks had the courage to support the Russians. Thanks to the energy and insistence with which the Russian monks defended their rights to the monastery, with documents in their hands and with the strong support of the Russian consul at the Porte [Count N.P. Ignatiev], the case ended with victory for the Russians."³⁰¹

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The phenomenon of so-called Pan-Slavism was misunderstood and exaggerated by the Greeks. While there was some talk in Russia - for example, by Michael Katkov at the ethnographic exhibition in Moscow in 1867³⁰² - of bringing all the Slavs together into a single polity under Russia just as the German lands were being brought together under Prussia, this was never a serious political proposition and never entertained by any of the Tsars. It existed more in the minds of the Greeks than in reality.

Indeed, the famous Serbian Bishop Nikolai (Velimirovich) was inclined to deny the very existence of Pan-Slavism, saying that it was invented by the Germans: "Who thought up Pan-Slavism and spoke about it to the world? The Pan-Germanists! Yes, it was precisely the Pan-Germanists who thought up Pan-Slavism and sounded out about it to the whole world. Man always judges about others from himself. If Pan-Germanism exists, then why should Pan-Slavism not exist? However, this analogy, however much it may appear to represent the rule, is inaccurate in this case. Pan-Germanism existed and exists, while Pan-Slavism was not and is not now. Everybody knows that there is a Pan-German party in both Germany and Austria. We know that there exists Pan-German journalism, and pan-German clubs, and pan-German literature, and pan-German organizations, and pan-German banks. But in the Slavic world, by contrast, there exists nothing of the kind. As a Slav, I would have known about it, and as a free man I would have spoken about it all openly. However, in the Slavic world there exists something which is somewhat different from the Pan-Slavic spectre - a feeling, only a feeling, which is to be found more often in literature than in politics - Slavophilism. This is the same feeling of blood kinship and sympathy that exists in Italy towards the French, which is far from political Pan-Romanism, or the same feeling of kinship that exists in the United States towards the English and in England towards the Americans, although here also it is far from any kind of fantastic Pan-Anglicanism. It is a sentimental striving for kin, a nostalgia of the blood, a certain organic fear of being separated from one's own. And if in

³⁰¹ Lopukhin, *op. cit.*, pp. 136-137. For more on this quarrel, see Deacon Peter Pakhomov, "O Prekraschenii Afonskoj Smuty, Igumene Makarii i Generale Ignatieve" (On the Ending of the Athos Time of Troubles, Abbot Macarius and General Ignatiev), 1 October, 2015.

³⁰² Sir Geoffrey Hosking, *Russia. People and Empire, 1552-1917*, London: HarperCollins, 1997, p. 369.

this Slavophilism the penetrating note of love is just a little more audible than in Romanophilism or Anglophilism (and I think that it is audible), then this is completely natural and comprehensible. People who suffer are closer to each other than people who are lords. We Slavs, first of all as Slavs, and secondly as oppressed slaves, love and strive towards those who suffer from the same injustice, from the same arrogant pride, from the same disdain. Who can understand a slave better than a slave? And who is more likely to help a sufferer than a sufferer?..."³⁰³

Even the Pan-Slavism of a man like General Fadeyev can be called this only with major qualifications. Thus consider his *Opinion on the Eastern Question* of 1876, in which he writes: "The liberated East of Europe, if it be liberated at all, will require: a durable bond of union, a common head with a common council, the transaction of international affairs and the military command in the hands of that head, the Tsar of Russia, the natural chief of all the Slavs and Orthodox. Every Russian, as well as every Slav and every Orthodox Christian, should desire to see chiefly the Russian reigning House cover the liberated soil of Eastern Europe with its branches, under the supremacy and lead of the Tsar of Russia, long recognized, in the expectation of the people, as the direct heir of Constantine the Great."³⁰⁴

The ideology expressed here is not Pan-Slavism, but that of *Russia the Third Rome*, the idea - which goes a long way back, before the age of nationalism - that Russia, as the successor of Rome and Byzantium, is the natural protector of all Orthodox Christians. Hence the reference to "all the Slavs *and Orthodox*", and "every Slav *and every Orthodox Christian*", and to Constantine the Great - who, needless to say, was not a Slav.

Another writer who is sometimes mistakenly thought to be Pan-Slavist was Fyodor Tiutchev. He wrote "as early as 1849 of 'the city of the Constantines' as one of the 'secret capitals of Russia's realm', and he evoked an unfading empire stretching 'from Nile to Neva and from Elbe to China... as the Spirit foresaw and Daniel prophesied.'"³⁰⁵ But again this is the vision of Russia the Third Rome, not Pan-Slavism.

For what in fact united *all* the Slavs as opposed to the Orthodox Slavic nations? Less than one might expect. Russia herself was far from being a purely Slavic empire; her aristocracy had been accepting Tatar and German nobles into its ranks for centuries. With the next largest Slavic nation, Poland, she was in a state of constant friction, as the Roman Catholic Poles did everything in their power to undermine Orthodox Russian power. With the Catholic and Protestant Slavs of the Austro-Hungarian Empire - Czechs, Slovaks, Croats, Slovenes - she was on more friendly terms. But it was not in her interests to foment revolution on ethnic lines in Austria, and as recently as 1848 Russian

³⁰³ Velimirovich, *Dusha Serbii* (The Soul of Serbia), Moscow, 2007, pp. 572-573.

³⁰⁴ A.N. Wilson, *The Victorians*, London: Arrow Books, 2002, p. 395.

³⁰⁵ Hosking, *Russia and the Russians*, London: Penguin, 2012, p. 313.

armies had acted to bolster Austrian power against the Magyars. With the Serbs and the Bulgars, Russia had both blood and Orthodox Christianity in common. But a political union with these nations - even if they wanted it, which most did not - would have required absorbing non-Orthodox Hungary and non-Slavic Romania as well.

Nor was it in Russia's interests to support individual Slavic nationalisms. As Tom Gallagher points out, "as a multi-national empire in its own right, Russia was hostile to the pretensions of European small state nationalism."³⁰⁶ As Hosking points out, "the official Foreign Office view was that Russia should cooperate with Germany and Austria to reaffirm the legitimist monarchical principle in Eastern Europe, to counteract revolutionary movements there, whether nationalist or not, and to promote a stable balance of power. Panslavism could never be consistently espoused by the Russian government, for it was a policy which would inevitably lead to war against the Ottomans and Habsburgs, if not against the European powers in general. Besides, it was in essence a revolutionary strategy, directed against legitimate sovereign states. For the Russian empire to promote the principle of insurrectionary nationalism was, to say the least, double-edged."³⁰⁷

For to support, say, Bulgarian pretensions to an independent Greater Bulgaria - as opposed to simply protecting Bulgarians suffering from Turkish cruelty - would have created conflicts with the Greeks, the Romanians and the Serbs; whereas it was in Russia's interests to see unity among all the Orthodox nations.

Even supposing that Russia in the name of some mythical Pan-Slavist ideal had been willing and able to conquer the whole of the Balkans and take Constantinople, she could not have held on to her gains for long. First, the western powers, including the new rising power of Germany, would have been stirred up to launch another crusade against her. Secondly, to drive the Turks out of Constantinople would not have meant their final defeat, and further operations deep into Asia would have been necessary. But thirdly and most importantly, the union between the Tsar of Russia and the Patriarch of Constantinople, upon which the whole of the Orthodox commonwealth was based, would have been shattered. For what then would the position of the Patriarch within the Russian empire have been? Still the first hierarch of Orthodoxy, or *de facto* subordinate to the Russian Synod? How would the Greeks (not to mention the Southern Slavs) have reacted to exchanging one form of foreign dominion for another, albeit Orthodox?

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A rare true Pan-Slavist in the political sense was Nicholas Danilevsky, whose *Russia and Europe* (1869) made use of Slavophile ideas from the 1840s.

³⁰⁶ Gallagher, "Folly & Failure in the Balkans", *History Today*, September, 1999, p. 48.

³⁰⁷ Hosking, *Russia. Empire and People*, pp. 370-371.

Danilevsky distinguished ten types of civilization in history: (1) Egyptian, (2) Chinese, (3) Assyrian-Babylonian-Phoenician or Ancient Semitic, (4) Hindu, (5) Iranian, (6) Hebrew, (7) Ancient Greek, (8) Roman, (9) Neo-Semitic or Arabian, and (10) Romano-Germanic or European. He believed that after Russia had conquered Constantinople and liberated and united the Slavs under her rule, she would create an eleventh type of civilization or cultural type.³⁰⁸

Being a form of nationalist historicism, Danilevsky's theory identified the *latest* in history with the *best*. And so Slavism, being the last in the series of "historico-cultural" types was the best, in his view. "The new Slavic civilization, with its capital at Constantinople, would synthesize the highest achievements of its predecessors in religion (Israel), culture (Greece), political order (Rome) and socio-economic progress (modern Europe), and would supplement them with the Slavic genius for social and economic justice. 'These four rivers will unite on the wide plains of Slavdom into a mighty sea.'³⁰⁹

Strictly speaking, however, "best" should not be understood here in relation to a universal scale of values, insofar as each "historico-cultural" type was *sui generis* and incommensurable, according to Danilevsky. However, this reduced the significance of Danilevsky's theory. For if no single civilization, even the Slavic, can be considered better than any other according to a universal scale of values, then there is no reason to consider it to be better in any real, objective sense.

As Fr. Georges Florovsky writes, speaking of the later Slavophiles, "Significance is ascribed to this or that cultural achievement or discovery of the Slavic nationality not because we see in it the manifestation of the highest values, values which surpass those that inspired 'European' culture, but simply because they are the organic offshoots of the Slavic national genius. And so not because they are *good*, but because they are *ours*."

"The ideals and concrete tasks for action are inspired not by autonomous seeking and 'the re-evaluation of all values', but solely by 'the milieu' and 'circumstances' of one's 'chance' belonging to the given 'cultural-historical type', to the given 'ethnic group of peoples'. This nationalism should be given the epithet '*anthropological*', as opposed to the *ethnic* nationalism of the 'older Slavophiles', [since] the basis for 'idiosyncrasy' is sociological or anthropological particularity, not originality of cultural content. There individual variations are allowed on universal and eternal motifs: here they are taken to be various unshakeable and unmixed relative melodies..."

"It was on this plane, that the annihilating criticism to which Vladimir Soloviev subjected the imitative nationalism of the later Slavophiles lay. His words had the greater weight in that, even though he was not conscious of it,

³⁰⁸ Andrzej Walicki, *A History of Russian Thought*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1988, pp. 291-293, 295-297.

³⁰⁹ Hosking, *Russia. Empire and People*, p. 369.

he stood squarely on the ground of the old, classical Slavophile principles. True, his criticism suffered from wordiness and 'personalities'. Too often a harsh phrase took the place of subtle argumentation. But the basic fault of 'false' nationalism was sensed by him and illumined completely correctly. *Only on the soil of universal principles that are absolutely significant to all is genuine culture possible*, and the national task of Slavdom can lie only in actively converting itself to the service of values that will be chosen for their supreme good in the free exercise of thought and faith... But the denial of the 'universal-historical' path is a step towards nihilism, to the complete dissolution of values,... in the final analysis, the abolition of the category of values altogether..."³¹⁰

In spite of the existence of one or two true Pan-Slavists like Danilevsky, Mark Almond is right in asserting that "Pan-Slavism remained a minority taste in Alexander II's Russia. Although it attracted interest among journalists and academics as well as curious politicians wondering whether it might serve imperial interests abroad or undermine stability at home, even the Slavic Congress founded in 1858 or the high profile Slavic Congress in Moscow in 1867 attracted little more than interest. Cash to support the idea of Pan-Slavism was in short supply. The Slavic Committee made do with 1700 rubles a year even in 1867, at the height of public interest before the war a decade later."³¹¹

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An important disciple of Danilevsky was Constantine Leontiev. However, if Leontiev had ever really been an adherent of Danilevsky's Pan-Slavism, he soon abandoned it under the influence of the holy Optina Elders, especially St. Ambrose, and a closer knowledge of the East. Thus "towards the end of his life, in the early 1890s, he finally lost his faith in Russia's ability to create a distinctive new cultural type. The future, he prophesied, belonged to socialism; possibly a Russian tsar would stand at the head of the socialist movement and would organize and discipline it just as the Emperor Constantine had 'organized' Christianity; or perhaps, he wrote in another apocalyptic prediction, a democratic and secular Russia would become the home of the Antichrist..."³¹²

A more important enduring influence than Pan-Slavism in the work of Leontiev was early Slavophilism...³¹³ However, he was more appreciative than

³¹⁰ 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. 101, 102-103).

³¹¹ Almond, *Europe's Backyard War*, London: Mandarin, 1994, p. 105.

³¹² Walicki, *op. cit.*, pp. 304-305.

³¹³ Thus "one of the sources of Leontiev's ideas", writes S.V. Khatuntsev, "on the inevitability of serious conflicts between a Russia that was renewing and transforming itself and the civilization of the West was, without a doubt, the ideas of the Slavophiles. Proceeding from a recognition of the complete opposition of the two worlds - the 'western', 'Romano-Germanic', 'Catholic-Protestant', and the 'eastern', 'Slavic-Orthodox', the Slavophiles concluded that conflicts and wars between them were inevitable. So for Yu.F. Samarin, 'the essential, root

any of the Slavophiles of the continuing importance of Greek Orthodoxy to Slavic Orthodoxy. Leontiev believed that if one subtracted Byzantinism from Slavdom, very little distinctively different was left. An ardent Philhellene, he thought that narrowly *Serbian* and *Bulgarian* nationalisms were real and powerful forces, very similar in their aims and psychology to Greek nationalism, and, like contemporary Greek nationalism, sadly lacking in that exalted and spiritual form of "universalist nationalism" that he called *Byzantinism*. These petty nationalisms, argued Leontiev, were closely related to liberalism. They were all rooted in the French revolution: just as liberalism insisted on the essential equality of all men and their "human rights", so these nationalisms insisted on the essential equality of all nations and their "national rights". But this common striving for "national rights" made the nations very similar in their essential egoism³¹⁴; it erased *individuality* in the name of *individualism*, *hierarchy* in the name of *egalitarianism*³¹⁵.

Leontiev believed, as Walicki writes, that "nations were a creative force only when they represented a specific culture: 'naked' or purely 'tribal' nationalism was a corrosive force destroying both culture and the state, a levelling process that was, in the last resort, cosmopolitan; in fact, nationalism was only a mask for liberal and egalitarian tendencies, a specific metamorphosis of the universal process of disintegration".³¹⁶ According to Leontiev, the nations' striving to be independent was based precisely on their desire to be like every other nation: "Having become politically liberated, *they are very glad, whether in everyday life or in ideas, to be like everyone else*". Therefore nationalism, freed from the universalist idea of Christianity, leads in the end to a soulless, secular cosmopolitanism. "In the whole of Europe the purely national, that is, *ethnic*

difference' between the two worlds was already 'a condition of struggle' between them in all spheres, including the political. The political opposition between Western Europe and Slavdom was the initial basis of the views of I.S. Aksakov. Already in 1861 he was speaking about 'the hatred, which is often instinctive' of Europe for the Slavic, Orthodox world, the case of which was 'the antagonism between the two opposing educational principles and the envy of the decrepit world for the new one, to which the future belongs'. Several years later Aksakov wrote: 'The whole task of Europe consisted and consists in putting an end to the material and moral strengthening of Russia, so as not to allow the new, Orthodox-Slavic world to arise...'. However, he did not think that the opposition between the West and Russia unfailingly signified enmity or war between them. No less important for the genesis of the ideas of Leontiev that are being reviewed was his conception of the war of 1853-56 and the anti-Russian campaigns in Europe during the Polish rebellion of 1863-1864. Both the Eastern war and the anti-Russian campaigns convinced him that the West was irreconcilably hostile to Russia." ("Problema 'Rossia-Zapad' vo vzgliadakh K.N. Leontieva (60-e gg. XIX veka)" (The Problem of Russia and the West in the views of K.N. Leontiev (in the 60s of the 19th century), *Voprosy Istorii* (Questions of History), 2006 (3), p. 119)

³¹⁴ As Leontiev put it: "The Greeks have 'the Byzantine empire', 'the Great Hellenic Idea'; while the Bulgars have 'Great Bulgaria'. Is it not all the same?" ("Pis'ma o vostochnykh delakh - IV" (Letters on Eastern Matters - IV), *op. cit.*, p. 363.

³¹⁵ "So much for the national development, which makes them all similar to contemporary Europeans, which spreads petty rationalism, egalitarianism, religious indifference, European bourgeois uniformity in tastes and manners: machines, pantaloons, frock-coats, top hats and demagogy!" ("Plody natsional'nykh dvizhenij" (The Fruits of the National Movements), *op. cit.*, p. 560).

³¹⁶ Walicki, *op. cit.*, p. 303.

principle, once released from its *religious fetters*, will at its triumph give fruits that are by no means national, but, on the contrary, in the highest degree cosmopolitan, or, more precisely, *revolutionary*."³¹⁷

Leontiev foresaw that Bulgarian nationalism would lead to a diplomatic break with Bulgaria's liberator and protector, Russia, which took place in the reign of Tsar Alexander III.³¹⁸ He also foresaw that state nationalism in general could lead to the internationalist *abolition* or *merging* of states. "A grouping of states according to pure nationalities will lead European man very quickly to the dominion of internationalism"³¹⁹ - that is, a European Union or even a Global United Nations. "A state grouping *according to tribes and nations* is... nothing other than the preparation - striking in its force and vividness - for the transition to a cosmopolitan state, first a pan-European one, and then, perhaps, a global one, too! This is terrible! But still more terrible, in my opinion, is the fact that so far in Russia nobody has seen this or wants to understand it..."³²⁰

"This striving for unity", writes Wil van den Bercken, "provoked in Leontiev a fear of cultural impoverishment. He feared that the old capital cities of Europe would be swept off the map because formerly they had been centres of hostility between the European nations, and that the monarchies would disappear in favour of 'a banal workers' republic. Leontiev asks himself: 'What price must be paid for such a fusion? Will not a new pan-European state have to dispense in principle with recognizing all local differences?... In any case France, Germany, Italy, Spain, etc. will cease to exist as states; they will become districts of the new state as former Piedmont, Tuscany, Rome and Naples have become districts for Italy, and as now Hessen, Hanover and Prussia have themselves become districts of pan-Germany; they will become for pan-Europe what Burgundy and Brittany have long become for France!' According to Leontiev, the cultural complexity of Europe cannot be maintained in a Europe which has been democratically levelled down, but only in the various monarchistic states of Europe..."³²¹

Orthodoxy recognizes no essential difference between Jew and Greek, Scythian and barbarian *so long as they are all Orthodox*, all right-believing members of the One True Church. The same applies on the collective level, between nations. This is the *Orthodox egalitarianism*. So it went against the spirit of Orthodoxy for Russia to take the side of one Orthodox nation against another, or of Slavs against non-Slavs. The aim of Russia, as the protectress of Orthodoxy throughout the world, had to be to cool passions, avert conflicts and build bridges among the Orthodox of different races, rejecting both Pan-Hellenism and Pan-Slavism. Therefore neither Pan-Hellenism nor Pan-Slavism

³¹⁷ Leontiev, *Letter of a Hermit*.

³¹⁸ Vadim Venediktov, "Pravoslavnij Vostok Glazami Russkogo Filosa K.N. Leontiev".

³¹⁹ Leontiev, "On Political and Cultural Nationalism", letter 3, *op. cit.*, p. 363.

³²⁰ Leontiev, "Tribal Politics as a Weapon of Global Revolution", letter 2, in Constantine Leontiev, *Izbrannie Sochinenia (Selected Works)*, edited and with an introductory article by I.N. Smirnov, Moscow, 1993, p. 314.

³²¹ Wil Van Den Bercken, *Holy Russia and Christian Europe*, London: SCM Press, 1999, p. 212.

but *Byzantinism*, or *Romanity* (*Romanitas* or *Ρωμειοσυνη*), was the truly Orthodox ideal, the ideal of a commonwealth of all Orthodox nations united by a strict adherence to Holy Orthodoxy in the religious sphere and loyalty to the Orthodox Emperor in the political sphere.

This vision has repelled many. Thus it has been argued that "for Leontiev, 'ascetic and dogmatic Orthodoxy' was mainly distinguished by its 'Byzantine pessimism', its lack of faith in the possibility of harmony and universal brotherhood."³²² However, this criticism is unjust: Orthodoxy does not reject the *possibility* of *universal* brotherhood, still less the *actuality* of *Orthodox* brotherhood. After all, what is the Kingdom of God, according to Orthodoxy, if not the complete brotherhood of man in the Fatherhood of God, when God will be "all in all"? But the Orthodox are also realistic; they know that man is fallen, and that neither the idea of human rights nor that of national rights can take the place of true fraternity, or love in Christ, acquired through true faith in Christ and ascetic struggle. Moreover, the eschatological teaching of Orthodoxy, according to which things will get worse and worse until the enthronement of the Antichrist towards the end of the world, does not leave much room for optimism in the long term, but only for temporary improvements in certain regions...

July 25 / August 7, 2019.

³²² Walicki, *op. cit.*, p. 308.

24. CHRIST AND THE SYNAGOGUE

The Apostles were all Jews, and in spite of persecution from the Jewish authorities they did not immediately break definitively with the Jewish community in Jerusalem, continuing to worship in the Temple and to read the Holy Scriptures of the Old Testament, which they saw as fulfilled in Jesus Christ. True, the first Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15) established that pagan converts to Christianity did not have to practice Mosaic rites: faith in Christ and baptism was all that was required to become a fully-entitled member of the Church. And there was no question that the Christians were now the people of God, "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation" (I Peter 2.9), "the Israel of God" (Galatians 6.16), taking the place of the apostate Jews, who had once been "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Deuteronomy 4.23-24), but were now enemies of God.

However, the Jewish Christian community in Palestine retained its outward semblance to Judaism, partly in order to facilitate the conversion of the Jews to Christianity. Although it is true, wrote Professor A.D. Belyaev, that "the sacrifices which the Jews continued to offer in accordance with the Old Testament rite were no longer necessary after the death of Jesus Christ and were invalid after the offering of the Golgotha sacrifice, nevertheless they were not yet the abomination of desolation after the death of Jesus Christ, they were not offerings to the devil. The book of the Acts of the Apostles records the daily presence of the believers in the temple (2.46) and the visits of the apostles during the hours of prayer (3.1). More than that: the Apostle Paul once even offered a sacrifice in the Jerusalem temple (Acts 21.21-26). Let it be that he did this out of condescension to the weakness of conscience of the Jews, fulfilling the rule: 'I was for the Jews as a Jew, so as to win the Jews' (I Corinthians 9.20). Nevertheless, he would not have offered a sacrifice if it has been an offering to the devil, as Eusebius puts it. For him it was an indifferent act, just as the fulfillment of the whole ritual law of Moses became a matter of indifference for the Christians."³²³

And this approach bore fruit, in that, at least in the first two generations, there was a steady trickle of converts from the Jews into the Church of Jerusalem, which was headed by the much-revered St. James the Just, the Brother of the Lord. Of course, the Christians differed fundamentally from the Jews in their worship of Christ as the Messiah and God; and the specifically Christian rite of the Eucharist was restricted only to those who believed in Christ and accepted baptism. Nevertheless, for the first forty years or so after the Resurrection the Church did not hasten to break all bonds with the Synagogue, hoping that as many Jews as possible could be converted.

The Jews were not deprived of signs that they were losing the Grace of God. Even the fiercely anti-Christian Talmud preserves a record of some of these

³²³ Belyaev, in Sergei and Tamara Fomin, *Rossia pered Vtorym Prishestviem*, Moscow, 1994, vol. 2, p. 393.

signs. Thus Dr. Seraphim Steger writes, commenting on Gemara, 39b, that during the last 40 years of the Temple's existence, from 30 to 70, "a bad omen occurred on Yom Kippur every year because:

"(1) The Lot for the LORD came up in the left hand, not the right hand of the High Priest of Israel on Yom Kippur. What happened in 30 CE that might have caused this? Could it have been the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, Yeshua Ha-Maschiach? Could it have been that the High Priest of Israel had lost his authority because now there was a new High Priest in town, Yeshua Ha-Maschiach? In his Letter to the Hebrews the Apostle Paul speaks of Yeshua Ha-Maschiach as a High Priest after the Order of Melchezadek sitting at the right hand of the Father in the Heavens.

"Because the crimson ribbon tied between the horns of the bullock did not miraculously turn white for the last 40 years the Temple stood when the scapegoat was thrown over the cliff in the wilderness, we can say that the LORD did not accept the Temple sacrifice of the scapegoat for the nation of Israel on Yom Kippur. Why? Could it be because Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, our Passover (Pesach) Sacrifice has been slain for us once and for all had been accepted by the Father on our behalf? Consequently, there was no more need for a scapegoat because Christ not only was a propitiation for our sins, but has carried our sins away from us as far as the East is from the West.

"(2). We can say that for the last 40 years the Temple stood neither did the westernmost Menorah lamp miraculously shine longer than the others as it had once done, now indicating that the Presence of the Lord, the Shikinah glory, had deserted the Temple all those last 40 years. Was the Shekinah, the glory of the Lord, now to be found outside the Temple? Could it be that it was now to be found in the Church, having descended upon the Church at Pentecost some 50 days after the crucifixion and resurrection of Yeshua?

"(3). We can say that during those last 40 years the Temple stood, the doors to the Hekel//Hekhal, the Holy Place/sanctuary, opened repetitively during those last 40 years by themselves, when they should have been closed, showing that access to the LORD in the Holy Place was not limited to the priests in their daily service, or the Holy of Holies to the High Priest but once a year. Could it be that through the risen Yesua Ha-Mashiach, Jesus the Messiah, "the Door" as He is sometimes called in the New Testament Gospels, that worship in the "Holy Place" was now open not just to the priests but to all who wished to enter in and to draw close to the Holy God of Israel, through faith in Yeshua, in the Church?

"Now, this testimony of the last 40 years that the Temple stood, is juxtaposed to the passages about a Simeon the Righteous who ministered in the Temple for 40 years [so presumably a priest, or levite at a minimum], during whose time the Temple was blessed.

“Reading this gemara again we can see that during the 40 years Simeon ministered, the sacrifices for the Israel were blessed and the scapegoat accepted, (removing the sins of the entire nation) because the lot for the Lord would always come up in the right hand. I.e., the people of Israel were being blessed by the LORD. Interestingly, after those 40 years, sometimes the sacrifices were accepted, sometimes not. Also, the priests suffered from the curse on the omer, two loaves, and shewbread--i.e., they were not nourished by the bread of the Temple as they were before.

“Who is Simeon the Righteous?

“... There is controversy over who this “Righteous Simeon” may have been since there are four men that have born this name in traditional Jewish history and there is some question of later Rabbinical fabrication of their tradition to favor their views at that later time. Perhaps this Simeon was none of the four major candidates. Could this Simeon possibly be Simeon the Just and Pious mentioned in the Gospel of Luke 2:25-36, the Simeon the Orthodox Church remembers as “Righteous Simeon” who held in his arms infant Jesus Christ at His presentation in the temple? Let’s look into this a bit further.

“We can see that during the 40 years Simeon ministered the Lord forgave the sins of the nation of Israel because the crimson-coloured strap [tied between the bullocks horns] would become white after the scapegoat was sent into the wilderness. As part of the blessing of the nation of Israel the Lord was forgiving the sins of the Israelites, sanctifying and preparing them for the enfleshment of the Logos.

“We can see that during the 40 years Simeon ministered the Shekhinah Glory/Holy Spirit remained present in the Holy of Holies blessing the nation [in preparation for the coming of the Messiah, Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God] because throughout those forty years the westernmost light was shining, having been lighted first and burning longer than the other lights. The Lord was blessing and preparing the Temple and its priests for receiving God in the flesh.

‘Lastly, we can see that during the 40 years Simeon ministered the fire of the pile of wood kept burning strong on the altar showing that the Lord was accepting of all the animal, meal, grain, oil, and wine sacrifices commanded in the Torah, the Law of Moses, under the Old Covenant, further underscoring the sanctifying the Temple, the priests, the nation, and all the people by the various offerings.’³²⁴

³²⁴ Steger, “Tidbits of 1st Century Christian History Preserved in the Babylonian Talmud and their Relationship to St. Simeon the Righteous”, http://www.stseraphimstjohnsandiego.org/St_Seraphim_of_Sarov_and_St_john_of_Kronstadt_Orthodox_Church/History/Entries/2014/5/9_History__Tidbits_of_1st_Century_History_Preserved_in_the_Babylonian_Talmud.html. See also N. Federoff & T. Peterson, “Talmudic Evidence for the Messiah at 30 C.E. - Four Unique Events Point to Messiah and His Identity”, August 2, 2014, *Window View*.

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The Apostles rejected the possibility of salvation through the Mosaic Law and declared that salvation was only through faith in Christ. Nor, as St. Peter, the apostle to the Jews, added, “is there salvation in any other, but there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4.12). St. Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, was particularly clear on this point, writing his Epistle to the Galatians precisely in order to refute the Judaizing Christians. Already in his earliest Epistle he wrote that the Jews “killed both the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have persecuted us and do not please God and are contrary to all me, forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved, so as always to fill up the measure of their sins. But wrath has come upon them to the uttermost...” (I Thessalonians 2.15-16).

The final break between the Jews and the Christians took place after the condemnation and execution of St. James, the Brother of the Lord, the rebellion of the Jews against Rome and the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. The situation for the Christians now changed – first in relation to the Jews, who saw the Christians as traitors to the national cause, and consequently also in relation to the Romans, who now had to treat the Christians as a separate religion. And the Jewish religion was changed in order that the Jews should set themselves apart finally and irrevocably from Christ...

Dr. Steger writes: “Just before the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple by the Roman army led by Vespasian, one of the leading sages of the Pharisees in Jerusalem, Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai, was captured by the Romans according to one early Palestinian tradition and taken against his will to the town of Yavne’el / Jamnia (modern Yavne on the Mediterranean coast) which served as a place of detention for those who had surrendered to the Romans. In Jamnia Rabban Yochannan ben Zakkai reconstituted the Sanhedrin, proclaimed New Moons and leap-years, and proceeded to construct a new religion for the war torn nation: ‘Rabbinical Judaism’ which was centered around the beliefs of the Pharisees as well as the practices of the Synagogue [the priests having become superfluous since the destruction of the Temple and the discontinuance of its services and sacrifices]. He preserved the oral traditions of the schools of the Pharisees encompassing the years 536 BC to AD 70. Jamnia subsequently became the new spiritual center for those Jews who survived the war.

“Some 150 years later Rabbi Yehudah haNasi set to writing a broad and comprehensive redaction of the Oral Law known as the Mishnah. Subsequent rabbinical commentaries, the Gamara, were added to each of the individual tractates forming two authoritative collections known as the Babylonian and the Jerusalem Talmudim. These contained 700 years worth of the oral tradition

of the rabbinical schools. Their final forms were completed around AD 600.”³²⁵

The Jewish Professor Norman Cantor writes: “This withdrawal of the rabbis from the political fate of the homeland was the end result of what was already clear in the first century B.C. Pharisaic Judaism was a self-subsisting culture and a kind of mobile religious and moral tabernacle that could function autonomously and perpetually almost anywhere that the Jews had a modicum of physical security and economic opportunity. This was to be the single most continuous and important theme in Jewish history until modern times, the sacred chain that binds the generations together...”³²⁶

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Now the Jews constituted a large and important part of the population of the Empire. “Jewish colonies,” writes Alexander Dvorkin, “could be found in any corner of the Mediterranean world – from Cadiz to the Crimea. In all there lived up to 4 million Jews in the diaspora out of a general population of the Roman Empire of 50 million, while the Jewish population of Palestine consisted of not more than one million people.

“In the first century after Christ there were 11 or 12 synagogues in Rome. But the highest percentage of Jewish settlement was in Alexandria: throughout Egypt (including Alexandria) there lived about a million Jews. The municipal authorities had to reckon with them, although the social isolation of the Jews did not allow them to form their own kind of ‘lobby’ for participation in the local power structures.³²⁷ Everywhere that they lived they refused to be merged into the life of their pagan surroundings, but unfailingly kept to their own religion and customs. Every Saturday they gathered to chant psalms and to read the Scriptures, after which there followed a sermon on the subject of the Biblical extract read and common prayers.

“Although scattered throughout the world, the Jews preserved the feeling of unity with the land of their fathers: they carried out private pilgrimages to the holy city of Zion and every year sent contributions to the Temple. Sometimes this export of currency from the provinces with its numerous Jewish population created definite difficulties for the Roman tax authorities. However, the Romans understood that in this question – as, however, in all questions connected with the basic principles of Judaism, – it was much more peaceful not to stop the Jews from acting in their own way. The Jews were not excluded from a single sphere of public life in which they themselves wanted to take part. But, of course, not all Jews observed their native customs as strictly as their religious leaders would have liked, and many of them experienced a

³²⁵ Steger, *op. cit.*

³²⁶ Cantor, *The Sacred Chain*, London: Fontana, 1996, p. 50.

³²⁷ Contrast this with the power of the Jewish lobby in the United States today (V.M.).

powerful temptation to give in to seduction and live no differently from their neighbours.

“But the Jews for their part also exerted a noticeable influence on the inhabitants of the Empire. Although both the Greeks and the Romans saw circumcision as a disgusting anti-aesthetic custom, very many of the pagans were attracted to Judaism by its strict monotheism, the purity of its moral life and the antiquity (if not the style) of its Sacred Scriptures. There was no teaching on asceticism in Judaism (if you don’t count some marginal groups), but it spoke out for chastity, constancy and faithfulness in family life. In their communities the Jews constantly practised charity, visiting the sick and giving alms to the poor.

“Around many of the synagogues in the diaspora there formed groups of pious pagans whom the Jews usually called ‘God-fearers’ (in general this term was applied to every pious member of the synagogue). A pagan could pass through circumcision and ritual washing (immersion from the head down in a basin of water, which was required for the reception of converts into Judaism), but this did not often take place. As a rule, the Hellenized Jews of the diaspora, who were much more open to the external world than their rigorist Palestinian brethren, to the chagrin of the latter accepted converts from the pagans into their circle without insisting that circumcision was necessary for their salvation.

“The net of synagogues covering the empire turned out to be providential preparatory path for the Christian preaching. Through it Christianity penetrated into the midst of those who were drawing near to Judaism. Among these groups of former pagans the Christian missionaries found their own first uncircumcised followers. One could liken them to a ripe fruit, for they had the advantage not only of a lofty morality but also a knowledge of the Jewish Scriptures. From them the first Christian communities were formed. They consisted of the most varied people, not only from the proletarians and lower levels of society who had despaired of finding justice in this life, as the Marxist historians and those with them affirmed. St. Paul in his Epistle to the Romans gives a greeting to Erastus, a city guardian of the general purse; in Athens a member of the Areopagus (the city council), Dionysius, was converted; and in Thessalonica there were ‘quite a few noble women’ (Acts 17.4). The governor of Bithynia, Pliny the Younger, in his letter to the Emperor Trajan (111-113) writes about the multitude ‘of Christians of various classes’. The majority of these people were educated pagans who came to Christianity from circles attached to the Jews.”³²⁸

Many of the Christian converts, especially among the women, came from the same social strata as the Gentile converts to Judaism – and these strata could be lofty. Thus “Poppaea Sabina, the emperor Nero’s second wife, made no

³²⁸ Dvorkin, *Ocherki po Istorii Vselenskoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi* (Sketches on the History of the Universal Orthodox Church), Nizhni-Novogorod, 2006, pp. 41-42.

secret of her tendency to Judaism"³²⁹ – while St. Paul wrote from Rome that he had made converts among the Praetorian Guard (Philippians 1.13).

However, “as the rate of conversion to Judaism intensified, so did the government’s disquiet and the resentment on the part of many Latin intellectuals”.³³⁰ The first recorded expulsion of Jewish converts from Rome was in 139 BC. A second was in 19 AD, when the Emperor Tiberius exiled four thousand converts to Sardinia.

In 49-50 the Emperor Claudius expelled the Jews again. For they were constantly “making disturbances”, according to Suetonius, “at the instigation of Chrestus [Christ]”. Of course, it was not Christ Who instigated the Jewish riots – it was rather the Jews who instigated riots against the Christians, as we see several times in the *Acts of the Apostles*. These anti-Christian pogroms continued and intensified after the Fall of Jerusalem. Suetonius’ confusion arose because in the beginning the Romans made no clear distinction between Jews and Christians, who lived “under the cover of Judaism”, as Tertullian put it.

However, in the reign of Nero the distinction had become clear, and it was the Christians, not the Jews, who were put to the torch for supposedly burning down Rome...

By the second century, the attitude of the Christians to the Jews had also become clear. Thus St. Justin the Martyr (+166) wrote in his *Dialogue with Trypho*: “The woes that have struck you have done so justly and rightly, for you killed the Righteous One [the Lord Jesus Christ] and before Him His prophets, and even now, as far as you can, you despise and dishonor those who hope on Him and on God the Ruler and Creator of all, Who sent Him; and you curse those who believe in Christ in your synagogues. At the present time you do not have the power to kill us yourselves – in this you are hindered by the present powers that be [the Romans]; but you could, you would do this too... The other nations are not as guilty as you in the injustice that they show towards us and to Christ; for you are to blame for their bad prejudice against the Righteous One and against us, His followers. When you crucified Him, the only immaculate and righteous man, by Whose wounds all those who come to the Father through Him are healed, and when you learned that He had risen from the dead and ascended to heaven, as was foretold in the prophecies, you not only did not repent of your evil deeds, but even sent people chosen by you from Jerusalem throughout the earth to proclaim that the supposedly godless heresy of Christianity had appeared, and to spread slanders against us, which all those who do not know us customarily repeat. Thus you are the causes not only of your own injustice, but also of all the other people...”³³¹

³²⁹ Shlomo Sand, *The Invention of the Jewish People*, London: Verso, 2009, p. 171.

³³⁰ Sand, *op. cit.*, p. 169.

³³¹ St. Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho*.

The Jews were different from the other nations of the Roman Empire in three major ways. First, their faith was exclusive; they claimed to worship the one and only True God, and rejected the ecumenist tolerance of the other faiths practised by the other peoples of the empire. This anti-ecumenism they shared with the Christians. Secondly, and especially after the Romans' destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD, they could never reconcile themselves with their conquered status, or delight in the achievements of the *Pax Romana* like most of the other conquered nations. And thirdly, they were unique in that, although their homeland was Palestine, most Jews lived abroad, in the diaspora, which providentially allowed them to exert an important influence on the whole of the Roman Empire. Nevertheless, the Jewish religion, unlike Christianity, was a licit cult that was given a certain leeway by the Roman authorities. It was only when they openly rebelled against Rome - in Judea in 66-70 and 135, and again in Libya in 115-117 - that they were suppressed...

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We have seen that the Jews were powerful and successful proselytizers in the Greco-Roman world before and after the Coming of Christ. However, as Alfred Lilienthal writes, "it was in the face of growing competition from the new Christian faith that the rabbinate and other Jewish leaders ceased proselytization."³³² In reaction to this competition, they formed an inner ghetto around themselves, whose laws were their religion, whose lawmakers were the rabbis, and whose sacred text was not the Sacred Scriptures of the Old Testament, but the Talmud...

The Talmud, writes Seraphim McCune, was "a direct response to the razing of the Temple in AD 70. Its primary premise is how to be a Jew without the temple."³³³ And, of course, without Christ.

Indeed, the Talmud is without doubt the most abhorrent and anti-Christian book ever written. It purports to record a secret oral tradition going back to Moses and representing the true interpretation of the Torah, the first five books of the Bible. In fact, it bears only the most strained and perverse relation to the Torah, often completely corrupting the true meaning of the Holy Scriptures. It even asserts its own superiority over the Scriptures. For it declares: "The Law is water, but the Mishna [the first form of the Talmud] is wine." And again: "The words of the elders are more important than the words of the Prophets." Pharisaic-Talmudic Judaism is therefore a different religion from that of the Old Testament. It does not contain a formal creed in the manner of Christianity. But it does contain 613 commandments that all Jews are expected to fulfill and which constitute the essence of their religion.

As we have seen, it was the Pharisees who incited Christ's death because He preached a spiritual, universalist Kingdom opposed to their nationalist dreams.

³³² Lilienthal, *The Zionist Connection*, New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1978, p. 10.

³³³ McCune, *Facebook*, October 21, 2018.

This opposition between the God-inspired Tradition of the Holy Scriptures and the man-made traditions of the Pharisees was pointed out by Christ when He said: "Thus have ye made the commandment of no effect by your tradition...Ye blind guides, who strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel" (Matthew 15.6, 23.24). These man-made traditions were gathered together in the Talmud, whose law, as Douglas Reed writes, "governed every imaginable action of a Jew's life anywhere in the world: marriage, divorce, property settlements, commercial transactions, down to the pettiest details of dress and toilet. As unforeseen things frequently crop up in daily life, the question of what is legal or illegal (not what is right or wrong) in all manner of novel circumstances had incessantly to be debated, and this produced the immense records of rabbinical dispute and decisions in which the Talmud abounds.

"Was it much a crime to crush a flea as to kill a camel on a sacred day? One learned rabbi allowed that the flea might be gently squeezed, and another thought its feet might even be cut off. How many white hairs might a sacrificial red cow have and yet remain a red cow? What sort of scabs required this or that ritual of purification? At which end of an animal should the operation of slaughter be performed? Ought the high priest to put on his shirt or his hose first? Methods of putting apostates to death were debated; they must be strangled, said the elders, until they opened their mouths, into which boiling lead must be poured. Thereon a pious rabbi urged that the victim's mouth be held open with pincers so that he not suffocate before the molten lead enter and consume his soul with his body. The word 'pious' is here not sardonically used; this scholar sought to discover the precise intention of 'the Law'."³³⁴

A dominant feature of these Jewish "holy" books was their hatred of Christ and Christianity. "The *Jewish Encyclopaedia* says: 'It is the tendency of Jewish legends in the Talmud, the Midrash... and in the *Life of Jesus (Toledoth Jeshua)* that originated in the Middle Ages to belittle the person of Jesus by ascribing to him an illegitimate birth, magic and a shameful death'. He is generally alluded to as 'that anonymous one', 'liar', 'imposter' or 'bastard' (the attribution of bastardy is intended to bring him under the Law as stated in Deuteronomy 23.3: 'A bastard shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord'). Mention of the name, Jesus, is prohibited in Jewish households.

"The work cited by the *Jewish Encyclopaedia* as having 'originated in the Middle Ages' is not merely a discreditable memory of an ancient past, as that allusion might suggest; it is used in Hebrew schools today. It was a rabbinical production of the Talmudic era and repeated all the ritual of mockery of Calvary itself in a different form. Jesus is depicted as the illegitimate son of Mary, a hairdresser's wife, and of a Roman soldier called Panthera. Jesus himself is referred to by a name which might be translated 'Joey Virgo'. He is shown as being taken by his stepfather to Egypt and there learning sorcery.

"The significant thing about this bogus life-story (the only information about

³³⁴ Reed, *The Controversy of Zion*, Durban, South Africa, 1978, p. 93.

Jesus which Jews were supposed to read) is that in it Jesus is not crucified by Romans. After his appearance in Jerusalem and his arrest there as an agitator and a sorcerer he is turned over to the Sanhedrin and spends forty days in the pillory before being stoned and hanged at the Feast of Passover; this form of death exactly fulfils the Law laid down in Deuteronomy 21.22 and 17.5, whereas crucifixion would not have been in compliance with that *Judaic* law. The book then states that in hell he suffers the torture of boiling mud.

“The Talmud also refers to Jesus as ‘Fool’, ‘sorcerer’, ‘profane person’, ‘idolator’, ‘dog’, ‘child of lust’ and the like more; the effect of this teaching over a period of centuries, is shown by the book of the Spanish Jew Mose de Leon, republished in 1880, which speaks of Jesus as a ‘dead dog’ that lies ‘buried in a dunghill’. The original Hebrew texts of these Talmudic allusions appear in Laible’s *Jesus Christus im Talmud*. This scholar says that during the period of the Talmudists hatred of Jesus became ‘the most national trait of Judaism’, that ‘at the approach of Christianity the Jews were seized over and over again with a fury and hatred that were akin to madness’, that ‘the hatred and scorn of the Jews was always directed in the first place against the person of Jesus’ and that ‘the Jesus-hatred of the Jews is a firmly-established fact, but they want to show it as little as possible’.

“This wish to conceal from the outer world that which was taught behind the Talmudic hedge led to the censoring of the above-quoted passages during the seventeenth century. Knowledge of the Talmud became fairly widespread then (it was frequently denounced by remonstrant Jews) and the embarrassment thus caused to the Talmudic elders led to the following edict (quoted in the original Hebrew and in translation by P.L.B. Drach, who was brought up in a Talmudic school and later became converted to Christianity):

““This is why we enjoin you, under pain of excommunication major, to print nothing in future editions, whether of the Mishna or of the Gemara, which relates whether for good or for evil to the acts of Jesus the Nazarene, and to substitute instead a circle like this: O, which will warn the rabbis and schoolmasters to teach the young these passages only *viva voce*. By means of this precaution the savants among the Nazarenes will have no further pretext to attack us on this subject’ (decree of the Judaist Synod which sat in Poland in 1631). At the present time, when public enquiry into such matters, or objection to them, has been virtually forbidden by Gentile governments, these passages, according to report, have been restored in the Hebrew editions of the Talmud...

“The Talmud sets out to widen and heighten the barrier between the Jews and others. An example of the different language which the Torah spoke, for Jews and for Gentiles, has previously been given: the obscure and apparently harmless allusion to ‘a foolish nation’ (Deuteronomy 32.21). According to the article on *Discrimination against Gentiles* in the *Jewish Encyclopaedia* the allusion in the original Hebrew is to ‘vile and vicious Gentiles’, so that Jew and Gentile received very different meanings from the same passage in the original and in the translation. The Talmud, however, which was to reach only Jewish eyes,

removed any doubt that might have been caused in Jewish minds by perusal of the milder translation; it specifically related the passage in Deuteronomy to one in Ezekiel 23.20, and by so doing defined Gentiles as those 'whose flesh is as the flesh of asses and whose issue is like the issue of horses'! In this spirit was the 'interpretation' of the Law continued by the Talmudists.

"The Talmudic edicts were all to similar effect. The Law (the Talmud laid down) allowed the restoration of a lost article to its owner if 'a brother or neighbour', but not if a Gentile. Book-burning (of Gentile books) was recommended... The benediction, 'Blessed be Thou... who hast not made me a *goi* [Gentile]' was to be recited daily. Eclipses were of bad augury for Gentiles only. Rabbi Lei laid down that the injunction not to take revenge (Leviticus 19.18) did not apply to Gentiles, and apparently invoked Ecclesiastes 8.4 in support of his ruling (a discriminatory interpretation then being given to a passage in which the Gentile could not suspect any such intention).

"The Jews who sells to a Gentile landed property bordering on the land of another Jew is to be excommunicated. A Gentile cannot be trusted as witness in a criminal or civil suit because he could not be depended on to keep his word like a Jew. A Jew testifying in a petty Gentile civil court as a single witness against a Jew must be excommunicated. Adultery committed with a non-Jewish woman is not adultery 'for the heathen have no lawfully wedded wife, they are not really their wives'. The Gentiles are as such precluded from admission to a future world..."³³⁵

Of particular importance for the future history of the Jews was their attitude towards usury. Now the Old Testament forbids the lending of money for interest to brothers, but allows it to strangers (Exodus 22.25; Leviticus 25.36; Deuteronomy 23.24). The Talmud exploited the letter of this law to justify outright exploitation of the Christians.

According to Oleg Platonov, it "teaches the Jew to consider the property of all non-Jews as 'gefker', which means free, belonging to no one. 'The property of all non-Jews has the same significance as if it had been found in the desert: it belongs to the first who seizes it'. In the Talmud there is a decree according to which open theft and stealing are forbidden, but anything can be acquired by deceit or cunning...

"From this it follows that all the resources and wealth of the non-Jews must belong to representatives of the 'chosen people'. 'According to the Talmud,' wrote the Russian historian S.S. Gromeka, "God gave all the peoples into the hands of the Jews" (Baba-Katta, 38); "the whole of Israel are children of kings; those who offend a Jew offend God himself" (Sikhab 67, 1) and "are subject to

³³⁵ Reed, *op. cit.*, pp. 89-91. The Zohar also says: "Tradition tells us that the best of the Gentiles deserves death" (Section Vaiqra, folio 14b). For a more detailed exposé of the Talmud and the religion founded upon it, see Michael Hoffman, *Judaism Discovered*, Independent History and Research, 2008.

execution, as for *lèse-majesté*" (*Sanhedrin* 58, 2); pious people of other nations, who are counted worthy of participating in the kingdom of the Messiah, will take the role of slaves to the Jews' (*Sanhedrin* 91, 21, 1051). From this point of view, ... all the property in the world belongs to the Jews, and the Christians who possess it are only temporary, 'unlawful' possessors, usurpers, and this property will be confiscated by the Jews from them sooner or later. When the Jews are exalted above all the other peoples, God will hand over all the nations to the Jews for final extermination.'

"The historian of Judaism I. Lyutostansky cites examples from the ancient editions of the Talmud, which teaches the Jews that it is pleasing to God that they appropriate the property of the *goyim* [Gentiles]. In particular, he expounds the teaching of Samuel that deceiving a goy is not a sin...

"Rabbi Moses said: 'If a *goy* makes a mistake in counting, then the Jew, noticing this, must say that he knows nothing about it.' Rabbi Brentz says: 'If some Jews, after exhausting themselves by running around all week to deceive Christians in various places, come together at the Sabbath and boast of their deceptions to each other, they say: "We must take the hearts out of the *goyim* and kill even the best of them." - of course, if they succeed in doing this.' Rabbi Moses teaches: 'Jews sin when they return lost things to apostates and pagans, or anyone who doesn't reverence the Sabbath.' ...

"To attain the final goal laid down in the Talmud for Jews - to become masters of the property of the *goyim* - one of the best means, in the rabbis' opinion, is usury. According to the Talmud, 'God ordered that money be lent to the *goyim*, but only on interest; so instead of helping them in this way, we must harm them, even if they can be useful for us.' The tract *Baba Metsiya* insists on the necessity of lending money on interest and advises Jews to teach their children to lend money on interest, 'so that they can from childhood taste the sweetness of usury and learn to use it in good time.'"³³⁶

The transformation of Judaism into Talmudism marked the last, most impenetrable barrier between the Jews and the Church. From now on, as Metropolitan Hilarion of Kiev said in the eleventh century: "Christ is glorified, and the Jews are vilified. The nations are gathered, and the Jews are scattered. As the prophet Malachi pronounced: 'I have no pleasure in the sons of Israel, and I will not accept a sacrifice at their hands. For from the east even to the west My name is glorified among the Gentiles, and in every place incense is offered to My name, for My name is great among the Gentiles.' And according to David: 'All the earth shall worship Thee, and sing unto Thee', and: 'Lord, our Lord, how wonderful is Thy name in all the earth.'"³³⁷

August 13/26, 2019.

³³⁶ Platonov, *Ternovij Venets Rossii* (Russia's Crown of Thorns), Moscow, 1998,

³³⁷ Hilarion, *Slovo o Zakone i Blagodati* (Word on the Law and Grace), 34.6.

25. THE CREATION OF MAN AND WOMAN

On the sixth day, God proceeded to the crown of His creation, saying: "Let Us create man in our image and after Our likeness" (Genesis 1.26). The plural "Us" indicates that God exists in a plurality of Persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. So man in his spiritual aspect is created in the image of the Holy Trinity. In Genesis 2, we read that while man's body is made of earth and water (the word "Adam" means "earth"), his soul is breathed into him by the Spirit of God Himself. So he is both material and spiritual by nature.

St. Anastasius of Sinai points out that before the reference to man's creation in Genesis 1.26, God is referred to with one word only, "God", whereas after that He has the double name, "Lord God". This is a subtle prophecy that God would acquire a second nature when He became man in Jesus Christ! So already from the beginning God knew that, for the sake of salvation of his greatest creation, He would assume human nature, becoming, as the Holy Apostles Thomas said on the day of the Resurrection, "My Lord" (in his humanity) and "my God" (in His Divinity) (John 20.28).³³⁸

The image of God in man has been interpreted variously by the Holy Fathers, but the general consensus is that it refers to that which distinguishes man from the animals – his free-will, his rationality and his eternity. According to St. Gregory of Nyssa, man is made in the image of God because he is made in the image of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity and the God-man. Like a painter and his model, God took the Incarnate Christ as His model in the creation of man.

As for the relationship between image and likeness, St. Basil the Great writes: "We possess the one by creation, we acquire the other by free will."³³⁹ In other words, we use our free will in order to steer our created nature, which has the *potential* to acquire the likeness of God, to the *actual* possession of that likeness. The likeness of God in man is *deification, holiness*, the full indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Adam was holy and in the likeness of God in the beginning, but he lost that holiness in the Fall.

Vladimir Lossky writes: "The image cannot be objectified, 'naturalized' we might say, by being attributed to some part or other of the human being. To be in the image of God, the Fathers affirm, in the last analysis is to be a personal being, that is to say, a free, responsible being. Why, one might ask, did God make man free and responsible? Precisely because He wanted to call him to a supreme vocation: deification; that is to say, to become by grace, in a movement as boundless as God, that which God is by nature. And this call demands a free response; God wishes that this movement be a movement of love..."

³³⁸ St. Anastasius, *Hexaemeron*, Book VII, Part 2.

³³⁹ St. Basil, in Rose, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

“A personal being is capable of loving someone more than his own nature, more than his own life. The person, that is to say, the image of God in man, is then man’s freedom with regard to his nature, ‘the fact of being freed from necessity and not being subject to the dominion of nature, but able to determine oneself freely’ (St. Gregory of Nyssa).”³⁴⁰

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Eve also partook of Adam’s God-likeness; both the unity and the distinction of the sexes is entailed in the words: “in the image of God He created them; *male and female* created He them” (Genesis 1.27). But in the very beginning there was only the male of the species, Adam, whose body was created from dust mixed with water, and his soul from the “inbreathing” of the Spirit of God (Genesis 2.7). In some texts man is said to be composed of spirit, soul and body (I Thessalonians 5.23). The “spirit” is the higher part of the soul, with which man enters into prayerful communion with God. In addition, as St. Seraphim of Sarov points out, the Divine Spirit (with a capital “S”) can be said to have been part of the original composition of man – before he lost It after the Fall.

However, judging that Adam should not be alone and needed “a helper like him” (Genesis 2.18, 20), “the Lord God caused a deep sleep [“ecstasy” in the Greek Septuagint text] to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh; and the rib which the Lord God had taken from the man He made into a woman, and brought her to the man.” (21-22). The Hebrew word translated as “deep sleep” here, *tardema*, actually means “visionary trance”, which is close to the Septuagint’s “ecstasy”.³⁴¹

Nicholas J. Shaser writes: “The description of the woman made from the man’s “rib” has led to the mistaken conclusion that women are inferior to men because they originate from one small part of the male anatomy. Yet’ According to Exodus, for example, God told Moses to make four gold rings for the Ark of the Covenant, “two rings on one side (צֵלַע; *tsela*) of it, and two rings on the other side of it” (Exodus 25:12). Likewise, **when God takes one *tsela* from the man to make the woman, Eve comes from an entire *side* of Adam’s body, not a single rib.**

“Adam’s own words clarify that Eve comes from one of his sides when he declares of his wife, ‘Finally, this is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh!’ (Genesis 2:23). Had Eve been created from the man’s rib alone, Adam would only have been able to say that she was ‘bone of his bone.’ As Adam’s bone *and* flesh, the woman is the man’s ‘other half.’ When man and woman cleave to one another and return to being ‘one flesh’ (2:24), the two equal halves

³⁴⁰ Lossky, *In the Image and Likeness of God*, Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Theological Seminary, 1989, pp. 71-72.

³⁴¹ Shaser, “Splitting the Adam”, *Hebrew Bible Center*, June 7, 2018.

of humanity are brought back together. The primordial couple in Genesis represents God's vision of equality and complementarity between the genders."³⁴²

Why from the side? Because it is the antitype of the creation of the Church, the Bride of Christ, from the blood and water that flowed from His side in the sleep of death on the Cross. "It is not without significance," writes St. Ambrose, "that the woman was made out of Adam's rib. She was not made of the same earth as he, in order to show that the physical nature of man and woman is identical and that together they were the one source for the propagation of the human race. Thus neither was man created with a woman, nor were two men nor two women created at the beginning, but first a man and then a woman, God willing that human nature be established as one. Therefore from the very beginning of our race He eliminated the possibility that different natures could arise."³⁴³

And yet there is a difference, a difference. This difference is for the sake of sexual reproduction – but not only for that... Thus "Adam said, This is now bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be in one flesh." (2.23-24) Thus "Adam," writes St. Ephraim, "was both one and two, one in that he was man, two in that he was created male and female".³⁴⁴ Again: "He honoured [Eve]", writes St. John Chrysostom, "and made them one, even before her creation".³⁴⁵ But "the wise counsel of God at the beginning divided the one into two; and wanting to show that even after division it still remains one, He did not allow that procreation should be possible through one person only...."

And so, concludes the holy Father, "one may see that they are one, for she was made from his side, and they are, as it were, two halves."³⁴⁶

³⁴² Shaset, "Did Eve Come from Adam's 'Rib'?" *Israel Bible Weekly*, June 6, 2018, <https://weekly.israelbiblecenter.com/eve-come-adams-rib/?via=5051b71>

However, the surgeon J.E. Shelley had a different interpretation: "The account in *Genesis* 2.18-25 is as factual as words can make it. It reads like the account which a surgeon writes for the records of the operating theatre! God performs a surgical operation under general anaesthesia, a rib re-section in this case. Note the detail: 'He closed up the flesh instead thereof'. In just such a manner would a surgeon describe his closing up of an incision. Remarkably enough, provided that the surgeon is careful to leave the periosteum (the membrane which envelops the bones) of the removed rib, the rib will reform in a non-septic case, and the operation performed upon Adam was truly aseptic. So far as I remember, the rib is the only bone in the body of man which will do this. God gave it this property, which is why He chose it. With the vast reservoir of living cells contained in this rib, 'He built up Eve'." (*How God created Man*, a Bible Christian Unity Fellowship Study, p. 6. Out of the 206 bones in the human body, only the rib can regenerate itself when taken out of the body. See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vZVfqvmnViM>

³⁴³ St. Ambrose of Milan, *On Paradise*, IX, 48.

³⁴⁴ St. Ephraim the Syrian, *Commentary on Genesis*, 2.12; quoted in Robert Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom*, Cambridge University Press, 1975, p. 302.

³⁴⁵ St. John Chrysostom, *Homily 31 on I Corinthians*, 5.

³⁴⁶ St. John Chrysostom, *Homily 12 on Colossians*, 5.

A more spiritual interpretation of the differentiation of the sexes is that through it God instilled in the nature of each one of us an intuitive understanding of the relationship between God and His creation, with God occupying the masculine, active role of saviour and protector, while man in relation to God adopts the feminine, passive role. Many Biblical passages portray God as the bridegroom of the human soul...

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Contemporary supporters of the LGBT ideology argue that the sexual distinctions are not important and therefore can be “renegotiated”, that men can become women and women - men. However, according to the Holy Scriptures, the distinction - and the attraction - between male and female was there from the very beginning, even before the fall. When Eve was created out of the side of Adam, he said of her: “This is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh: and she shall be called woman [*isha* in Hebrew] because she was taken out of man [*ish*]”³⁴⁷. Here he is acknowledging that they are of one flesh - in other words, that they are *married - physically married*. These words, as Bishop Nikolai Velimirovich writes, are “the foundation of, and the reason for, the mysterious attraction and union between man and woman”.³⁴⁸ They “have become,” writes St. Asterius of Amasea, “a common admission, spoken in the name of all men to all women, to the whole female sex. These words bind all the rest. For that which took place in the beginning in these first-created ones passed into the nature of their descendants.”³⁴⁹

“This is the origin,” writes Archpriest Lev Lebedev, “of the irresistible attraction of man to his ‘wife’ (the woman) as to the most necessary complement of his own nature. Union in love with the woman can be replaced only by union in love with God, which is immeasurably more profound. It is on such a union with God that monasticism is founded, which is why it does not lead to psychological complexes. But monasticism is not for everyone, it is the lot of special people, ‘who can accommodate’ this condition (Matthew 19.11-12). But for the majority the woman remains one of the most necessary conditions of a normal existence.”³⁵⁰ Adam continues with the famous words which the Lord Jesus Christ, followed by the Apostle Paul, saw as the founding document of marriage: *Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be in one flesh.*

³⁴⁷ The Hebrew words “ish” and “isha” (like the English “man” and “woman”) emphasize the unity of the sexes in a single human nature. For “this name,” as St. John Chrysostom says, “should reveal their common creation and become the foundation of a durable love and the cement of their union” (*Homily 6 on Genesis*, 5).

³⁴⁸ Velimirovich, *The Prologue from Ochrid*, Birmingham: Lazarica Press, 1986, volume IV, p. 241, November 25.

³⁴⁹ St. Asterius, *Sermon on Matthew 19.3*, P.G. 40:228; in S.V. Troitsky, “Brak i Tserkov’” (“Marriage and the Church”), *Russkoe Vozrozhdenie* (Russian Regeneration), 1986 (III), № 35, pp. 25-26.

³⁵⁰ Lebedev, “O masterakh i margaritakh” (“On Masters and Margaritas”), *Pravoslavnaia Zhizn’* (Orthodox Life), 53, № 5 (640), May, 2003, p. 31.

Now it may be true, as St. Gregory of Nyssa argues, that the whole apparatus of sexual anatomical differences and sexual reproduction, being aspects of “the garments of skin” given to Adam and Eve after their fall, only came into being after the fall. If that is so, then sexual intercourse took place, as St. John of the Ladder points out, only after the fall. But the fact remains that Adam was a man and Eve a woman already in Paradise, before the fall, that they were married and of one flesh already in Paradise, and that even then they were attracted to each other in a natural, but sinless, unfallen manner. Thus St. Cyril of Alexandria writes of Adam's body *before* the fall that it “was not entirely free from concupiscence of the flesh”.³⁵¹ For “while it was beyond corruption, it had indeed innate appetites, appetites for food and procreation. But the amazing thing was that his mind was not tyrannized by these tendencies. For he did freely what he wanted to do, seeing that his flesh was not yet subject to the passions consequent upon corruption.”³⁵²

Now science has established that the intellectual and emotional differences between men and women may be related to hormonal differences and to different patterns of activity in the right and left hemispheres of the brain. Indeed, these hemispherical differences appear to complement each other rather like male and female.³⁵³ It is as if each individual man and woman were one half of a single bisexual organism, so that each man appears to be “missing” certain feminine qualities that would make him more whole, while each woman appears to be missing certain masculine qualities that would make her more whole.

Be that as it may, and whether or not such differences existed before the fall, the fall has accentuated and corrupted the differences between the sexes. Thus men tend to be crude, insensitive and boastful, and women – weak-willed, vain and easily led by all kinds of influences. But these fallen differences do not entail that in the beginning, before the fall, there was never meant to be any real and important difference.

The restoration of the image of God in man involves, not the abolition of all sexual differences, but their return to their original, unfallen condition, not the abolition of sexuality but sexual *integration*. Thus men return to real masculinity together with those feminine qualities which fallen masculinity drives out; and vice-versa for women. After all, although Christ was the perfect man, with none of the weaknesses of fallen men, nobody would claim that He is anything but supremely masculine. And the Virgin Mary is supremely feminine...

³⁵¹ St. Cyril of Alexandria, *On I Corinthians 7*; quoted in Walter Burghardt, *The Image of God in Man according to Cyril of Alexandria*, Woodstock, Maryland: Woodstock College Press, 1957, p. 98.

³⁵² St. Cyril of Alexandria, *Against Julian*, 3, P.G. 76, 637; quoted in Burghardt, *op. cit.*, p. 98.

³⁵³ Professor Simon Baron-Cohen, *The Essential Difference: Men, Women and the Extreme Male Brain*, London: Allen Lane The Penguin Press, 2003.

Again, modern medicine claims to be able to change men into women, and women into men. But sex-change operations appear to be far less successful than is commonly claimed.³⁵⁴ And Dr. Paul R. McHugh, former psychiatrist-in-chief for John Hopkins Hospital and its current Distinguished Service Professor of Psychiatry, said that transgenderism is a “mental disorder” that merits treatment, that sex change is “biologically impossible,” and that people who promote sexual reassignment surgery are collaborating with and promoting a mental disorder.³⁵⁵ And the reason for that seems to be that while you can (up to a point) change a man’s (or a woman’s) *secondary, external* secondary characteristics, you cannot change his *primary, internal* sexuality. For sexuality is not as superficial and “negotiable” as the modernists would like us to believe. There is more to sexuality than meets the eye...

The deeper aspects of sexuality, even on the purely physical plane, appear to be immutable.³⁵⁶ Thus every man has an X and a Y chromosome, while every woman has two X chromosomes; and there are at least 6,500 genetic differences between men and women which no amount of hormones or surgery can change. As a scientific journalist writes: “Although men and women sometimes act like separate species, scientists have long assumed that – in terms of their DNA – they are more or less the same. But a new study has shown that the sexes really are quite different, reports *Nature* magazine, and it all comes down to the X chromosome. Women carry two X chromosomes; men, by contrast, have one X, inherited from their mothers, and one Y. The Y is an ‘eroded’ version of the X chromosome with fewer than 100 working genes. The X, by contrast, has more than 1000, and is able to deploy them more intricately. “Because women have two X chromosomes, one is inactive. But that doesn’t mean it’s entirely silent. The new research has revealed that up to 25 % of genes in the so-called inactive chromosome are actually switched on. In other words, women are getting ‘double doses’ of some genes. ‘The effect of these genes from the inactive X chromosome could explain some of the differences between men and women that are not attributable to sex hormones,’ said Laura Carrel of Pennsylvania State University. These could include emotional, behavioural and physical differences, including susceptibility to disease. Although the X contains only 4% of all human genes, it accounts for almost 10% of those inherited diseases that are caused by a single gene. These ‘X-linked’ disorders include colour blindness, haemophilia, various forms of mental retardation and Duchenne muscular dystrophy. With no ‘spare’ X to make up for genetic deficiencies, men are more vulnerable to ‘X-linked’ conditions.”³⁵⁷

Thus the scientific evidence, taken as a whole, supports *both* the thesis that

³⁵⁴ Walt Heyer, “‘Sex change’ Surgery: What Bruce Jenner, Diane Sawyer, and you should Know”, <http://www.pravoslavie.ru/english/78949.htm>, April 27, 2015.

³⁵⁵ Michael W. Chapman, “Johns Hopkins Psychiatrist: Transgender is ‘Mental Disorder;’ Sex Change ‘Biologically Impossible’”, *cnsnews.com*, June 2, 2015. Cf. “The Transgender Tipping Point: America’s Next Civil Rights Frontier”, *Time Magazine*, June 9, 2104.

³⁵⁶ Cf. Dorothy Kimura, “Sex Differences in the Brain”, *Scientific American*, vol. 267, September, 1992, pp. 80-87.

³⁵⁷ “The Difference between Men and Women”, *This Week*, March 26, 2005, p. 17.

the sexuality of a man or woman is immutable, *and* St. Gregory's view that certain secondary sexual characteristics were "added" to the original man and woman after the fall. On the one hand, since, as the Lord says, there will be no marriage in the resurrection, it follows, as St. Gregory writes, that these secondary characteristics will not exist in the Kingdom: "If the organs of marriage exist for the sake of marriage, when that function does not exist we shall need none of the organs for that function".³⁵⁸ On the other hand, "male and female created He them": the evidence also supports the position that there is a deeper, primary level of sexuality that is "wired into" the nature of men and women and cannot be removed or changed; from which it follows that the attempt to remove or reverse or "renegotiate" sexuality is unnatural and perverse...

August 13/26, 2019.

³⁵⁸ St. Gregory, *On the Soul and the Resurrection*, 10. However, Hieromonk Seraphim Rose writes that "Adam and Eve were created, like the whole of the first creation, in the bloom of youth and beauty, and already possessing the sexual distinction that would be needed in their fallen nature" (*Genesis, Creation and Early Man*, Platina, Ca.: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 2000, p. 187)

26. CAN A RULER BE ABOVE THE LAW?

The clear answer to this question, according to contemporary thinking, is: no. Indeed, one of the main criteria by which “the international community” decides whether it can accept a country into its blessed company is: does the ruler of this country, whether that be a single man, an oligarchy or a parliament, follow the rule of law, not least his or its own laws? However, the recent statement by the British Prime Minister Boris Johnson that he would be prepared to break the law, if necessary, in order to take his country out of the European Union (with or without a deal with the EU) raises the question again in a particularly acute form.

The German jurist Carl Schmitt argued that a ruler must be above the law in cases of *emergency* when a vital decision has to be made, and there is no obvious solution within the context of contemporary law. The most obvious emergency is when the leader has to choose whether to go to war or not when parliamentary delegates are divided and yet a nation acting as one, under one leader, is clearly essential. The obvious example is Britain in 1940 when Churchill was in a minority in his conviction not to surrender to Germany but to continue to fight – but pushed through the decision anyway...The law cannot foresee all eventualities, and democratic law-makers may not be able to make new laws that solve the problem. Certainly, the long, complex and increasingly frustrating debates around Brexit seem to confirm that point. In such a situation, the leader of the nation has to cut the Gordian knot, whether or not he strictly has the power to do so according to contemporary law. The price may be that he will be called “autocratic”, even “dictatorial”, by his opponents: but he has no choice but to act in a royal manner...

The word “autocrat” means “self-ruling”. The Byzantine and Russian rulers called themselves “autocrats” because they considered themselves self-ruling in the political sphere. However, they were not *absolutely* autonomous because as Christians they accepted the Law of God and the canon law of the Church. Thus in the ninth-century Byzantine *Epanagoge* we read: “The Emperor must act as the law when there is none written, except that his actions must not violate canon law. The Patriarch alone must interpret the canons of the ancient (Patriarchs) and the decrees of the Holy Fathers and the resolutions of the Holy Synods” (*Titulus III, 5*).

The presumption, therefore, is that the Emperor should obey the written law as it stands, but can make new laws and modify existing ones. However, he cannot modify or disobey the Law of the Church. In this sense, and in this sense only, he is *not* above the law. If he does put himself above the Law of God and the Church, he becomes an absolutist monarch, or *despot*. The Byzantine and Russian autocrats were not in general despots, although the Arian and iconoclast emperors, Ivan the Terrible in the second half of his reign and Peter the Great from 1700 until his death were indeed despots.

Almost all modern rulers, even if they have been elected by the people (indeed, very often *because* they have been elected by the people), are despotic because they believe that they have the right – even the duty – to legislate contrary to the Law of God. Thus it is lawful in almost all modern democracies to blaspheme against God and Christ, to kill unborn babies in the womb and to practice homosexuality. Moreover, those who champion the Law of God in these instances are likely to find themselves condemned by the law, even imprisoned. Therefore modern rulers do not obey the law and are strictly speaking illegitimate.

Does that mean that the Christian people should rebel against their rulers? If the rulers compel them to transgress the Law of God, then yes, they must refuse to obey. But armed insurrection is neither practical in most cases nor mandatory. The Three Holy Youths refused to obey Nebuchadnezzar's command to worship the golden idol, but they did not rebel against his rule in general. Indeed, the Lord through the Prophet Jeremiah had told the Jews that they *must* accept his yoke: "Seek the peace of the city where I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray to the Lord for it; for in its peace you will have peace..." (Jeremiah 29.7). Similarly, the early Christians refused to obey the Roman emperor's command to worship him as god. But in general they obeyed and prayed for him, for they saw in him "a terror not to good works, but to evil" (Romans 13.3).

The great advantage of a truly autocratic ruler is that, without having to obtain the will of the people, who may be evil or corrupted or simply divided amongst themselves, he is able to sweep away bad laws and evil traditions and create new ones (or restore old ones) that are concordant with the Law of God and the Sacred Tradition of Holy Orthodoxy. Of course, he can also use – or rather, abuse – his power to do exactly the opposite: there can be no guarantee of infallibility or consistency where fallen human beings are involved. Thus Ivan the Terrible was a true autocrat in the first half of his reign, but turned into a despot in the second half.

Both good autocrats and evil despots are sent by the Providence of God for the ultimate spiritual benefit of His people. Thus St. Irenaeus of Lyons writes: "Some rulers are given by God with a view to the improvement and benefit of their subjects and the preservation of justice; others are given with a view to producing fear, punishment and reproof; yet others are given with a view to displaying mockery, insult and pride – in each case in accordance with the deserts of the subjects."³⁵⁹ Again, St. Isidore of Pelusium writes that the evil ruler "has been allowed to spew out this evil, like Pharaoh, and, in such an instance, to carry out extreme punishment or to chastize those for whom great cruelty is required, as when the king of Babylon chastized the Jews."³⁶⁰

³⁵⁹ St. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, v, 24, 3; translated in Maurice Wiles & Mark Santer, *Documents in Early Christian Thought*, Cambridge University Press, 1977, p. 226.

³⁶⁰ St. Isidore, *Letter 6*, quoted in *Selected Letters of Archbishop Theophan of Poltava*, Liberty, TN: St. John of Kronstadt Press, 1989, p. 36.

In our age, when the people have been indoctrinated with anti-christian teachings already for centuries, it is almost inconceivable that a popular vote should re-establish Orthodoxy or even common sense. This is not to say that there are no people who have preserved a core of healthy thinking. But such people are in a minority now, and they need a leader if they are ever to have their healthy thinking restored to a dominant place in society. God can raise such a leader now, as He has done more than once in the past. But it is essential, if that leader is to accomplish his God-pleasing task, that he is *not* subject to the rule of any law except God's law; for what goes for "law" now in our society is as often as not a terror, not to evil works, but to the good...

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27. THE PROBLEM OF ECCLESIASTICAL AUTOCEPHALY

The recent quarrel between the patriarchates of Constantinople and Moscow over Constantinople's proclamation of an autocephalous Ukrainian Church raises once again the problem of ecclesiastical autocephaly that has so plagued the Orthodox Church over the course of the last millennium.

Let us first offer a definition of ecclesiastical autocephaly. Following the canonist Sergei Troitsky (1878-1972) in his article "Church Autocephaly" (*Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*, 1948), we may define a Church as autocephalous if it is "self-headed", having its own supreme or sovereign power independent of that of any other autocephalous Church, whose bishops elect their first bishop and the rest of the hierarchy, and are able to judge their own hierarchs, including the first hierarch, independently of any other church hierarchy. In addition, an autocephalous Church "enjoys full freedom in producing holy myrrh for itself, canonizing its own saints, composing new hymns, determining the time of the liturgy, etc." However, an autocephalous Church is not independent in its dogmatic and canonical definitions, which have to conform to the decisions of the Ecumenical Councils, and is also subject to the decisions of all truly Orthodox Ecumenical and Pan-Orthodox Councils.

If we exclude the five patriarchates that came into existence in the first Christian centuries – Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem – autocephalous Churches have come into existence in the following three ways:-

1. **By the Decision of an Ecumenical Council.** In this way were born the autocephalies of the Churches of Georgia, Cyprus and Sinai. In later ages, for their protection in the face of overwhelming external pressure, the Church of Georgia was absorbed into the Church of Russia, and the Church of Cyprus into the Church of Constantinople. But these absorptions, or annulments of autocephaly, were recognized as temporary, and therefore did not significantly hinder the reassertion of autocephaly in later ages.
2. **By the Grant of a Mother or "kyriarchal" Church.** In this way were born the autocephalies of the Churches of Bulgaria and Serbia in medieval times, and of many other Churches in the twentieth century. In most cases the Mother Church has been the patriarchate of Constantinople; in a few cases it has been the patriarchate of Moscow. One characteristic of this method of autocephaly-creation has been its instability: the Church that grants the autocephaly feels itself entitled to take back this grant for one or another reason. Thus in 1766-67 the Patriarchate of Constantinople abolished the autocephalies of the Churches of Bulgaria and Serbia. Another characteristic is that a grant of autocephaly by one Church is often contested by another. For example, the patriarchate of Constantinople has always contested Moscow's granting of autocephaly to the Orthodox Church of America, regarding it as a metropolitanate of the Russian Church. Again, Moscow contested Constantinople's grant of

autocephaly to the Church of Poland until it had confirmed it with its own grant, and similarly contests Constantinople's grant of autocephaly to a Ukrainian Church in 2018. Sometimes this leads to the creation of two autocephalous Churches on one territory, as when two autocephalous Churches of Estonia were created, one by Constantinople and the other by Moscow.

3. **By a Unilateral declaration of Autocephaly.** Usually such a declaration is rejected as invalid or schismatic by the Church which considers itself "kyriarchal" (usually Constantinople), but is then recognized some years later *ex post facto*. For example, after the proclamation of the kingdom of Romania in 1881, the Romanian Synod itself consecrated the holy chrism in 1882. This aroused the stern opposition of Patriarch Joachim III, but his successor Joachim IV bowed to the reality: Constantinople officially recognized the autocephaly by the Tomos of 25 April 1885, and in 1924 also recognized the Romanian patriarchate.

From the above, it is obvious that the only stable method of creating autocephalous Churches, without the threat of schism or uncanonicity, is by means of an Ecumenical or Pan-Orthodox Council whose decisions are accepted by all the Local Autocephalous Churches. For the creation of a new Church, whether or not it takes place on the territory of an existing Church or not, is a matter affecting the life of all the existing Churches and should therefore be authorized and confirmed by all the Churches sitting in council together. Thus the *de facto* autocephaly of the Russian Church since 1448 was recognized and confirmed *de jure* by the Pan-Orthodox Councils of 1589, 1590 and 1593.

However, this approach to the problem has proved difficult to implement for three reasons:-

1. **Political Interference.** When wars or national revolutions or the influx of large numbers of immigrants of a certain race into a certain territory create changes in state boundaries, or a change in the dominant race on a certain territory, the need for the creation of a new Church to accommodate such changes becomes obvious and not unreasonable. More problematic is the situation when an imperial or totalitarian power seeks to exploit inter-church relations and rivalries for its own political ends. The Orthodox Church of its nature has always striven to be independent of political interference, but in some cases this becomes difficult if not impossible. For example, when the Ottomans conquered the whole of Eastern Europe and Anatolia, and placed the patriarch of Constantinople as ethnarch of all the Orthodox Christians in the region, the weakening of the autocephaly of the non-Greek Churches became inevitable. From this there arose the attitude (evident even before the Ottoman conquest) of Constantinople seeing herself as "ecumenical" in a way that was incompatible with the full autocephaly of the other Local Churches. And unfortunately this attitude has persisted even after the fall of the Ottoman empire; in fact, in some ways it appears to have

increased as Constantinople seeks to make up for the power it lost under the Ottomans. Similarly, the Soviet conquest of Eastern Europe at the end of the Second World War gave the Moscow Patriarchate, as a tool of Soviet political power, dominion over all the autocephalous Churches of Eastern and Central Europe – a dominion that it has not been willing fully to relinquish since the fall of Soviet power. And where new states have arisen within the former Soviet Union (as in the Baltic States, Belarus and Ukraine), the Moscow Patriarchate, following the bidding of its political master, has acted as if these new boundaries did not exist, and all Russians everywhere, being all parts of one “Russian world”, should all belong to one Russian Church.

2. **The Orthodox Diaspora.** Large numbers of Orthodox Christians whose racial and cultural roots lie in Eastern Europe now live in the countries of the West, where a multiplicity of separate and parallel ethnic jurisdictions have sprung up, violating the territorial principle of Orthodox ecclesiastical organization, whereby there should be only one bishop in one defined territory. This problem has been on the agenda of a future Pan-Orthodox Council for decades, but neither the Council that met in Crete in 2016 nor any other inter-Church consultations have succeeded in solving it. Here again, political interference has played its part...
3. **The Heresy of Ecumenism.** Since the 1920s in the Greek Churches, and since the 1960s in the Russian and East European Churches, the ecumenist heresy has played havoc with the spiritual lives of all the Local Orthodox Churches, making a truly spiritual and canonical resolution of their problems impossible. Ecumenism divides the Churches within and between themselves. While the leaders of the patriarchates of Moscow and Constantinople vie with each other in trying to be the closest satraps of the Pope of Rome, the lower clergy and people begin to have doubts whether their leaders are Orthodox at all, and look towards the True Orthodox Churches that have remained undefiled by the pollution of ecumenism.

In conclusion, there is an urgent need for an Ecumenical or Pan-Orthodox Council that will sort out the problems of the organization of the Orthodox Church and in particular the criteria for the lawful creation of new Autocephalous Churches. However, such a Council cannot be convened until a new leadership is in place that is free of the pollution of heresy and all association with anti-Orthodox political interference. Only then can the One True Church make its unity manifest to the rest of the world that lies in darkness.

*September 4/17, 2019.
Holy Prophet and God-Seer Moses.*

28. THE RIGHTS OF THE ORTHODOX AUTOCRAT

The Emperor Constantine VII “Porphyrogennitus” (“born-in-the-purple”) was for much of his reign in submission to his father-in-law, Emperor Romanos Lekapenos, who usurped the throne in 919. This subordinate status had this advantage, however: it gave Constantine the leisure and means to play an important role in the intellectual and cultural life of the empire. Thus between 948 and 952 he compiled *De Administrando Imperio* (DAI), “On the Administration of the Empire”, whose purpose was to instruct his son, Romanos II, on what he should know if and when he ascended the throne.

Thus, as Louis Minakakis writes, “the DAI embodies the imperial ideology, espousing the role of an emperor that was characterized in Byzantine thinking prevalent in the empire’s middle period (843-1204). In it, the Byzantine emperor is the ultimate caretaker, ‘bound to take thought for the safety of all, and to steer and to guide the laden ship of the world’. This reference to the ‘ship of the world’ is the Byzantine state. It was the emperor’s mission to rule over the *oikoumene*, or ‘civilised world’, as God had entrusted the empire to the Romans under Constantinople. The Byzantines were the new Chosen People and the Empire was eulogized in the DAI with biblical imagery: ‘Come hither and behold a land flowing with milk and honey’.

“Yet it is the idea of order (*taxis*) that characterized the Byzantine spirit, calling essentially for a harmonious hierarchy of society and its institutions, framing Byzantine society as a reflection of heaven. In another of Constantine VII’s works, *Book of Ceremonies*, this divine order is described as a beautiful physical form: ‘For just as when a body is not harmoniously fashioned but has its limbs set in a contorted and ill coordinated way, one would describe this as disorder, so too when the imperial administration is not led and governed by order so that the reins of power will be managed with order and beauty.’ States that did not conform to this strict *taxis* were looked on as ‘barbaric’, demonstrating a ‘disorderly’ state of affairs that the Byzantines abhorred.

“Constantine’s intellectual work helped to revitalise the empire’s foreign relations in the 10th century and beyond. As the new Chosen People and legitimate heirs of Constantine the Great’s Roman Empire, the Byzantines sought to project power in former Roman territories with renewed energy and assertiveness. Following Constantine’s return to the throne and his death in 959, the three emperors who followed him were able military leaders, who fielded armies and went on to incorporate large swathes of territory into the Empire.

“By 1025, Byzantium had reached its zenith, in influence, power and territory. These achievements might not have been undertaken – let alone attained – without the impetus of Constantine’s ideological program of the mid-tenth century...”³⁶¹

³⁶¹ Minakakis, “A Blueprint for Byzantine Power”, *History Today*, November, 2007, pp. 13-14.

Let us summarise the central hinge, as it were, of Byzantine political ideology - the relationship between the Church and the State as led by the Emperor...

The essential condition of successful imperial rule was that the Emperor should be a faithful son of the Church, obeying her dogmas and traditions of Orthodoxy and protecting her from all her enemies. "If the Emperor forgets the fear of God," wrote the Emperor Constantine, "he will inevitably fall into sin and be changed into a despot, he will not be able to keep to the customs established by the Fathers, and by the intrigues of the devil he will do that which is unworthy and contrary to the commandments of God, he will become hateful to the people, the senate and the Church, he will become unworthy to be called a Christian, he will be deprived of his post, will be subject to anathema, and, finally, will be killed as the 'common enemy' of all Romans, both 'those who command' and 'those who obey'."³⁶²

Whatever rights the emperor has in the Church are given to him by the Church, for the sake of the Church, and in view of the fact that he is himself specially anointed to the kingdom by the Church. This is a vitally important point which is often overlooked by those who look on Church and State as necessarily warring principles. Just as the soul and the body are not by nature warring principles, even if the fall has often set them against each other, so it is with the Church and State. And yet we must agree with Sir Steven Runciman that "the chief practical problem that faces any organized Church lies in its relation to the State" ...³⁶³

The rights of the Emperor in the Church were limited by the fact that he could not perform sacraments, nor did he ordain or defrock bishops and priests. "To be sure, the Emperor wore vestments similar to those of the bishop and even had a special place in the worship of the Church, such as censing the sanctuary at the Liturgy for the Nativity of Christ, offering the sermon during Vespers at the commencement of the Great Lent, and receiving Holy Communion directly from the altar as did the clergy. Nevertheless, the Emperor was not a priest and many Greek Fathers disapproved of even these privileges. Emperor Marcian (451-457) may have been hailed as a priest-king at the Council of Chalcedon (451), but this did not bestow sacerdotal status on him or any Byzantine *imperator*."³⁶⁴

One of the rights given to the Emperor by the Church was that of convening Councils and enforcing their decisions. This right did not empower the emperor or his officials to interfere in the proceedings on a par with the bishops, but it did enable him to make quiet suggestions which were often vitally important. Thus at the First Council it was the Emperor Constantine

³⁶² Emperor Constantine VII, *On the Government of the Empire*.

³⁶³ Runciman, *The Great Church in Captivity*, Cambridge University Press, 1968, p. 55.

³⁶⁴ *The Lives of the Pillars of Orthodoxy*, Buena Vista, Co.: Holy Apostles' Convent, p. 125.

who quietly suggested the word “consubstantial” to describe the relationship between the Son of God and God the Father.³⁶⁵ Again, although the Emperor Marcian said that he had decided to be present at the Fourth Ecumenical Council “not as a manifestation of strength, but so as to give firmness to the acts of the Council, taking Constantine of blessed memory as my model,”³⁶⁶ his firm but tactful intervention was decisive in the triumph of Orthodoxy.

The Emperor also had the right to invest the Patriarch. “According to the official formula,” writes Runciman, “the Patriarch was elected by the decree of the Holy Synod and the promotion of the Emperor. His investiture took place in the Imperial Palace in the presence of the high dignitaries of Church and State. Until 1204 the scene was the Palace of Magnaura, where the Emperor in person announced the election with the formula: ‘The Divine grace, and Our Majesty which derives from it, raised the most pious [*name*] to be Patriarch of Constantinople.’ After 1261 the investiture was held in the *triclinium* of the Palace of Blachernae; and about the same time the formula was changed. The Emperor now said: ‘The Holy Trinity, through the power that It has given Us, raises you to be Bishop of Constantinople, New Rome, and Oecumenical Patriarch.’ By the beginning of the fifteenth century the formula and the setting had changed once more. The investiture now took place in a church in the presence of the Emperor; but it was a high lay official who pronounced the words: ‘Our great and holy Sovereign and the Sacred Synod call Your Holiness to the supreme throne of Patriarch of Constantinople.’ The theologian Symeon of Thessalonica, writing in about 1425, regretted the change of words as there was no mention of God, though he liked the recognition given to the Holy Synod. When the election had thus been proclaimed the Emperor gave to the Patriarch the cross, the purple soutane and the pectoral reliquary which symbolized his office. After this investiture the new Patriarch rode in procession through the streets of Constantinople to the church of Saint Sophia, where he was consecrated by the Metropolitan of Heraclea, in memory of the days when Byzantium had been a suffragan see under Heraclea.”³⁶⁷

The Emperor chose the Patriarch from three candidates put forward to him by the Holy Synod. As Simeon of Thessalonica witnessed, this right was not seized by the emperor by force, “but was entrusted to him from ancient times by the Holy Fathers, that is, by the Church itself”. Moreover, “if none of the three candidates was suitable, the *basileus* could suggest his own candidate, and the Hierarchical Synod again freely decided about his suitability, having the possibility of not agreeing. The king’s right did not in principle violate the Hierarchs’ freedom of choice and was based on the fact that the Patriarch occupied not only a position in the Church, but was also a participant in political life... Simeon of Thessalonica said: ‘He, as the anointed king, has been from ancient times offered the choice of one of the three by the Holy Fathers,

³⁶⁵ Archbishop Averky (Taushev) of Syracuse, *Sem’ Vselenskikh Soborov* (The Seven Ecumenical Councils), Moscow, 1996, p. 11.

³⁶⁶ Averky, *op.cit.*, p. 71.

³⁶⁷ Runciman, *op.cit.*, p. 27.

for they [the three] have already been chosen by the Council, and all three have been recognized as worthy of the Patriarchy. The king assists the Council in its actions as the anointed of the Lord, having become the defender and servant of the Church, since during the anointing he gave a promise of such assistance. *De jure* there can be no question of arbitrariness on the part of the king in the choosing of the Patriarch, or of encroachment on the rights and freedom of choice [of the Hierarchs].”³⁶⁸

Another imperial right was that of handing the Patriarch his staff. This should not be interpreted as if the emperor bestowed the grace of the Patriarchy. Nor was it the same as the ceremony of “lay investiture” in the West. The emperor did this, according to Simeon of Thessalonica, “because he wishes to honour the Church, implying also at the same time that he personally accepts the individual now consecrated as his own pastor whom God has chosen for him.”³⁶⁹

“Simeon of Thessalonica explains that in this act the king only witnesses to the fact of his agreement with the installation of the new Patriarch, and after the bestowal of the staff he witnesses to his spiritual submission... by the bowing of his head, his asking for a blessing from the Patriarch and his kissing of his hand. By the grace and action of the Hierarchy, the Patriarch does not differ from the Metropolitans and Bishops. But in the dignity of his see, and in his care for all who are under his authority, he is the father and head of all, consecrating Metropolitans and Bishops, and judging them in conjunction with the Council, while he himself is judged by a Great Council, says Simeon of Thessalonica. The king was present at both the consecration and the enthronement of the Patriarch in the altar...; but the consecration and enthronement were acts of a purely ecclesiastical character, and the king’s participation in them was no longer as active as in the first stages of the process, when he convened the Hierarchical Council, chose one of the three elected by the Council and witnessed to his recognition of him in the act of *προβλησις* [which gave the Patriarch his rights in Byzantine civil law]. In the act of consecration [assuming that the candidate to the Patriarchy was not already a bishop] Hierarchical grace was invoked upon the man to be consecrated by the Metropolitan of Heraclea, while in the act of enthronement he was strengthened by abundant grace to greater service for the benefit, now, of the whole Church, and not of one Diocese [only].”³⁷⁰

These rights of the emperor in the Church were paralleled by certain rights of the Church in the State, especially the Patriarch’s right of intercession (Russian: *pechalovanie*). “The Patriarch was called to intercede for the persecuted and those oppressed by the authorities, for the condemned and those in exile, with the aim of easing their lot, and for the poor and those in need with the aim of giving them material or moral support. This right of

³⁶⁸ Zyzykin, *Patriarkh Nikon*, Warsaw: Synodal Press, 1931, part I, pp. 116, 117.

³⁶⁹ Zyzykin, *op. cit.*, part I, pp. 322-323.

³⁷⁰ Zyzykin, *op. cit.*, part I, pp. 120-121.

intercessory complaint, which belonged by dint of the 75th canon of the Council of Carthage to all Diocesan Bishops, was particularly linked with the Patriarch of Constantinople by dint of his high position in the Byzantine State with the king.”³⁷¹

Also, State officials “were obliged to help the Bishop in supporting Church discipline and punishing transgressors. Sometimes the emperors obliged provincial officials to tell them about Church disturbances which depended on the carelessness of the Bishop, but the emperors gave the Bishops the right to keep an eye on officials, while the Bishops, in carrying out this obligation imposed on them by the civil law, did not thereby become State officials... In the Byzantine laws themselves the Church was distinguished from the State as a special social organism, having a special task distinct from that of the State; these laws recognized the Church as the teacher of the faith and the establisher of Church canons, while the State could only raise them to the status of State laws; Church administration and Church courts were recognized as being bound up with the priestly rank.”³⁷²

“In reviewing Byzantine ideas on royal power, we must recognize the fact that, in spite of the influence of pagan traditions, in spite of Saracen Muslim influences leading to a confusion of powers, in spite of the bad practices of arianizing and iconoclast emperors, it remained a dogma of Byzantine law to recognize the Church of Christ as a special society, parallel to the State, standing separate and above the latter by its aims and means, by dint of which the supreme head of the State was by no means the head of the other, ecclesiastical union, and, if he entered into it in the position of a special sacred rank, it was far from being the higher, but was only equal to the deacon’s, being subject thereby to the canons which established the Church as a Divine institution having its own legislation, administration and court...”³⁷³

The State is rooted in the family, so that the head of the State, the Emperor or King, is like the Father of all his citizens. However, if the Emperor is the father of his people, the Patriarch is the father of the Emperor, and was so called in Byzantium and in all her daughter-autocracies: Serbia, Bulgaria, Georgia and Russia. Thus Emperor Theodosius the Great embraced St. Meletius, president of the Second Ecumenical Council, as his father. In Serbia, this spiritual relationship was even paralleled by physical paternity: St. Symeon, the first Nemanja king, was the physical father of the first archbishop, St. Savva, but at the same time his spiritual son. Again, in Russia the first Romanov Tsar, Mikhail Fyodorovich, was the spiritual *and* natural son of Patriarch Philaret. This emphasized that Christian politics, as represented by the Emperor or Tsar, should ideally be conformed to – even “begotten by” – the other-worldly spirit and aims of Christian spirituality, as represented by the Patriarch.

³⁷¹ Zyzykin, *op. cit.*, part I, p. 121.

³⁷² Zyzykin, *op. cit.*, part I, p. 137.

³⁷³ Zyzykin, *op. cit.*, part I, p. 139.

*September 4/17, 2019.
Holy Prophet and God-Seer Moses.*

29. A QUESTION OF LITURGICAL COMMEMORATION

One of the most difficult issues in contemporary Orthodoxy is the question whether the secular authorities should be commemorated at the Divine Liturgy. Many Orthodox believe that all the secular regimes in the world today are not only not Orthodox, but anti-Orthodox, and so should not be commemorated. Others, however, believe that they should be commemorated because this is the tradition of the Orthodox Church since the times of apostles, when prayers were offered even for the pagan persecutors of the Church, the Roman emperors, and also because the law and order that is provided by the authorities is valuable to the Orthodox, whoever the providers of that order may be.

This issue arose in the middle of the nineteenth century in the Balkans. Let us examine the circumstances of that controversy.

The foremost spiritual authority in the Balkans at that time was, of course, the Ecumenical Patriarch. He was bound by an oath to obey the Sultan, and commemorated him at the Liturgy. Failure to do that could have very serious consequences. Thus during the Greek revolution in 1821, the patriarch was suspected of disloyalty to the Sultan and cooperation with the revolutionaries. It was a false charge, as was demonstrated by the fact that the patriarch anathematized the revolutionaries. Nevertheless, the Turks did not believe him. So they killed both him and twelve of his metropolitans and almost the whole of the Phanariot clan in Constantinople (who, unlike the patriarch, had been complicit in the rebellion).

However, the Patriarch had other political sympathies and loyalties. Besides his loyalty to the Sultan, he was naturally sympathetic to the leaders of the Free State of Greece, of which many of his subjects and compatriots were citizens from the end of the 1820s - and to the Tsar of Russia. For in 1598 the Ecumenical Patriarch Jeremiah II had called the tsar the sovereign "*of all Christians throughout the inhabited earth*," and explicitly called his empire "*the Third Rome*". But now, centuries later, the image of Russia the Third Rome had faded from the minds of the Patriarchs; it was the image of a resurrected *New Rome*, or *Byzantium*, that attracted them and their Greek compatriots - this was the truly "great idea". The Russians were, of course, Orthodox, and their help was useful; but the Greeks would liberate themselves. To adapt a phrase of Elder Philotheus of Pskov, it was as if they said: "Constantinople is the Second Rome, and a Third Rome there will not be"...

In any case, did not the Patriarch's oath of allegiance to the Sultan take precedence over all other political sympathies and loyalties? Certainly, this was the position of Patriarch Gregory V in 1821, as we have seen, and of other distinguished teachers of the Greek nation, such as the Chiot, Athanasios Parios. Moreover, the Tsar who was reigning at the time of the Greek Revolution, Alexander I, also recognized the Sultan as a lawful ruler, and as lawful ruler of his Christian subjects, even to the extent of refusing the Greeks

help when they rose up against the Sultan in 1821. Even his successor, Tsar Nicholas I, who did come to the rescue of the Greeks in 1827 and again in 1829, continued to regard the Sultan as a legitimate ruler.

However, the situation was complicated by the fact that, even if the Patriarch commemorated the Sultan at the Liturgy, almost nobody else did! Thus Protopriest Benjamin Zhukov writes: "In Mohammedan Turkey the Orthodox did not pray for the authorities during Divine services, which was witnessed by pilgrims to the Sepulchre of the Lord in Jerusalem. Skaballonovich in his *Interpreted Typicon* writes: 'With the coming of Turkish dominion, the prayers for the kings began to be excluded from the augmented and great litanies and to be substituted by: "Again we pray for the pious and Orthodox Christians" (p. 152).'³⁷⁴

But perhaps commemoration and obedience are different matters, so that commemoration of an authority may be refused while obedience is granted?... Or perhaps the Sultan could not be *commemorated* by name because no heterodox can be commemorated at the Divine Liturgy, but could and should have been *prayed for* (without commemoration), if such a distinction is valid, in accordance with the apostolic command to pray "for all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty" (I Timothy 2.2), although the authorities at that time were pagans...

However, there was one important difference between the pagan authorities of St. Paul's time and the heterodox authorities of the nineteenth century. In the former case, the pagan Roman empire was the *only* political authority of the Oecumene. But in the latter case, there *was* a more lawful authority than the heterodox authorities - the Orthodox Christian authority of the Tsar.

The critical question, therefore, was: if there was a war between the Muslim Sultan, on the one side, and the Orthodox Tsar, on the other, whom were the Orthodox Christians of the Balkans to pray for and support?...

Precisely this situation arose during the Crimean War. The Russians were fighting for a cause dear to every Orthodox Christian heart: the control of the Holy Places. And their enemies were an alliance of three of the major anti-Orthodox powers, Muslim (Turkey), Catholic (France) and Protestant (England). So the supreme loyalty inherent in faithfulness to Orthodox Christianity - a loyalty higher than any oath given to an infidel enemy of the faith under duress - would seem to have dictated that the Patriarch support the Russians. But he neither supported them, nor even prayed for the Russian Tsar at the liturgy.

³⁷⁴ Zhukov, *Russkaia Pravoslavnaia Tserkov' na Rodine i za Rubezhom* (The Russian Orthodox Church in the Homeland and Abroad), Paris, 2005, pp. 18-19.

Perhaps the likely terrible retribution of the Turks on the Balkan Orthodox was a sufficient reason not to support the Tsar openly. But could he not commemorate the Tsar at the liturgy, or at any rate not commemorate the Sultan as other Balkan Churches did not? For even if the Sultan was accepted as a legitimate authority to whom obedience was due in normal situations, surely his legitimacy failed when he used his authority to undermine the much higher authority of the Orthodox Christian Empire?

Certainly, the Athonite Elder Hilarion the Georgian, the former confessor of the Imeretian King Solomon II, felt that loyalty to the Tsar came first in this situation, although he was not Russian, but Georgian. He instructed his disciple, Hieromonk Sabbas, to celebrate the Divine Liturgy every day and to pray for *the Russians* during it, and to read the whole Psalter and make many prostrations for the aid of "our Russian brethren". And the rebuke he delivered to his ecclesiastical superior, the Ecumenical Patriarch, was soon shown to have the blessing of God.

"When some time had passed," witnesses Hieromonk Sabbas, "the elder said to me: 'Let's go to the monastery, let's ask the abbot what they know about the war, whether the Russians are winning or the enemies.' When we arrived at the monastery, the abbot with the protoses showed us a paper which the Patriarch and one other hierarch had sent from Constantinople, for distributing to the serving hieromonks in all the monasteries. The Patriarch wrote that they were beseeching God, at the Great Entrance in the Divine Liturgy, to give strength to the Turkish army to subdue the Russians under the feet of the Turks. To this was attached a special prayer which had to be read aloud. When the abbot, Elder Eulogius, had read us this patriarchal epistle and said to the elder: 'Have you understood what our head, our father is writing to us?', my elder was horrified and said: 'He is not a Christian,' and with sorrow asked: 'Have you read this in the monastery during the Liturgy, as he writes?' But they replied: 'No! May it not be!' But in the decree the Patriarch was threatening any monastery that did not carry out this order that it would suffer a very severe punishment. The next day we went back to our cell. A week passed. A monk came from Grigoriou monastery for the revealing of thoughts, and my elder asked him: 'Did you read this prayer which the Patriarch sent to the monasteries?' He replied: 'Yes, it was read last Sunday during the Liturgy.' The elder said: 'You have not acted well in reading it; you have deprived yourselves of the grace of Holy Baptism, you have deprived your monastery of the grace of God; condemnation has fallen on you!' This monk returned to the monastery and told his elders and abbot that 'we have deprived the monastery of the grace of God, the grace of Holy Baptism - that is what Papa Hilarion is saying.' On the same day a flood swept away the mill, and the fathers began to grumble against the abbot: 'You have destroyed the monastery!' In great sorrow the abbot hurried to make three prostrations before the icon of the Saviour and said: 'My Lord Jesus Christ, I'm going to my spiritual father Hilarion to confess what I have done, and whatever penance he gives me I will carry it out, so that I should not suffer a stroke from sorrow.' Taking with him one hierodeacon and one monk, he set off for the cell of the

Holy Apostle James, where we living at the time. When they arrived, my elder was outside the cell. The abbot with his companions, on seeing my elder, fell face downwards in prostrations to the earth and said: 'Bless, holy spiritual father.' Then they went up to kiss his hand. But my elder shouted at them: 'Go away, away from me; I do not accept heretics!' The abbot said: 'I have sinned, I have come to ask you to give me a penance.' But the elder said: 'How did you, wretched one, dare to place Mohammed higher than Christ? God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ says to His Son: "Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies the footstool of Thy feet" (Psalm 109.1), but you ask Him to put His Son under the feet of His enemies! Get away from me, I will not accept you.' With tears the abbot besought the elder to receive him in repentance and give him a penance. But my elder said: 'I am not your spiritual father, go, find a spiritual father and he will give you a penance.' And leaving them outside his cell weeping, the elder went into it and locked the door with a key. What could we do? We went into my cell and there served an all-night vigil, beseeching God to incline the elder to mercy and give a penance to the abbot. In the morning the elder went into the church for the Liturgy, not saying a word to those who had arrived, and after the dismissal of the Liturgy he quickly left for his cell. Those who had arrived with the abbot began to worry that he would suffer a heart attack; they asked me to go in to the elder and call him; perhaps he would listen to me. I went, fell at his feet and asked him: 'Be merciful, give them a penance - the abbot may suffer a stroke in the heart attack with fatal consequences.' Then the elder asked me: 'What penance shall I give them? God on high is angry with them. What *epitimia* should I give them which would propitiate God?' When I said to my father: 'Elder, since I read the whole Psalter of the Prophet-King David every day, as you told me, there is one psalm there which fits this case - the 82nd: "O God, who shall be likened unto Thee? Be Thou not silent, neither be still, O God..." Command them to read this psalm tomorrow during the Liturgy, when the Cherubic hymn is being sung, at the Great Entrance; let the hieromonk who read the prayer of the Patriarch before stand under the great chandelier, and when all the fathers come together during the Great Entrance, the priest must come out of the altar holding the diskos and chalice in his hands, then let one monk bring a parchment with this psalm written on it in front, and let the hieromonk, who has been waiting under the chandelier, read the whole psalm loudly to the whole brotherhood, and while they are reading it from the second to the ninth verses let them all repeat many times: "Lord, have mercy". And when the remaining verses are being read, let them all say: "Amen!" And then the grace of God will again return to their monastery.' The elder accepted my advice and asked me to call them. When they joyfully entered the cell and made a prostration, the elder said to them: 'Carry out this penance, and the mercy of God will return to you.' Then they began to be disturbed that the exarch sent by the Patriarch, who was caring for the fulfilment of the patriarchal decree in Karyes, might learn about this and might bring great woes upon the monastery. They did not know what to do. The elder said: 'Since you are so frightened, I will take my hieromonk and go to the monastery; and if the exarch or the Turks hear about it, tell them: only Monk Hilarion the Georgian ordered us to do this, and we did it, and and you will be without sorrow.' Then

the abbot said: 'Spiritual father, we are also worried and sorrowful about you, because when the Turks will learn about this, they will come here, take you, tie you up in sacks and drown you both in the sea.' My elder replied: 'We are ready, my hieromonk and I, let them drown us.' Then we all together set off in the boat for Grigoriou monastery. When the brothers of the monastery saw us, they rejoiced greatly. In the morning we arranged that the hieromonk who had read the prayer of the Patriarch should himself liturgize; they lit the chandelier during the Cherubic hymn, and when all the fathers were gathered together and the server had come out of the altar preceded by the candle and candleholder and carrying the chalice and diskos on his head and in his hands, he declared: "May the Lord remember you all in His Kingdom", and stopped under the great chandelier. Then one monk, having in his hand the parchment with the 82nd psalm written on it, stood in front of the priest and began to read: "O God, who shall be likened unto Thee? Be Thou not silent, neither be still, O God..." - to the end. Meanwhile the fathers called out: "Lord, have mercy" until the 10th verse, and then everyone said: "Amen" many times. And they all understood that the grace of God had again come down on the monastery, and the elders from joy embraced men, thanking me that I had done such a good thing for them; and everyone glorified and thanked God.'

"All this took place under Patriarch Anthimus VI. At the end of the war he was again removed from his throne. After this he came to Athos and settled in the monastery of Esphigmenou, where he had been tonsured. Once, in 1856, on a certain feast-day, he wanted to visit the monastery of St. Panteleimon, where Fr. Hilarion was at that time. During the service the Patriarch was standing in the cathedral of the Protection on the hierarchical see. Father Hilarion passed by him with Fr. Sabbas; he didn't even look at the venerable Patriarch, which the latter immediately noticed. The Patriarch was told about the incident with the prayer in Grigoriou monastery. At the end of the service, as usual, all the guests were invited to the guest-house. The Patriarch, wanting somehow to extract himself from his awkward situation in the eyes of the Russians and Fr. Hilarion, started a conversation on past events and tried to develop the thought that there are cases when a certain 'economia' is demanded, and the care of the Church sometimes requires submission also to some not very lawful demands of the government, if this serves for the good of the Church. 'And so we prayed for the granting of help from on high to our Sultan, and in this way disposed him to mercifulness for our Church and her children, the Orthodox Christians.' When Patriarch Anthimus, under whom the schism with the Bulgarians took place, arrived on Athos after his deposition, and just stepped foot on the shore, the whole of the Holy Mountain shuddered from an underground quake and shook several times. All this was ascribed by the Athonites to the guilt of the Patriarch, and the governing body sent an order throughout the Mountain that they should pray fervently to God that He not punish the inhabitants of the Holy Mountain with His righteous wrath, but that He have mercy according to His mercy."³⁷⁵

³⁷⁵ Hieromonk Anthony of the Holy Mountain, *Ocherki Zhizni i Podvigov Startsa Ieroskhimonakha Ilariona Gruzina* (Sketches of the Life and Struggles of Elder Hieroschemamonk Hilarion the Georgian), Jordanville, 1985, p. 95.

Thus there was a fine line to be drawn between submission to the Sultan as the lawful sovereign, and a too-comfortable adaptation to the conditions of this Babylonian captivity. The Tsar considered that the Orthodox peoples did not have the right to rebel against the Sultan of their own will, without the blessing of himself as the Emperor of the Third Rome. But the corollary of this view was that when the Tsar entered into war with the Sultan, it was the duty of the Orthodox subjects of the Sultan to pray for victory for the Tsar. For, as Fr. Hilarion said, echoing the words of St. Seraphim of Sarov: "The other peoples' kings often make themselves out to be something great, but not one of them is a king in reality, but they are only adorned and flatter themselves with a great name, but God is not favourably disposed towards them, and does not abide in them. They reign only in part by the condescension of God. *Therefore he who does not love his God-established tsar is not worthy of being called a Christian.*"³⁷⁶

The situation today is closer to that of the early Christians under the pagan Roman emperors than to that of the Christians under the Ottoman yoke. We have no Orthodox tsar as an alternative source of support and object of commemoration and prayer. Nevertheless, the story of Fr. Hilarion the Georgian shows that, even while commemorating our secular authorities, we should also pray, with equal if not greater fervor, for the restoration of the throne of the Orthodox tsars...

September 5/18, 2019.

³⁷⁶ S. Fomin & T. Fomina, *Rossia pered Vtorym Prishestviem* (Russia before the Second Coming), Moscow, 1994, vol. I, pp. 331-333.

30. THE FALL OF THE JEWISH NATION

The question put before the Jews in Christ's lifetime was: would they accept Him as the Messiah, "the Son of God, the King of Israel" (John 1.49)? On this would depend the salvation of the people and their State... Tragically, in their great majority the Jews failed this test; they both crucified their True King and God, 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."³⁷⁷ 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, without the slightest external coercion, carried out a *democratic revolution* against their True King, and accepted a mere mortal as their only king, thereby undermining and betraying the whole long tradition of Jewish zealotry. Of course, Christ, too, had recognized the kingship of Caesar - but only under God: He emphasized that Pilate received his earthly kingdom from the Heavenly King and never confused the kingship of God with the kingship of Caesar.

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 Emperor of Rome.

But the positive result was that the Kingdom, with all its ineffable and inestimable benefits, was passed to other peoples. 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).

Thus all the other peoples of the world were now given the opportunity of joining God's Kingdom in the Church, "the Israel of God" (Galatians 6.16).

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³⁷⁷ 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.

But for the Jews who rejected Him it was another matter. After their killing of Christ – which was not only regicide, but also *Deicide*, an act unparalleled in evil in the history of the world – there came upon them the punishment prophesied by Christ: “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). This prophecy was fulfilled in 66 AD, when the Jews, incited by the Zealots, rose up in armed rebellion against Rome. Josephus, a Jewish commander who deserted to the Romans, wrote that “all sorts of misfortunes sprang forth from these men, and the nation was infected with this doctrine [of rebellion] to an incredible degree.”

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...”³⁷⁸

But the primary cause of the catastrophe was the rejection and murder by God’s people of their only King and God.

“In this striking way,” writes St. John of Kronstadt, “did the people chosen in accordance with the merits of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob stumble against the inheritance of these merits, which were being received as their own impersonal virtue; they stumbled on their preference for the earthly kingdom over the Kingdom of Heaven, on their preference for a political messiah over the Messiah Whose Kingdom is not of this world.

“Let us look at the consequences to which this mistake led. First of all, this bitter error of the chosen people was bewailed by the Messiah Himself. In His triumphant procession into Jerusalem, when Christ came close to the city, then,

³⁷⁸ Faulkner, “The great Jewish revolt against Rome, 66-73 CE”, *History Today*, vol. 52 (10), October, 2002, pp. 50, 51.

looking at it, He wept over it and said: 'If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, and level you, and your children within you, to the ground, because you did not know the time of your visitation' (Luke 19.42-44). As He ascended onto Golgotha, Christ the Saviour sorrowed, not over the torments that were facing Him, but about the torments that awaited Jerusalem. He expressed this to the women who were sympathetic to His sufferings, who wept and sobbed over Him: 'Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for your selves and for your children. For indeed the days are coming in which they will say, "Blessed are the barren, wombs that never bore, and breasts which never nursed!" Then they will begin to say to the mountains: "Fall on us!"' (Luke 23.28-30).

"Already in ancient times the prophets were pointing to the woes that would strike the Jewish people for its betrayal of God - the people that was nevertheless chosen for the salvation of the world, for the foreseen fall of Israel had to bring salvation to the Gentiles (Romans 11.11).

"1500 years before, the Prophet and God-Seer Moses foretold the siege, the scattering of the Jews across the whole face of the earth and the terrible trials that followed: 'The Lord will bring a nation against you from afar, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flies, a nation whose language you will not understand, a nation of fierce countenance, which does not respect the elderly nor show favour to the young. And they shall eat the increase of your livestock, and the produce of your land, until you are destroyed; they shall not leave you grain or new wine or oil, or the increase of your cattle or the offspring of your flocks, until they have destroyed you. They shall besiege you at all your gates until your high and fortified walls, in which you trust, come down throughout all your land, and they shall besiege you at all your gates throughout all your land which the Lord your God has given you. You shall eat of the fruit of your own body, the flesh of your sons and your daughters whom the Lord your God has given you, in the siege and desperate straits in which your enemy shall distress you... Then the Lord will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other... And among those nations you will find no rest... Your life shall hang in doubt before you; you shall fear day and night, and have no assurance of life' (Deuteronomy 28.49-53, 64-65, 66)...

"The holy Prophet Ezekiel points to the siege of Jerusalem as the consequence of the multiplication of lawlessnesses which attained a greater development than among the neighbouring people.

"Therefore thus says the Lord God: Because you have multiplied disobedience more than the nations that are all around you, have not walked in My statutes nor kept My judgements, nor even done according to the judgements of the nations that are all around you. Therefore thus says the Lord God, Indeed I, even I, am against you and will execute judgements in your

midst in the sight of the nations. And I will do among you what I have never done, and the like of which I will never do again, because of all your abominations. Therefore fathers shall eat their sons in your midst, and sons shall eat their fathers, and I will execute judgements among you, and all of you who remain I will scatter to all the winds. Therefore as I live, says the Lord God, surely, because you have defiled My sanctuary with all your detestable things and with all your abominations therefore I will also diminish you. My eye will not spare, nor will I have any pity. One third of you shall die of the pestilence, and be consumed with famine in your midst, and one third shall fall by the sword all around you, and I will scatter another third to all the winds, and I will draw out a sword after them' (5.7-12).

"In this way the prophets of God clearly announce the causes of the destruction of Jerusalem and what had once been *the chosen people*, as they were called in antiquity, according to the merits of their forefathers. What became of them with their dreams of an earthly kingdom of Israel? Their destinies serve as a vivid example for the Christian peoples, of what awaits them, too, for abandoning the ways of the commandments of God and for accepting principles that contradict the truth."³⁷⁹

The Roman Emperors Titus and Vespasian crushed the rebellion, destroyed the Temple by fire, and killed over a million Jews (although this figure is disputed³⁸⁰). The zealot Jews who escaped the destruction of Jerusalem fled to the fortress at Masada on the Dead Sea. After three years' siege, the Romans captured the fortress and discovered that the zealots had killed their wives and children before killing themselves.

In 135 there was another rebellion of the Jews under Bar Kokhba. It was crushed by the Emperor Hadrian with the deaths, according to Dio Cassius, of 580,000 Jewish soldiers.³⁸¹ The city was renamed Aelia Capitolina, Judaea was

³⁷⁹ St. John, *Nachalo i Konets Nashego Zemnogo Mira* (The Beginning and End of our Earthly Life), Moscow, 1901, 2004, pp. 49-50, 51-52.

³⁸⁰ 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". (This is confirmed by St. Caesarius of Arles who says: "The Jews as if driven by the hand of God assembled in Jerusalem according to their custom to celebrate the Passover. We read in history that three million Jews were gathered in Jerusalem; eleven hundred thousand of them are read to have been destroyed by the sword of hunger, and one hundred thousand young men were led to Rome in triumph. For two years that city was besieged, and so great was the number of the dead who were cast out of the city that their bodies equalled the height of the walls." (Sermon 127)). 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).

³⁸¹ 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

renamed Syria Palaestina and Jews were barred from entering it. Finally, the city and its 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...

Both the destruction of the Temple in Nebuchadnezzar's time and the ploughing up of the Temple site in Hadrian's time took place on August 9, the day on which all the major catastrophes of Jewish history took place. Thus David Baron writes: "The fast of the fifth month, which is the month of Ab, answering to August, is still observed by the Jews on the ninth day, in celebration of the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar; but, according to the Talmud and Jewish historians, the following list of calamities all happened on the same day, namely: (1) On that day the decree went forth from God in the wilderness that the people should not enter the land because of their unbelief; (2) on the very same day of the destruction of the First Temple by the Chaldeans [in 586 BC], the Second Temple also was destroyed by the Romans [in 70 AD]; (3) on that day, after the rising under Bar Kochba, the city of Bethar was taken, 'in which were thousands and myriads of Israel, and they had a great king whom all Israel and the greatest of the wise men thought was King Messiah'; but (4) he fell into the hands of the Gentiles, and they were all put to death, and the affliction was great, like as it was in the desolation of the Sanctuary; (5) and lastly, on that day 'the wicked Turnus Rufus, who is devoted to punishment, ploughed up the (hill of the) Sanctuary, and the parts round about it, to fulfill that which was said by Micah, "Zion shall be ploughed as a field"'."³⁸²

Paradoxically, the Jews' last stand in both their rebellions took place in the hilltop fortresses built at Herodium and Masada by that arch-Hellenist, Herod the Great.³⁸³ 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 original mission to the New Israel, the Church.

"On coming into the world," writes L.A. 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

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).

³⁸² Baron, *Zechariah*, Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1918, 1988, pp. 213-214.

³⁸³ Mueller, *op. cit.*, pp. 58-59.

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.

"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'."³⁸⁴

In the destruction of Jerusalem and the exile of the Jews the Scripture was fulfilled: "I will set My face against you, and you shall be defeated by your enemies. Those who hate you will reign over you, and you shall flee when no one pursues you. And after all this, if you do not obey Me, I will punish you seven times more for your sins. I will break the pride of your power... And after all this, if you do not obey Me, but walk contrary to Me, then I also will walk contrary to you in fury; and I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins. You shall eat the flesh of your sons, and eat the flesh of your daughters. I will destroy your high places, cut down your incense altars, and cast your carcasses on the lifeless forms of your idols. And My soul shall abhor you. I will lay your cities waste and bring your cities to desolation, and I will not smell the fragrance of your sweet incense. I will lay your cities waste and bring your sanctuaries to desolation, and I will not smell the fragrance of your sweet aromas. I will bring the land to desolation, and your enemies who dwell in it shall be astonished at it. I will scatter you among the nations and draw out a sword after you. Your land shall be desolate and your cities waste. Then the land will enjoy its Sabbaths as long as it lies desolate, and you are in your enemies' land. Then the land will rest and enjoy its Sabbaths. As long as it lies desolate it shall rest – for the time it did not rest on your Sabbaths when you dwelt in it... You shall perish among the nations, and the land of your enemies shall eat you up... Yet for all that, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away;

³⁸⁴ Tikhomirov, *Religiozno-Filosofskie Osnovy Istorii*, p. 142.

nor shall I abhor them, to utterly destroy them and break My covenant with them..." (Leviticus 26.17-19, 27-35, 38, 44)

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The Apostles were all Jews, and, as we have seen, in spite of persecution from the Jewish authorities they did not immediately break definitively with the Jewish community in Jerusalem, continuing to worship in the Temple and to read the Holy Scriptures of the Old Testament, which they saw as fulfilled in Jesus Christ. True, the first Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15) established that pagan converts to Christianity did not have to practice Mosaic rites: faith in Christ and baptism was all that was required to become a fully-entitled member of the Church. And there was no question that the Christians were now the people of God, "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation" (I Peter 2.9), "the Israel of God" (Galatians 6.16), taking the place of the apostate Jews, who had once been "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Deuteronomy 4.23-24), but were now enemies of God. However, the Jewish Christian community in Palestine retained its outward semblance to Judaism, partly in order to facilitate the conversion of the Jews to Christianity. Although it is true, wrote Professor A.D. Belyaev, that "the sacrifices which the Jews continued to offer in accordance with the Old Testament rite were no longer necessary after the death of Jesus Christ and were invalid after the offering of the Golgotha sacrifice, nevertheless they were not yet the abomination of desolation after the death of Jesus Christ, they were not offerings to the devil. The book of the Acts of the Apostles records the daily presence of the believers in the temple (2.46) and the visits of the apostles during the hours of prayer (3.1). More than that: the Apostle Paul once even offered a sacrifice in the Jerusalem temple (Acts 21.21-26). Let it be that he did this out of condescension to the weakness of conscience of the Jews, fulfilling the rule: 'I was for the Jews as a Jew, so as to win the Jews' (I Corinthians 9.20). Nevertheless, he would not have offered a sacrifice if it has been an offering to the devil, as Eusebius puts it. For him it was an indifferent act, just as the fulfillment of the whole ritual law of Moses became a matter of indifference for the Christians."³⁸⁵

And this approach bore fruit, in that, at least in the first two generations, there was a steady trickle of converts from the Jews into the Church of Jerusalem, which was headed by the much-revered St. James the Just, the Brother of the Lord. Of course, the Christians differed fundamentally from the Jews in their worship of Christ as the Messiah and God; and the specifically Christian rite of the Eucharist was restricted only to those who believed in Christ and accepted baptism. Nevertheless, for the first forty years or so after the Resurrection the Church did not hasten to break all bonds with the Synagogue, hoping that as many Jews as possible could be converted.

³⁸⁵ Belyaev, in Sergei and Tamara Fomin, *Rossia pered Vtorym Prishestviem*, Moscow, 1994, vol. 2, p. 393.

The Jews were not deprived of signs that they were losing the Grace of God. Even the fiercely anti-Christian Talmud preserves a record of some of these signs. Thus Dr. Seraphim Steger writes, commenting on Gemara, 39b, that during the last 40 years of the Temple's existence, from 30 to 70, "a bad omen occurred on Yom Kippur every year because:

"(1) The Lot for the LORD came up in the left hand, not the right hand of the High Priest of Israel on Yom Kippur. What happened in 30 CE that might have caused this? Could it have been the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, Yeshua Ha-Maschiach? Could it have been that the High Priest of Israel had lost his authority because now there was a new High Priest in town, Yeshua Ha-Maschiach? In his Letter to the Hebrews the Apostle Paul speaks of Yeshua Ha-Maschiach as a High Priest after the Order of Melchezadek sitting at the right hand of the Father in the Heavens.

"Because the crimson ribbon tied between the horns of the bullock did not miraculously turn white for the last 40 years the Temple stood when the scapegoat was thrown over the cliff in the wilderness, we can say that the LORD did not accept the Temple sacrifice of the scapegoat for the nation of Israel on Yom Kippur. Why? Could it be because Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, our Passover (Pesach) Sacrifice has been slain for us once and for all had been accepted by the Father on our behalf? Consequently, there was no more need for a scapegoat because Christ not only was a propitiation for our sins, but has carried our sins away from us as far as the East is from the West.

"(2). We can say that for the last 40 years the Temple stood neither did the westernmost Menorah lamp miraculously shine longer than the others as it had once done, now indicating that the Presence of the Lord, the Shekinah glory, had deserted the Temple all those last 40 years. Was the Shekinah, the glory of the Lord, now to be found outside the Temple? Could it be that it was now to be found in the Church, having descended upon the Church at Pentecost some 50 days after the crucifixion and resurrection of Yeshua?

"(3). We can say that during those last 40 years the Temple stood, the doors to the Hekel//Hekhal, the Holy Place/sanctuary, opened repetitively during those last 40 years by themselves, when they should have been closed, showing that access to the LORD in the Holy Place was not limited to the priests in their daily service, or the Holy of Holies to the High Priest but once a year. Could it be that through the risen Yesua Ha-Mashiach, Jesus the Messiah, "the Door" as He is sometimes called in the New Testament Gospels, that worship in the "Holy Place" was now open not just to the priests but to all who wished to enter in and to draw close to the Holy God of Israel, through faith in Yeshua, in the Church?

"Now, this testimony of the last 40 years that the Temple stood, is juxtaposed to the passages about a Simeon the Righteous who ministered in the Temple for 40 years [so presumably a priest, or levite at a minimum], during whose time the Temple was blessed.

“Reading this gemara again we can see that during the 40 years Simeon ministered, the sacrifices for the Israel were blessed and the scapegoat accepted, (removing the sins of the entire nation) because the lot for the Lord would always come up in the right hand. I.e., the people of Israel were being blessed by the LORD. Interestingly, after those 40 years, sometimes the sacrifices were accepted, sometimes not. Also, the priests suffered from the curse on the omer, two loaves, and shewbread--i.e., they were not nourished by the bread of the Temple as they were before.

“... There is controversy over who this ‘Righteous Simeon’ may have been since there are four men that have born this name in traditional Jewish history and there is some question of later Rabbinical fabrication of their tradition to favor their views at that later time. Perhaps this Simeon was none of the four major candidates. Could this Simeon possibly be Simeon the Just and Pious mentioned in the Gospel of Luke 2:25-36, the Simeon the Orthodox Church remembers as “Righteous Simeon” who held in his arms infant Jesus Christ at His presentation in the temple? Let’s look into this a bit further.

“We can see that during the 40 years Simeon ministered the Lord forgave the sins of the nation of Israel because the crimson-coloured strap [tied between the bullocks horns] would become white after the scapegoat was sent into the wilderness. As part of the blessing of the nation of Israel the Lord was forgiving the sins of the Israelites, sanctifying and preparing them for the enfleshment of the Logos.

“We can see that during the 40 years Simeon ministered the Shekhinah Glory/Holy Spirit remained present in the Holy of Holies blessing the nation [in preparation for the coming of the Messiah, Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God] because throughout those forty years the westernmost light was shining, having been lighted first and burning longer than the other lights. The Lord was blessing and preparing the Temple and its priests for receiving God in the flesh.

‘Lastly, we can see that during the 40 years Simeon ministered the fire of the pile of wood kept burning strong on the altar showing that the Lord was accepting of all the animal, meal, grain, oil, and wine sacrifices commanded in the Torah, the Law of Moses, under the Old Covenant, further underscoring the sanctifying the Temple, the priests, the nation, and all the people by the various offerings.’³⁸⁶

³⁸⁶ Steger, “Tidbits of 1st Century Christian History Preserved in the Babylonian Talmud and their Relationship to St. Simeon the Righteous”, http://www.stseraphimstjohnsandiego.org/St_Seraphim_of_Sarov_and_St_john_of_Kronstadt_Orthodox_Church/History/Entries/2014/5/9_History__Tidbits_of_1st_Century_History_Preserved_in_the_Babylonian_Talmud.html. See also N. Federoff & T. Peterson, “Talmudic Evidence for the Messiah at 30 C.E. - Four Unique Events Point to Messiah and His Identity”, August 2, 2014, *Window View*.

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The Apostles rejected the possibility of salvation through the Mosaic Law and declared that salvation was only through faith in Christ. Nor, as St. Peter, the apostle to the Jews, added, “is there salvation in any other, but there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4.12). St. Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, was particularly clear on this point, writing his Epistle to the Galatians precisely in order to refute the Judaizing Christians. Already in his earliest Epistle he wrote that the Jews “killed both the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have persecuted us and do not please God and are contrary to all me, forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved, so as always to fill up the measure of their sins. But wrath has come upon them to the uttermost...” (I Thessalonians 2.15-16).

The final break between the Jews and the Christians took place after the condemnation and execution of St. James, the Brother of the Lord, the rebellion of the Jews against Rome and the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. The situation for the Christians now changed – first in relation to the Jews, who saw the Christians as traitors to the national cause, and consequently also in relation to the Romans, who now had to treat the Christians as a separate religion. And the Jewish religion was changed in order that the Jews should set themselves apart finally and irrevocably from Christ...

Dr. Steger writes: “Just before the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple by the Roman army led by Vespasian, one of the leading sages of the Pharisees in Jerusalem, Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai, was captured by the Romans according to one early Palestinian tradition and taken against his will to the town of Yavne’el / Jamnia (modern Yavne on the Mediterranean coast) which served as a place of detention for those who had surrendered to the Romans. In Jamnia Rabban Yochannan ben Zakkai reconstituted the Sanhedrin, proclaimed New Moons and leap-years, and proceeded to construct a new religion for the war torn nation: ‘Rabbinical Judaism’ which was centered around the beliefs of the Pharisees as well as the practices of the Synagogue [the priests having become superfluous since the destruction of the Temple and the discontinuance of its services and sacrifices]. He preserved the oral traditions of the schools of the Pharisees encompassing the years 536 BC to AD 70. Jamnia subsequently became the new spiritual center for those Jews who survived the war.

“Some 150 years later Rabbi Yehudah haNasi set to writing a broad and comprehensive redaction of the Oral Law known as the Mishnah. Subsequent rabbinical commentaries, the Gamara, were added to each of the individual tractates forming two authoritative collections known as the Babylonian and the Jerusalem Talmudim. These contained 700 years worth of the oral tradition

of the rabbinical schools. Their final forms were completed around AD 600.”³⁸⁷

The Jewish Professor Norman Cantor writes: “This withdrawal of the rabbis from the political fate of the homeland was the end result of what was already clear in the first century B.C. Pharisaic Judaism was a self-subsisting culture and a kind of mobile religious and moral tabernacle that could function autonomously and perpetually almost anywhere that the Jews had a modicum of physical security and economic opportunity. This was to be the single most continuous and important theme in Jewish history until modern times, the sacred chain that binds the generations together...”³⁸⁸

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Now the Jews constituted a large and important part of the population of the Empire. “Jewish colonies,” writes Alexander Dvorkin, “could be found in any corner of the Mediterranean world – from Cadiz to the Crimea. In all there lived up to 4 million Jews in the diaspora out of a general population of the Roman Empire of 50 million, while the Jewish population of Palestine consisted of not more than one million people.

“In the first century after Christ there were 11 or 12 synagogues in Rome. But the highest percentage of Jewish settlement was in Alexandria: throughout Egypt (including Alexandria) there lived about a million Jews. The municipal authorities had to reckon with them, although the social isolation of the Jews did not allow them to form their own kind of ‘lobby’ for participation in the local power structures.³⁸⁹ Everywhere that they lived they refused to be merged into the life of their pagan surroundings, but unfailingly kept to their own religion and customs. Every Saturday they gathered to chant psalms and to read the Scriptures, after which there followed a sermon on the subject of the Biblical extract read and common prayers.

“Although scattered throughout the world, the Jews preserved the feeling of unity with the land of their fathers: they carried out private pilgrimages to the holy city of Zion and every year sent contributions to the Temple. Sometimes this export of currency from the provinces with its numerous Jewish population created definite difficulties for the Roman tax authorities. However, the Romans understood that in this question – as, however, in all questions connected with the basic principles of Judaism, – it was much more peaceful not to stop the Jews from acting in their own way. The Jews were not excluded from a single sphere of public life in which they themselves wanted to take part. But, of course, not all Jews observed their native customs as strictly as their religious leaders would have liked, and many of them experienced a

³⁸⁷ Steger, *op. cit.*

³⁸⁸ Cantor, *The Sacred Chain*, London: Fontana, 1996, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

³⁸⁹ Contrast this with the power of the Jewish lobby in the United States today (V.M.).

powerful temptation to give in to seduction and live no differently from their neighbours.

“But the Jews for their part also exerted a noticeable influence on the inhabitants of the Empire. Although both the Greeks and the Romans saw circumcision as a disgusting anti-aesthetic custom, very many of the pagans were attracted to Judaism by its strict monotheism, the purity of its moral life and the antiquity (if not the style) of its Sacred Scriptures. There was no teaching on asceticism in Judaism (if you don’t count some marginal groups), but it spoke out for chastity, constancy and faithfulness in family life. In their communities the Jews constantly practised charity, visiting the sick and giving alms to the poor.

“Around many of the synagogues in the diaspora there formed groups of pious pagans whom the Jews usually called ‘God-fearers’ (in general this term was applied to every pious member of the synagogue). A pagan could pass through circumcision and ritual washing (immersion from the head down in a basin of water, which was required for the reception of converts into Judaism), but this did not often take place. As a rule, the Hellenized Jews of the diaspora, who were much more open to the external world than their rigorist Palestinian brethren, to the chagrin of the latter accepted converts from the pagans into their circle without insisting that circumcision was necessary for their salvation.

“The net of synagogues covering the empire turned out to be providential preparatory path for the Christian preaching. Through it Christianity penetrated into the midst of those who were drawing near to Judaism. Among these groups of former pagans the Christian missionaries found their own first uncircumcised followers. One could liken them to a ripe fruit, for they had the advantage not only of a lofty morality but also a knowledge of the Jewish Scriptures. From them the first Christian communities were formed. They consisted of the most varied people, not only from the proletarians and lower levels of society who had despaired of finding justice in this life, as the Marxist historians and those with them affirmed. St. Paul in his Epistle to the Romans gives a greeting to Erastus, a city guardian of the general purse; in Athens a member of the Areopagus (the city council), Dionysius, was converted; and in Thessalonica there were ‘quite a few noble women’ (Acts 17.4). The governor of Bithynia, Pliny the Younger, in his letter to the Emperor Trajan (111-113) writes about the multitude ‘of Christians of various classes’. The majority of these people were educated pagans who came to Christianity from circles attached to the Jews.”³⁹⁰

Many of the Christian converts, especially among the women, came from the same social strata as the Gentile converts to Judaism – and these strata could be lofty. Thus “Poppaea Sabina, the emperor Nero’s second wife, made no

³⁹⁰ Dvorkin, *Ocherki po Istorii Vselenskoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi* (Sketches on the History of the Universal Orthodox Church), Nizhni-Novogorod, 2006, pp. 41-42.

secret of her tendency to Judaism”³⁹¹ – while St. Paul wrote from Rome that he had made converts among the Praetorian Guard (Philippians 1.13).

However, “as the rate of conversion to Judaism intensified, so did the government’s disquiet and the resentment on the part of many Latin intellectuals”.³⁹² The first recorded expulsion of Jewish converts from Rome was in 139 BC. A second was in 19 AD, when the Emperor Tiberius exiled four thousand converts to Sardinia.

In 49-50 the Emperor Claudius expelled the Jews again. For they were constantly “making disturbances”, according to Suetonius, “at the instigation of Chrestus [Christ]”. Of course, it was not Christ but the Jews who instigated riots against the Christians, as we see several times in the *Acts of the Apostles*. These anti-Christian pogroms continued and intensified after the Fall of Jerusalem. Suetonius’ confusion arose because in the beginning the Romans made no clear distinction between Jews and Christians, who lived “under the cover of Judaism”, as Tertullian put it. However, in the reign of Nero the distinction had become clear, and it was the Christians, not the Jews, who were put to the torch for supposedly burning down Rome...

By the second century, the attitude of the Christians to the Jews had also become clear. Thus St. Justin the Martyr (+166) wrote in his *Dialogue with Trypho*: “The woes that have struck you have done so justly and rightly, for you killed the Righteous One [the Lord Jesus Christ] and before Him His prophets, and even now, as far as you can, despise and dishonor those who hope on Him and on God the Ruler and Creator of all, Who sent Him; and you curse those who believe in Christ in your synagogues. At the present time you do not have the power to kill us yourselves – in this you are hindered by the present powers that be [the Romans]; but you could, you would do this too... The other nations are not as guilty as you in the injustice that they show towards us and to Christ; for you are to blame for their bad prejudice against the Righteous One and against us, His followers. When you crucified Him, the only immaculate and righteous man, by Whose wounds all those who come to the Father through Him are healed, and when you learned that He had risen from the dead and ascended to heaven, as was foretold in the prophecies, you not only did not repent of your evil deeds, but even sent people chosen by you from Jerusalem throughout the earth to proclaim that the supposedly godless heresy of Christianity had appeared, and to spread slanders against us, which all those who do not know us customarily repeat. Thus you are the causes not only of your own injustice, but also of all the other people...”³⁹³

The Jews were different from the other nations of the Roman Empire in three major ways. First, their faith was exclusive; they claimed to worship the one and only True God, and rejected the ecumenist tolerance of the other faiths

³⁹¹ Sand, *op. cit.*, p. 171.

³⁹² Sand, *op. cit.*, p. 169.

³⁹³ St. Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho*.

practised by the other peoples of the empire. Secondly, and especially after the Romans' destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD, they could never reconcile themselves with their conquered status, or delight in the achievements of the *Pax Romana* like most of the other conquered nations. And thirdly, they were unique in that, although their homeland was Palestine, most Jews lived abroad, in the diaspora, which providentially allowed them to exert an important influence on the whole of the Roman Empire. Nevertheless, the Jewish religion, unlike Christianity, was a licit cult that was given a certain leeway by the Roman authorities. It was only when they openly rebelled against Rome - in Judea in 66-70 and 135, and again in Libya in 115-117 - that they were suppressed...

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The Jews were powerful and successful proselytizers in the Greco-Roman world both before and after the Coming of Christ. However, as Alfred Lilienthal writes, "it was in the face of growing competition from the new Christian faith that the rabbinate and other Jewish leaders ceased proselytization."³⁹⁴ In reaction to this competition, they formed an inner ghetto around themselves, whose laws were their religion, whose lawmakers were the rabbis, and whose sacred text was not the Sacred Scriptures of the Old Testament, but the Talmud...

The Talmud, writes Seraphim McCune, was "a direct response to the razing of the Temple in AD 70. Its primary premise is how to be a Jew without the temple."³⁹⁵ And, of course, without Christ. Indeed, the Talmud is without doubt the most abhorrent and anti-Christian book ever written. It purports to record a secret oral tradition going back to Moses and representing the true interpretation of the Torah, the first five books of the Bible. In fact, it bears only the most strained and perverse relation to the Torah, often completely corrupting the true meaning of the Holy Scriptures. It even asserts its own superiority over the Scriptures. For it declares: "The Law is water, but the Mishna [the first form of the Talmud] is wine." And again: "The words of the elders are more important than the words of the Prophets."

Pharisaic-Talmudic Judaism is therefore a different religion from that of the Old Testament. It does not contain a formal creed in the manner of Christianity. But it does contain 613 commandments that all Jews are expected to fulfill and which constitute the essence of their religion, the religion of the laws.

As we have seen, it was the Pharisees who incited Christ's death because He preached a spiritual, universalist Kingdom opposed to their nationalist dreams. This opposition between the God-inspired Tradition of the Holy Scriptures and the man-made traditions of the Pharisees was pointed out by Christ when He said: "Thus have ye made the commandment of no effect by your tradition...Ye

³⁹⁴ Lilienthal, *The Zionist Connection*, New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1978, p. 10.

³⁹⁵ McCune, *Facebook*, October 21, 2018.

blind guides, who strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel” (Matthew 15.6, 23.24).

These man-made traditions were gathered together in the Talmud, whose law, as Douglas Reed writes, “governed every imaginable action of a Jew’s life anywhere in the world: marriage, divorce, property settlements, commercial transactions, down to the pettiest details of dress and toilet. As unforeseen things frequently crop up in daily life, the question of what is legal or illegal (not what is right or wrong) in all manner of novel circumstances had incessantly to be debated, and this produced the immense records of rabbinical dispute and decisions in which the Talmud abounds.

“Was it much a crime to crush a flea as to kill a camel on a sacred day? One learned rabbi allowed that the flea might be gently squeezed, and another thought its feet might even be cut off. How many white hairs might a sacrificial red cow have and yet remain a red cow? What sort of scabs required this or that ritual of purification? At which end of an animal should the operation of slaughter be performed? Ought the high priest to put on his shirt or his hose first? Methods of putting apostates to death were debated; they must be strangled, said the elders, until they opened their mouths, into which boiling lead must be poured. Thereon a pious rabbi urged that the victim’s mouth be held open with pincers so that he not suffocate before the molten lead enter and consume his soul with his body. The word ‘pious’ is here not sardonically used; this scholar sought to discover the precise intention of ‘the Law’.”³⁹⁶

A dominant feature of these Jewish “holy” books was their hatred of Christ and Christianity. “The *Jewish Encyclopaedia* says: ‘It is the tendency of Jewish legends in the Talmud, the Midrash... and in the Life of Jesus (*Toledoth Jeshua*) that originated in the Middle Ages to belittle the person of Jesus by ascribing to him an illegitimate birth, magic and a shameful death’. He is generally alluded to as ‘that anonymous one’, ‘liar’, ‘imposter’ or ‘bastard’ (the attribution of bastardy is intended to bring him under the Law as stated in Deuteronomy 23.3: ‘A bastard shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord’). Mention of the name, Jesus, is prohibited in Jewish households.

“The work cited by the *Jewish Encyclopaedia* as having ‘originated in the Middle Ages’ is not merely a discreditable memory of an ancient past, as that allusion might suggest; it is used in Hebrew schools today. It was a rabbinical production of the Talmudic era and repeated all the ritual of mockery of Calvary itself in a different form. Jesus is depicted as the illegitimate son of Mary, a hairdresser’s wife, and of a Roman soldier called Panthera. Jesus himself is referred to by a name which might be translated ‘Joey Virgo’. He is shown as being taken by his stepfather to Egypt and there learning sorcery.

“The significant thing about this bogus life-story (the only information about Jesus which Jews were supposed to read) is that in it Jesus is not crucified by Romans. After his appearance in Jerusalem and his arrest there as an agitator

³⁹⁶ Reed, *The Controversy of Zion*, Durban, South Africa, 1978, p. 93.

and a sorcerer he is turned over to the Sanhedrin and spends forty days in the pillory before being stoned and hanged at the Feast of Passover; this form of death exactly fulfils the Law laid down in Deuteronomy 21.22 and 17.5, whereas crucifixion would not have been in compliance with that *Judaic* law. The book then states that in hell he suffers the torture of boiling mud.

“The Talmud also refers to Jesus as ‘Fool’, ‘sorcerer’, ‘profane person’, ‘idolator’, ‘dog’, ‘child of lust’ and the like more; the effect of this teaching over a period of centuries, is shown by the book of the Spanish Jew Mose de Leon, republished in 1880, which speaks of Jesus as a ‘dead dog’ that lies ‘buried in a dunghill’. The original Hebrew texts of these Talmudic allusions appear in Laible’s *Jesus Christus im Talmud*. This scholar says that during the period of the Talmudists hatred of Jesus became ‘the most national trait of Judaism’, that ‘at the approach of Christianity the Jews were seized over and again with a fury and hatred that were akin to madness’, that ‘the hatred and scorn of the Jews was always directed in the first place against the person of Jesus’ and that ‘the Jesus-hatred of the Jews is a firmly-established fact, but they want to show it as little as possible’.

“This wish to conceal from the outer world that which was taught behind the Talmudic hedge led to the censoring of the above-quoted passages during the seventeenth century. Knowledge of the Talmud became fairly widespread then (it was frequently denounced by remonstrant Jews) and the embarrassment thus caused to the Talmudic elders led to the following edict (quoted in the original Hebrew and in translation by P.L.B. Drach, who was brought up in a Talmudic school and later became converted to Christianity):

““This is why we enjoin you, under pain of excommunication major, to print nothing in future editions, whether of the Mishna or of the Gemara, which relates whether for good or for evil to the acts of Jesus the Nazarene, and to substitute instead a circle like this: O, which will warn the rabbis and schoolmasters to teach the young these passages only *viva voce*. By means of this precaution the savants among the Nazarenes will have no further pretext to attack us on this subject’ (decree of the Judaist Synod which sat in Poland in 1631). At the present time, when public enquiry into such matters, or objection to them, has been virtually forbidden by Gentile governments, these passages, according to report, have been restored in the Hebrew editions of the Talmud...

“The Talmud sets out to widen and heighten the barrier between the Jews and others. An example of the different language which the Torah spoke, for Jews and for Gentiles, has previously been given: the obscure and apparently harmless allusion to ‘a foolish nation’ (Deuteronomy 32.21). According to the article on *Discrimination against Gentiles* in the *Jewish Encyclopaedia* the allusion in the original Hebrew is to ‘vile and vicious Gentiles’, so that Jew and Gentile received very different meanings from the same passage in the original and in the translation. The Talmud, however, which was to reach only Jewish eyes, removed any doubt that might have been caused in Jewish minds by perusal of the milder translation; it specifically related the passage in Deuteronomy to one

in Ezekiel 23.20, and by so doing defined Gentiles as those 'whose flesh is as the flesh of asses and whose issue is like the issue of horses'! In this spirit was the 'interpretation' of the Law continued by the Talmudists.

"The Talmudic edicts were all to similar effect. The Law (the Talmud laid down) allowed the restoration of a lost article to its owner if 'a brother or neighbour', but not if a Gentile. Book-burning (of Gentile books) was recommended... The benediction, 'Blessed be Thou... who hast not made me a *goi* [Gentile]' was to be recited daily. Eclipses were of bad augury for Gentiles only. Rabbi Lei laid down that the injunction not to take revenge (Leviticus 19.18) did not apply to Gentiles, and apparently invoked Ecclesiastes 8.4 in support of his ruling (a discriminatory interpretation then being given to a passage in which the Gentile could not suspect any such intention).

"The Jews who sells to a Gentile landed property bordering on the land of another Jew is to be excommunicated. A Gentile cannot be trusted as witness in a criminal or civil suit because he could not be depended on to keep his word like a Jew. A Jew testifying in a petty Gentile civil court as a single witness against a Jew must be excommunicated. Adultery committed with a non-Jewish woman is not adultery 'for the heathen have no lawfully wedded wife, they are not really their wives'. The Gentiles are as such precluded from admission to a future world..."³⁹⁷

Of particular importance for the future history of the Jews was their attitude towards usury. Now the Old Testament forbids the lending of money for interest to brothers, but allows it to strangers (Exodus 22.25; Leviticus 25.36; Deuteronomy 23.24). The Talmud exploited the letter of this law to justify outright exploitation of the Christians.

According to Oleg Platonov, it "teaches the Jew to consider the property of all non-Jews as '*gefker*', which means free, belonging to no one. 'The property of all non-Jews has the same significance as if it had been found in the desert: it belongs to the first who seizes it'. In the Talmud there is a decree according to which open theft and stealing are forbidden, but anything can be acquired by deceit or cunning...

"From this it follows that all the resources and wealth of the non-Jews must belong to representatives of the 'chosen people'. 'According to the Talmud,' wrote the Russian historian S.S. Gromeka, "God gave all the peoples into the hands of the Jews" (Baba-Katta, 38); "the whole of Israel are children of kings; those who offend a Jew offend God himself" (Sikhab 67, 1) and "are subject to execution, as for *lèse-majesté*" (Sanhedrin 58, 2); pious people of other nations, who are counted worthy of participating in the kingdom of the Messiah, will

³⁹⁷ Reed, op. cit., pp. 89-91. The Zohar also says: "Tradition tells us that the best of the Gentiles deserves death" (Section Vaiqra, folio 14b). For a more detailed exposé of the Talmud and the religion founded upon it, see Michael Hoffman, *Judaism Discovered*, Independent History and Research, 2008.

take the role of slaves to the Jews' (Sanhedrin 91, 21, 1051). From this point of view, ... all the property in the world belongs to the Jews, and the Christians who possess it are only temporary, 'unlawful' possessors, usurpers, and this property will be confiscated by the Jews from them sooner or later. When the Jews are exalted above all the other peoples, God will hand over all the nations to the Jews for final extermination.'

"The historian of Judaism I. Lyutostansky cites examples from the ancient editions of the Talmud, which teaches the Jews that it is pleasing to God that they appropriate the property of the *goyim* [Gentiles]. In particular, he expounds the teaching of Samuel that deceiving a goy is not a sin...

"Rabbi Moses said: 'If a *goy* makes a mistake in counting, then the Jew, noticing this, must say that he knows nothing about it.' Rabbi Brentz says: 'If some Jews, after exhausting themselves by running around all week to deceive Christians in various places, come together at the Sabbath and boast of their deceptions to each other, they say: "We must take the hearts out of the *goyim* and kill even the best of them." - of course, if they succeed in doing this.' Rabbi Moses teaches: 'Jews sin when they return lost things to apostates and pagans, or anyone who doesn't reverence the Sabbath.' ...

"To attain the final goal laid down in the Talmud for Jews - to become masters of the property of the *goyim* - one of the best means, in the rabbis' opinion, is usury. According to the Talmud, 'God ordered that money be lent to the *goyim*, but only on interest; so instead of helping them in this way, we must harm them, even if they can be useful for us.' The tract Baba Metsiya insists on the necessity of lending money on interest and advises Jews to teach their children to lend money on interest, 'so that they can from childhood taste the sweetness of usury and learn to use it in good time.'"³⁹⁸

The transformation of Judaism into Talmudism marked the last, most impenetrable barrier between the Jews and the Church. From now on, as Metropolitan Hilarion of Kiev said in the eleventh century: "Christ is glorified, and the Jews are vilified. The nations are gathered, and the Jews are scattered. As the prophet Malachi pronounced: 'I have no pleasure in the sons of Israel, and I will not accept a sacrifice at their hands. For from the east even to the west My name is glorified among the Gentiles, and in every place incense is offered to My name, for My name is great among the Gentiles.' And according to David: 'All the earth shall worship Thee, and sing unto Thee', and: 'Lord, our Lord, how wonderful is Thy name in all the earth.'"³⁹⁹

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³⁹⁸ Platonov, *Ternovij Venets Rossii* (Russia's Crown of Thorns), Moscow, 1998,

³⁹⁹ Hilarion, *Slovo o Zakone i Blagodati* (Word on the Law and Grace), 34.6.

31. MONARCHISM AND THE FIRST WORLD WAR

It is sometimes claimed that democracies are less belligerent than monarchies. The comparison may be valid with regard to despotic monarchies, but not in relation to real autocracies or monarchies in general. Truer is the assertion that monarchs, by virtue of their monopoly of political power in their own kingdoms, have the power to make war or prevent it. The evidence from 1914 goes to demonstrate that if the monarchs then had been allowed to exercise full sovereignty by their subjects, and had not had their strivings for peace sabotaged by them, they could have prevented the First World War...

The only hope of avoiding the catastrophe after Austria declared war on Serbia on July 28 was that the Emperors of Russia and Germany would get together and work out some compromise. It nearly happened. For in 1914 Europe was a family of nations united by a single dynasty and a cosmopolitan elite confessing what most considered a single Christianity, albeit divided into Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant varieties.⁴⁰⁰

The idea of a family of nations linked by dynastic marriages and/or a common faith as a bulwark against war is an old one. The Byzantine emperor saw himself as the head of a network of Orthodox nations in various degrees of relationship to himself, the head of the family. Of course, there was a large element of wish-fulfilment in this idea, and there were often "black sheep" who decided to make war against other members of the family against the will of the father. Nevertheless, there was enough substance in the idea to preserve a certain stability – until the empire was destroyed.

The idea was revived in a slightly different form by Tsar Alexander I, who in 1815, fresh from his victory over Napoleon, proposed a "Holy Alliance" of Christian monarchs (one Orthodox, one Catholic and one Protestant) against the revolution to the kings of Austria and Prussia. This alliance, though mocked by Metternich and the British, and based more on a common monarchism and anti-democratism, did manage to preserve Europe against major revolutions until the Crimean War, but then foundered when Catholic France and Protestant Britain teamed up with the Muslim Ottoman empire against Russia. Thus the most serious "breach of the peace", the Europe-wide revolution of 1848, was brought to an end by Tsar Nicholas I, invading revolutionary Hungary in 1849. But of course no European head of state seriously thought of the tsar of Russia as the head of a European family of nations. Even the monarchs of Europe regarded him with fear rather than filial love. And when Nicholas II proposed the Hague court of justice in 1899 as an arbitration mechanism for halting the arms race and preventing war, he was politely (or in the Germans' case, not so politely) ignored...

⁴⁰⁰ Tsar Nicholas II became the godfather of the future King Edward VIII at his Anglican baptism (Carter, *op. cit.*, p. 137), and in 1904 Kaiser Wilhelm was invited to be godfather of the Tsarevich Alexis (Niall Ferguson, *The War of the World*, London: Penguin, 2007, p. 100).

However, there was still the European royal family. Almost all the crowned heads of Europe were united in one family, German in origin, being made up of branches of the Saxe-Coburg dynasty.⁴⁰¹ Thus even the matriarch of the family, Queen Victoria of England, once told her uncle, King Leopold of the Belgians: "My heart is so German..."⁴⁰² As for the Russians, for many generations, the tsars and great princes had taken brides from German princely families; Nicholas II, though thoroughly Russian in spirit, had much more German blood than Russian in his veins; and the Tsaritsa Alexandra and her sister Grand Duchess Elizabeth were Hessian princesses with an English mother.⁴⁰³ However, a divisive factor within the family was the fact that Alexandra and Minnie, the wives of King Edward VII of England and Tsar Alexander III of Russia, were sisters from the Danish dynasty; for the Danes nurtured an intense dislike of the Prussians, who had invaded their country in 1864, and so moved their husbands, and later their sons, King George V and Tsar Nicholas II, closer to each other and further away from Germany, thereby weakening the traditional hostility that existed between Russia and England and turning them against Germany. Meanwhile, the German Kaiser Wilhelm II, a cousin of George V and Nicholas II, reacted strongly against the liberalism of his English mother, and was attracted towards the militarist and fiercely anti-English monarchism of the Prussian aristocracy. In some ways, this also attracted him to autocratic Russia; but the developing alliance between Russia, Britain and France engendered in him and his circle a fear of "encirclement" and hostility against them all. Nevertheless, in the summer of 1914 many hoped that the family links between the Kaiser and the Tsar would prevent war.⁴⁰⁴ For, as the London *Standard* had observed in 1894, "the influence of the Throne in determining the relations between European Power has never been disputed by those at all familiar with modern politics, it is sometimes lost sight of or ignored by the more flippant order of Democrats..."⁴⁰⁵ In July, 1914 it was the last chance to prevent war...

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⁴⁰¹ Sophie Gordon, "The Web of Royalty", *BBC History Magazine*, February, 2012, pp. 16-18. Victoria's son, Edward VII, reacted against this Germanism by becoming very anti-German.

⁴⁰² Ferguson, *The War of the World*, p. 97.

⁴⁰³ However, as Metropolitan Anastasy (Gribanovsky) pointed out, the sisters were more English than German in their tastes and upbringing, taking after their English mother rather than their German father ("Homily on the Seventh Anniversary of the Martyric End of Emperor Nicholas II and the Entire Royal Family", *Orthodox Life*, vol. 31, no. 4, July-August, 1981).

⁴⁰⁴ This in spite of the remark of the Tsarina Alexandra in a letter to her sister, Princess Victoria of Battenburg: "Family ties should not influence political considerations" (3 March, 1897).

⁴⁰⁵ Miranda Carter, *The Three Emperors*, London: Penguin, 2010, p. 145. As Christopher Clark writes, "The European executives were still centred on the thrones and the men or women who sat on them. Ministers in Germany, Austria-Hungary and Russia were imperial appointees. The three emperors had unlimited access to state papers. They also exercised formal authority over their respective armed forces. Dynastic institutions and networks structured the communications between states. Ambassadors presented their credentials to the sovereign in person and direct communications and meetings between monarchs continued to take place throughout the pre-war years; indeed, they acquired a heightened importance" (*The Sleepwalkers. How Europe Went to War in 1914*, London: Penguin, 2012, p. 170).

The emperors – cousins “Nicky”, “Willy” and “Georgie” – did talk, for they knew each other well, and Nicky in particular hoped that his family ties with Willie could prevent war... On July 29, the day after Austria declared war on Serbia, Russian Foreign Minister Sazonov received a message from the German chancellor via the German ambassador Pourtalès warning that if the Russians continued their military preparations the Germans themselves would be compelled to mobilize. This confirmed Sazonov in his belief that the Germans had instigated the Austrians’ attack on Serbia, so he ordered the chief of the Russian General Staff Yanushkevich to authorize a general mobilization. However, at 9.20 p.m. the Tsar received a telegram from the Kaiser pleading with him not to undertake military measures that would undermine his position as mediator with Austria. At 9.30, “saying ‘I will not be responsible for a monstrous slaughter’, the Tsar insisted that the order [for general mobilization] be cancelled. Yanushkevich reached for the phone to stay Dobrorolsky’s hand, and the messenger was sent running to the telegraph to explain that an order for partial mobilization was to be promulgated instead.”⁴⁰⁶ Partial mobilization involved only the districts adjoining Austria (Odessa, Kiev, Moscow, Kazan); and, as Dominic Lieven points out, “so long as the Petersburg and Warsaw military districts were not mobilized, Russian preparations of war against Germany could not get very far.”⁴⁰⁷ So by the late evening of July 29, Russia had partially mobilized against Austria, which had partially mobilized against Serbia. Germany was not yet directly involved or threatened... However, as Sazonov hastened to tell the Tsar at Peterhof the following afternoon (July 30), the reversal of the previous order was impractical for purely military and logistical reasons. Reluctantly, the Tsar agreed to revert to the order for full mobilization...

Before that, the Tsar had made another appeal to the Kaiser: “I foresee that very soon I shall be overwhelmed by the pressure brought upon me and forced to take extreme measures which will lead to war.” “On the morning of 30 July, when the Tsar received a telegram from Wilhelm reiterating the warning issued by Ambassador Pourtalès on the previous day, Nicholas II abandoned any hope that a deal between the cousins could save peace and returned to the option of general mobilization...”⁴⁰⁸

However, the game was not yet quite over: a final exchange took place on July 31, “after the news reached Berlin that Russia was mobilizing against

⁴⁰⁶ Clark, *op. cit.*, p. 521.

⁴⁰⁷ Lieven, *Towards the Flame. Empire, War and the End of Tsarist Russia*, London: Allen Lane, 2015, p. 333. “Russian mobilization did not pose the deadly danger that German mobilization would. For Germany, mobilization meant war; for Russia, as its government explained to the Germans, it did not. ‘Russia’s armies,’ as an academic authority recently has pointed out, could ‘remain mobile behind their frontier almost indefinitely.’ And the German government really knew that.” (David Fromkin, *Europe’s Last Summer*, London: Vintage, 2005, p. 131)

⁴⁰⁸ Clark, *op. cit.*, p. 513. As he said to Sazonov: “They [the Germans] don’t want to acknowledge that Austria mobilized before we did. Now they demand that our mobilization be stopped, without mentioning that of the Austrians...He is asking the impossible... If I accepted Germany’s demands now, we would be disarmed against Austria.” In fact, the Austrians were not mobilized against Russia, but only against Serbia...

Germany as well as against Austria. The Kaiser had just finished cabling the Czar that 'the peace of Europe may still be maintained by you, if Russia will agree to stop the military measures which must threaten Germany and Austro-Hungary.' He offered to continue his mediation efforts.

"The Czar replied: 'I thank you heartily for your mediation which begins to give one hope that all may yet end peacefully. It is technically impossible to stop our military preparations which were obligatory owing to Austria's mobilization. We are far from wishing for war. As long as the negotiations with Austria on Serbia's account are taking place my troops shall not make any *provocative* action. I give you my solemn word for this.'

"Meanwhile, Franz Joseph cabled the Kaiser his thanks for his mediation offer but said it came too late. Russia had already mobilized and Austrian troops already were marching on Serbia..."⁴⁰⁹

So in the last resort the avoidance of world war counted for less for the Kaiser than nationalist pride and solidarity with the Austrians, and less for the Tsar than solidarity in faith and blood with the Serbs...⁴¹⁰

The Tsar has been accused of weakness of will and the Kaiser - of war-mongering. But neither accusation is just. Leaving aside their differences in faith, character and general sympathies (which were great), the Tsar and the Kaiser had this in common: they were both monarchs in a proto-democratic age when it was no longer possible, as it had been in the time of Louis XIV or Peter the Great, for one man, however authoritative or authoritarian, to impose his will on the whole nation and the whole of its administrative machinery. And the result was profoundly tragic: the monarchs were forced to acquiesce in a war neither of them wanted that was to destroy both their kingdoms and the very foundations of European Christian civilization...

Left to themselves, the Tsar, the Kaiser and Emperor Franz Josef could probably have prevented war. But all three monarchs were pushed into war by the pressure of their subordinates, patriotic emotions and the logic of the opposing alliances to which they had willingly ascribed, at least to some degree. This logic had been built up on both sides over the course of several years, and the monarchs were neither solely responsible for it nor able on their own to free themselves from its gravitational force...

Grand Duchess Elizabeth said that the Tsar had not wanted war, but rather blamed her cousin, the Kaiser, "who disobeyed the bidding of Frederick the Great and Bismarck to live in peace and friendship with Russia."⁴¹¹

⁴⁰⁹ Fromkin, *op. cit.*, p. 235.

⁴¹⁰ As for the third royal cousin, the British King George V, he appealed to the Tsar to stop his mobilization on August 1. But by then it was too late: the Germans had mobilized on the same day, and Churchill had already mobilized the British fleet...

⁴¹¹ Abbot Seraphim, *Martyrs of Christian Duty*, Peking, 1929; quoted in Lyubov Millar, *Grand Duchess Elizabeth of Russia*, Redding, Ca.: Nikodemos Publication Society, 1993, p. 176.

But the Kaiser's real tragedy was not that he disobeyed Bismarck but that he obeyed his generals... Thus on July 28 the minister of war Falkenhayn had reminded the Kaiser that he "no longer had control of the affair in his own hand". For since 1908 his position, writes Fromkin, "had been precarious. In May 1914, only two months before Falkenhayn's reminder, Edward House, President Woodrow's envoy, had reported from Berlin that 'the 'military oligarchy' were supreme, were 'determined on war' and were prepared to 'dethrone the Kaiser the moment he showed indications of taking a course that would lead to peace.' Of course, Wilhelm, whose grip on reality was fragile at best, may not have been fully alive to the perils of his position. Alternatively, House may have exaggerated.

"But there can be little doubt that much was going on of which the emperor was unaware. Indeed, among the things that Wilhelm did not know was that, the day before, [Foreign Minister] Jagow had cabled Vienna urging - indeed, practically ordering - the Austrian government to declare war on Serbia immediately. Jagow warned that the English proposal for a conference to keep the peace could not be resisted much longer. The German foreign minister neither consulted the Kaiser before sending this warning nor informed him afterwards that it had been sent.

"In Austria, too, a reluctant monarch was gotten around. Emperor Franz Joseph was hesitant about declaring war, and his ministers were obliged to obtain his assent in order to do so. Berthold obtained that assent by reporting - falsely - that Serbian troops had opened fire on Austrian forces. Actually - and it was only one isolated incident - it was Austrian troops who had fired on Serbs..."⁴¹²

In the past the Kaiser's bombast had always given way in the end to caution. And now, on August 1, just as the German army was mobilizing in the West, the Kaiser, on the basis of some misinterpreted telegrams from the British Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey, again counseled caution, calling for the troops to be halted on the promise of Anglo-French neutrality. If France was going to stay out of the war, the plan had to be changed to concentrate all of Germany's forces on Russia.

"According to Moltke, 'the Kaiser, without asking me, turned to the aide-de-camp on duty and commanded him to telegraph immediate instructions... not to march into Luxembourg. I thought my heart would break.' With England and France refusing to be drawn into the war, 'The final straw,' Moltke exploded, 'would be if Russia now also fell away.' Germany would be deprived of enemies!"⁴¹³

⁴¹² Fromkin, *op. cit.*, pp. 219-220.

⁴¹³ Fromkin, *op. cit.*, p. 240.

Moltke threw a tantrum, and “implored the Kaiser not to hinder the occupation of Luxembourg on the grounds that this would jeopardize German control of its railway route.” Wilhelm retorted: “Use other routes!” Now Moltke became “almost hysterical. In a private aside to the Minister of War Erich von Falkenhayn, the chief of the General Staff confided, close to tears, ‘that he was a totally broken man, because the decision by the Kaiser demonstrated to him that the Kaiser still hoped for peace’.”

However, when Grey’s real meaning became clearer through another telegram, and he saw that there was no question of British neutrality, the Kaiser finally surrendered, saying to Moltke: “Now you can do what you want...”⁴¹⁴

So the Kaiser nearly prevented the catastrophe. But he bent his own sovereign will before that of his subject, the true war-monger, Moltke. In the end the Kaiser betrayed his own monarchist ideals – and paid for it with his own crown and his country’s defeat...

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Did the Tsar also bow before his subjects and thereby lose his crown? Not exactly... The Tsar was limited, not only by the highly nationalist sympathies of the press and most of his ministers, but also by the constitution (because that is what it was) imposed on him in 1906, which he could get round temporarily by the emergency use of Article 87, but not on a regular basis. Moreover, he was the victim of what may only be called *a campaign of national disobedience*, not only from avowed revolutionaries, but also from Duma deputies and *Zemstvo* officers, Grand Dukes and generals, workers and peasants. So it was not only the family ties of the general European family that broke down in 1914: it was also the bonds of the Russian family, who disobeyed their batyushka-father-tsar, and in a tide of nationalist emotion forced his hand, compelling him to join a war that destroyed him, the state and the whole of European civilization. At the same time, while there can be no doubt that most of the elites wanted war, it is doubtful that the majority of *the people* wanted anything other than peace...

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The tsar was not to blame. “The emperor is sometimes accused,” writes Lieven, “of ‘caving in’ to his generals in 1914 and thereby bringing on the descent into war. This is unfair. Nicholas was forced by the united pressure not just of the generals but also of the Foreign Ministry, the de facto head of the domestic government, and the spokesmen of the Duma and public opinion. In many ways, the surprise is that the emperor held out on his own for so long...”⁴¹⁵

⁴¹⁴ Clark, *op. cit.*, pp. 531, 533.

⁴¹⁵ Lieven, *Towards the Flame*, p. 337.

There is another vitally important difference between the Tsar's submission to his counselors and the Kaiser's. The Tsar was not fighting only for Russia and her interests, or for Serbia and her interests, but also for *Holy Orthodoxy*. For if the Germans tended to see the contest as a racial or cultural one between Teuton *Kultur* and Slavic barbarism, for the Russians who still had faith it was rather a religious one between Protestantism and Orthodoxy. As Archbishop Anthony (Khrapovitsky) put it: "Germany and Austria declared war on us, for which the former had already been preparing for forty years, wishing to extend its control to the East. What then? Should we quietly have submitted to the Germans? Should we have imitated their cruel and coarse manners? Planted in our country in place of the holy deeds of Orthodoxy piety the worship of the stomach and the wallet? No! It would be better for the whole nation to die than to be fed with such heretical poison!

"We have swallowed enough of it since the time of Peter the Great! And without that the Germans have torn away from the Russian nation, from Russian history and the Orthodox Church its aristocracy and intelligentsia; but in the event of a total submission to the German governmental authority, at last the simple people would have been corrupted. We already have enough renegades from the simple people under the influence of the Germans and of German money. These are above all those same Protestants who so hypocritically cry out for peace. Of course, they were not all conscious traitors and betrayers of their homeland, they did not all share in those 2,000,000 marks which were established by the German government (and a half of it from the personal fortune of the Kaiser) to be spent on the propagation of Protestant chapels in Russia..."⁴¹⁶

At the deepest level, therefore, the First World War, at any rate on the Eastern front, was a religious war whose outcome would have huge religious consequences: if Russia won, the liberation of Russian Orthodoxy from its German captivity, and if she lost, her captivity not only to Protestantism but even to militant atheism through the German agent Lenin. As Archimandrite (later Archbishop and Hieromartyr) Hilarion (Troitsky), put it, the war was "liberational in the broadest meaning of the word", and called on his students to resist German influence in theology with books and words.⁴¹⁷

However, although this was a righteous - indeed, a supremely righteous - reason for going to war, the war did not achieve the aim of saving Russia from heterodoxy. Instead, it plunged the country into captivity, if not to German Protestantism, at any rate to other western heresies, democratism and socialism. For the people as a whole had already embraced these heresies when they rejected their God-given tsar...

⁴¹⁶ Khrapovitsky, *The Christian Faith and War*, Jordanville, 2005, pp. 8-9.

⁴¹⁷ Troitsky, "Bogoslovie i Svoboda Tserkvi" (Theology and the Freedom of the Church), *Bogoslovskij Vestnik* (Theological Herald), September, 1915, vol. 3, Sergiev Posad; reprinted in Kaluga in 2005, p. 4.

Finally, a word should be said about the *pessimism* and *fatalism* that, according to some, seemed to overcome all the main actors in the tragedy at this time. This is most clearly evident in the German Chancellor Bethmann, whose acquiescence to the war party Lieven finds “bewildering”.⁴¹⁸ After all, Bethmann had successfully opposed the military’s warmongering for several years. Why did he give in to the idea of a war that he considered “a leap in the dark”?

One hypothesis is that he surrendered to the “alpha male”, *machismo* culture of the Prussian warrior class. “To have shrunk from supporting Austria-Hungary during the crisis of 1914, Bethmann commented in his memoirs, would have been an act of self-castration.”⁴¹⁹

Another is that he finally accepted Moltke’s argument that it was “now or never” if Germany wanted to triumph in the inevitable war with Russia – but was still pessimistic about the outcome. “He was, he confessed in 1912, ‘gravely distressed by our relative strength in case of war. One must have a good deal of trust in God and count on the Russian revolution as an ally in order to be able to sleep at all. In June 1913 he admitted to feeling ‘sick of war, the clamour for war and the eternal armaments. It is high time that the great nations quieted down again... otherwise an explosion will occur which no one deserves and which will harm all.’ To the National Liberal leader Bassermann, he said ‘with fatalistic resignation: “If there is war with France, the last Englishman will march against us.” His secretary, Kurt Riezler, recorded some of his musings in his diary for 7 July 1914: ‘The Chancellor expects that a war, whatever its outcome, will result in the uprooting of everything that exists. The existing [world] very antiquated, without ideas... Thick fog over the people. The same in all Europe. The future belongs to Russia, which grows and grows and weighs upon us as an ever heavier nightmare... The Chancellor very pessimistic about the intellectual condition of Germany.’ On 20 July Bethmann returned to his Russian theme: ‘Russia’s claims [are] growing [along with her] enormously explosive strength... In a few years no longer to be warded off, particularly when the present European constellation persists.’ A week later, he told Riezler that he felt ‘a fate [*Fatum*] greater than human power hanging over Europe and our own people.’ The mood of near despair, sometimes attributed by cultural historians to excessive exposure to the works of Nietzsche, Wagner and Schopenhauer, becomes more intelligible when the military realities of Europe in 1914 are considered...”⁴²⁰

⁴¹⁸ Lieven, *Towards the Flame*, p. 317.

⁴¹⁹ Clark, *op. cit.*, p. 359.

⁴²⁰ Ferguson, *The War of the World*, London: Penguin, 2007, pp. 98-99. “Yet Bethmann,” writes Fromkin, “felt that Germany had no choice. The portrait that he painted of the country’s international position showed a dark and even paranoid vision, with dangers exaggerated. As he saw it, Germany was ‘completely paralyzed’, and its rivals, the allied powers of Russia, France and Britain, knew it. ‘The future belongs to Russia which is growing and is becoming an ever-increasing nightmare to us.’ Even the Dual Monarchy would ally with Russia in order

It was indeed “excessive exposure to the works of Nietzsche, Wagner and Schopenhauer”, as well as his personal Theosophism, that had corrupted this most intelligent and cultured of Germans, and the whole of his generation, to a “greater than human power”, a demonic power, that was leading him and the whole of Europe like the Gadarene swine into the abyss. And even Bethmann, who saw more clearly than anyone in his nation that a war would “turn everything that exists upside down”, was prepared to make this “leap in the dark”...

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How different was the so-called “fatalism” of Tsar Nicholas II. The Tsar’s “fatalism” should rather be called “providentialism”, or simply “faith”, an unwavering belief in God’s omnipotence and complete control of world history. He certainly believed in the proverb: “A man’s heart plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps” (Proverbs 16.9). And even more in the proverb: “The heart of the king is in the hand of the Lord. Like the rivers of water, He turns it wherever He wishes” (Proverbs 21.1). It was not for him to argue with God, Who declares: “I make peace, and I create calamity: I, the Lord, do all these things” (Isaiah 45.8). For “it is not for [us] to know the times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority” (Acts 1.7).

Unlike all those around him, the Tsar had a secret, God-given knowledge, which in spite of its tragic content brought him, not despair, but peace. For he *knew* - probably from the letter he received from St. Seraphim at Sarov in 1903, which had such a shattering effect on him and the Tsarina, but also from other sources - that all his efforts to save Russia from war and catastrophe would fail, and that he himself would die in 1918. So while he struggled bravely against what his and Russia’s tragic destiny, he knew - in 1914, as during his abdication in 1917 - that at a certain point he would have to surrender. For he knew that “there is a tide in the affairs of men”, and that the tide in European politics, all over the continent, was towards war - a tide that no man could resist indefinitely.

The Tsar might have resisted the tide for a while, as he resisted it in 1912; but it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that he felt he had no real alternative but to go to war *eventually*. The best he could do was choose a time when honour and loyalty (to his allies, to the Serbs and, above all, to Holy Orthodoxy) provided a moral justification for war. And that time came in July, 1914.

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The die was now cast: the Tsar published his order for general mobilization on July 31. The Germans declared war the next day, August 1. That was the

to go with the winner. Germany would be alone and helpless in the world of international politics...” (op. cit., p. 181)

feastday inaugurated by the tsar himself commemorating the translation of the relics of St. Seraphim of Sarov in 1903 – that is, the feast of the great prophet of the last times, who had foretold both the Great War and how tragically it would end for the Tsar and for Russia...

On August 1, as Lubov Millar writes, “large patriotic crowds gathered before the Winter Palace, and when the Emperor and Empress appeared on the balcony, great and joyful ovations filled the air. When the national anthem was played, the crowds began to sing enthusiastically.

“In a sitting room behind this balcony waited Grand Duchess Elizabeth, dressed in her white habit; her face was aglow, her eyes shining. Perhaps, writes Almedingen, she was thinking, ‘What are revolutionary agents compared with these loyal crowds? They would lay down their lives for Nicky and their faith and will win in the struggle.’ In a state of exaltation she made her way from the Winter Palace to the home of Grand Duke Constantine, where his five sons – already dressed in khaki uniforms – were preparing to leave for the front. These sons piously received Holy Communion and then went to the Romanov tombs and to the grave of Blessed Xenia of Petersburg before joining their troops.”⁴²¹

Moreover, there were no signs of imminent revolution. “Before the war,” as Hew Strachan writes, “the incidence of strikes – which had both soared in number and become increasingly politicized – peaked in July 1914, and conservatives had warned against war for its ability to stoke revolution. The actual experience of mobilization suggested that such fears had been exaggerated: ‘As if by magic the revolutionary disorders had died down at the announcement of war’. In Petrograd (as St. Petersburg had been renamed), ‘patriotic fervour had gripped the workmen... They cheered us enthusiastically as we marched by their factories.’ Ninety-six per cent of reservists reported for duty, a rate not far behind that of France.”⁴²²

“But, as in France, public demonstrations of enthusiasm were urban phenomena, and of all the major armies of 1914 Russia’s was overwhelmingly made up of peasants... They had crops to harvest and families to feed. Mobilisation prompted rioting in 49 out of 101 provinces [*oblast*] in European and Asiatic Russia.”⁴²³

The great tragedy of the war was that the lofty patriotic-religious mood prevalent at least in some parts of the country at the beginning did not last, and those who rapturously applauded the Tsar in August, 1914 were baying for his blood less than three years later...

⁴²¹ Lyubov Millar, *Grand Duchess Elizabeth of Russia*, Redding, Ca.: Nikodemos Publication Society, 1993, p. 171.

⁴²² Strachan, *The First World War*, London: Pocket Books, 2006, p. 141.

⁴²³ Strachan, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

The Tsar sincerely wanted and strove for peace, knowing better than anyone what the terrible consequences of the war would be. But he also knew that it is God Who controls the destinies of nations. Who was he – who was any man? – to resist the will of God if He wanted to punish His people and all the nations in accordance with His inscrutable judgements?

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It is impossible to understand the superiority of monarchy, and in particular Orthodox autocracy, to all other systems of government, especially at moments of crisis, unless we adopt a religious point of view. For the question here is not: what is best for the king, or for the ruling class, or even for the people as whole, but what is the will of God, Whose mercy and justice encompasses all human beings everywhere, and takes into account the consequences of present events far into the future, and Whose will is not necessarily that we should have peace and prosperity in this life but rather salvation and eternal joy in the age to come. When put in that way, it is obvious that no individual human being or human collective has anything like the far-seeing wisdom needed to answer such a question. The only hope, therefore, is that God will communicate His will to a king directly - or indirectly through another man (say, a prophet or priest). This does not mean that the will of God cannot be expressed through a democratic election. But it seems intuitively more likely – and this is certainly what Holy Scripture and Tradition lead us to believe – that He will communicate His will more clearly and decisively through one man chosen by Him and anointed for that very purpose than through millions of voters who do not know their right hand from their left and have no special training or knowledge of politics. *Vox populi*, contrary to the popular saying, is not (usually) *Vox Dei*.

And if it is objected that the anointed king may be evil or blind to the truth for some reason or other, then we reply: Of course, where men are involved, there is sin, and therefore the possibility of error. But the possibility of error is surely increased many times if the masses make the decision – which they may then weaken by their divisions or overthrow at the next election. Solomon asked wisdom from God and was granted it, in spite of the fact that he did not live a spotless life. But when do the teeming masses ask for wisdom from God?

In any case, if the king defies the will of God, God can remove him as He removed Saul – unless, of course, He judges that the people are not worthy of having a better king. But if they are worthy, then He can and will provide them with such a king, a king “after My own heart” a king like David or Tsar Nicholas II, who, though sinful like all men, still loved God and strove to know and do His will. The question then becomes: will the people continue to be worthy of such a king? And will they honour and obey him?

September 21 / October 3, 2019.

32. RUSSIA'S REVOLUTIONARY DEVILS

The 1860s were a depressing time; the moral disease of westernism continued to infect the body of Holy Russia. As the future New-Martyr Anna Zertsalova wrote: "It was a sad time then in the capital. The holy churches, the unconquerable strongholds of Orthodoxy, stood in it as before, as did the unshakeable walls; the holy icons were adorned with shining covers of precious stones, the God-pleasers rested in the churches in their incorrupt relics. But the people were perishing from their vices and errors. The spirit of little faith and debauchery entered everywhere like the most savage plague into unstable heads. Tolstoy and other false teachers crept into inexperienced young hearts with their destructive propaganda, undermining in them the bases of faith and piety. The Lord was forgotten, forgotten were the rules of morality and honour; forgotten were the authorities and order; passions and vices broke out into liberty."⁴²⁴

One who succumbed temporarily to this temptation was Sergius Alexandrovich Nilus. "I was born," he wrote, "in 1862 (25 August), in a family which on my mother's side counted in its midst not a few advanced people - advanced in the spirit for which the 60s of what is now already the last century was distinguished. My parents were nobles and landowners - major ones. It was perhaps because of their links with the land and the peasants that they escaped any extreme manifestation of the enthusiasms of the 70s. However, they could not escape the general, so to speak platonic-revolutionary spirit of the times, so great then was the allure of the ideas of egalitarianism, freedom of thought, freedom of thought, freedom... yes, perhaps freedom of action, too, which overcame everyone. It seems that at that time there was not one home of the nobility in both the capitals where the state structure of the Russian empire was not reshaped in its own model, according to the measure of its understanding and according to the last book it had read, first from *Sovremennik* [*The Contemporary*], and then *Otechestvoennii Zapiski* [*Notes on the Fatherland*] or *Vestnik Evropy* [*Herald of Europe*]. Of course, the hard food of conversations of a political character did not much help to develop in me religious dreams, as they were then called, and I grew up in complete alienation from the Church, uniting it in my childish imagination only with my old nanny, whom I loved to distraction. Nevertheless, I did not know any prayers and entered a church only by chance; I learned the law of God from teachers who were indifferent, if not outrightly hostile, to the word of God, as an intractable necessity of the school's programme. That was the degree of my knowledge of God when I, as a youth who was Orthodox in name, went to university, where they already, of course, had no time for such trivialities as Orthodoxy. Left to my devices in the life of faith, I reached such an abominable degree of spiritual desolation as only that person can imagine who has lived in this spiritual stench and who

⁴²⁴ "Zhizneopisanie Protoiereia Valentina Amphiteatrova" (Life of Protopriest Valentine Amphiteatrov), *Pravoslavnaia Zhizn'* (*Orthodox Life*), 53, N 11 (658), November, 2004, pp. 9-10.

has then, while on the path of his own destruction, been detained by the unseen hand of the benevolent Creator."⁴²⁵

Nilus did not become a revolutionary. But many others subjected to the same influences did, such as L.A. Tikhomirov. Few were those, like Nilus and Tikhomirov, who found their way back to the ancestral faith of Orthodoxy. Thus did the woolly liberalism of the fathers corrupt the sons, preparing the way for the revolution...

"The revolution," wrote the philosopher Ivan Ilyin, "is a spiritual, and perhaps also a directly psychological illness. The revolution is the unleashing of atheist, unnatural, destructive and base passions. It is born from the mistakes of the ruling power, and from the vanity and envy of its subjects. It begins with violation of the law and ends with demoralization and death."

The strategy of revolution came in two forms: the anarchist revolution favoured by the Russian nobleman Michael Bakunin, and the socialist revolution favoured by Marx and Engels.

Marxism's main aims, as declared in *The Communist Manifesto* of 1848, were the destruction of private property, the destruction of the family and the destruction of religion as a prelude to the triumph of the proletariat and the coming of communism. However, the revolution of 1848 had been a failure from the socialist point of view. And after that failure a mild conservative reaction set in throughout Europe as some of the wealth generated by a period of rapid growth in the world economy trickled down to the workers and dulled their zeal for revolution. But as their numbers increased in direct proportion to the increase in factory production, so did their power. And it would only take another downturn in the economy to bring them out on the streets...

In 1864 Marx founded the International Working Men's Association in London. In his Inaugural Address he showed how the industrial revolution had impoverished the English working class, and declared: "In all countries of Europe it has now become a truth demonstrable to every unprejudiced mind, and only denied by those whose interest is to hedge other people in a fool's paradise, that no improvement of machinery, no appliance of science to production, no contrivances of communication, no new colonies, no emigration, no opening of markets, no free trade, nor all these things put together, will do away with the miseries of the industrious masses."

Marx continued to control this, the First Internationale, until its Congress in Basle in 1869, when the delegates were captivated by Bakunin.⁴²⁶ Wagner said of him: "In this remarkable man, the purest humanitarianism [!] was combined with a savagery utterly inimical to all culture, and thus my relationship with

⁴²⁵ Monk Boris (Ephremov), "Sergius Nilus", *Pravoslavnaia Rus'* (Orthodox Russia), N 1 (1454), January 1/14, 1992, pp. 5-9.

⁴²⁶ Edmund Wilson, *To the Finland Station*, London: Phoenix, 2004, pp. 256-258, 259-260, 261.

him fluctuated between instinctive horror and irresistible attraction... The annihilation of all civilisation was the objective on which he had set his heart; to use all political levers as a means to this end was his current preoccupation, and it often served him as a pretext for ironic merriment."⁴²⁷

Bakunin, wrote Berlin, "was a born agitator with sufficient scepticism in his system not to be taken in himself by his own torrential eloquence. To dominate individuals and sway assemblies was his *métier*: he belonged to that odd, fortunately not very numerous, class of persons who contrive to hypnotise others into throwing themselves into causes – if need be killing and dying for them – while themselves remaining coldly, clearly and ironically aware of the effect of the spells which they cast. When his bluff was called, as occasionally it was, for example, by Herzen, Bakunin would laugh with the greatest good nature, admit everything freely, and continue to cause havoc, if anything with greater unconcern than before. His path was strewn with victims, casualties, and faithful, idealistic converts; he himself remained a gay, easy-going, mendacious, irresistibly agreeable, calmly and coldly destructive, fascinating, generous, undisciplined, eccentric Russian landowner to the end..."⁴²⁸

The basic difference between Marx and Bakunin was in their attitude to the State. While Marx called for the overthrow of the old regimes, he was not against the State as such, at any rate before the advent of the communist paradise, and believed that the State could be used to free the workers. And the importance of the State in his thinking, combined with a more "scientific" and collectivist approach, became more pronounced with time.

"It meant," as M.S. Anderson writes, "a fundamental change of emphasis in his thinking. The fulfilment and true freedom of the individual still remained the objective of revolution and the end of the historical process. As far as the making of revolutions was concerned, however, his 'alienation' and his revolutionary consciousness, so important in the early works of the 1840s and still important in those of the 1850s, were now threatened with submersion in a vast and impersonal process of social evolution governed by laws analogous to those of the physical world and quite impossible to divert or restrain."⁴²⁹

Bakunin, however, believed that the State was simply another form of oppression and had to be destroyed. "I am not a Communist," he said, "because Communism, by concentrating all property in the State, necessarily leads to the concentration of all the power of society in the State. I want to abolish the State..."⁴³⁰ Like the French philosopher-anarchist Proudhon, Bakunin believed that all property was theft, and that included State property. Like Proudhon again, he believed that States would be replaced by local workers' organizations.

⁴²⁷ Wagner, in Stephen Johnson, *Wagner. His Life and His Work*, London: Naxos, 2007. P. 59.

⁴²⁸ Berlin, "German Romanticism in Petersburg and Moscow", in *Russian Thinkers*, London: Penguin, 2008, pp. 164-165.

⁴²⁹ M.S. Anderson, *The Ascendancy of Europe, 1815-1914*, London: Longman, 1985, pp. 350-351.

⁴³⁰ Bakunin, in Julius Braunthal, *History of the International 1864-1914*, 1966, p. 139.

Bakunin's most famous remark was: "The desire to destroy is also a creative desire." "The whole of Europe," he said, with St. Petersburg, Paris and London, will be transformed into an enormous rubbish-heap." "The miracles of the revolution," he said, "will come out of the depths of this fiery ocean. Russia is the aim of the revolution, its greatest forces will be unleashed there, and there it will attain its perfection." "The constellation of the revolution will rise high and beautiful in Moscow out of the sea of blood and will become the guiding star for the good of the whole of liberated humanity..." "Russian democracy with its tongues of fire will swallow up all of Europe in a bloody glow." As Hosking remarks, "this proved to be a contagious and attractive vision, not only in Russia but especially there."⁴³¹

In 1883 Engels criticised Bakunin's anarchism, writing: "The anarchists have put the thing upside down. They declare that the proletarian revolution must *begin* by doing away with the political organisation of the state... But to destroy it at such a moment would be to destroy the only organism by means of which the victorious proletariat can assert its newly-conquered power, hold down its capitalist adversaries and carry out that economic revolution of society without which the whole victory must end in a new defeat and in a mass slaughter of the workers similar to those after the Paris Commune."⁴³²

True; and yet "Bakuninist" anarchism corresponded more closely to the spirit of the revolution than all the treatises of Marx, whose only purpose was to give a pseudo-scientific justification to an essentially destructive, satanic force. Thus the victory of Bakunin over Marx at the meeting of the First Internationale in Basle was no accident – the delegates recognised in Bakunin the true incarnation of the spirit of the revolution. As Baron Wrangel said of his speech: "I no longer remember what Bakunin said, and it would in any case scarcely be possible to reproduce it. His speech had neither logical sequence nor richness in ideas, but consisted of thrilling phrases and rousing appeals. It was something elemental and incandescent – a raging storm with lightning flashes and thunderclaps, and a roaring as of lions. The man was a born speaker, made for the revolution. The revolution was his natural being. His speech made a tremendous impression. If he had asked his hearers to cut each other's throats, they would have cheerfully obeyed him."⁴³³

One of those present at Bakunin's speech was Dostoyevsky. He said that the whole speech had been given "without the slightest proof, all this was learned by rote twenty years ago and has not changed one bit. Fire and sword! And when all has been destroyed, then, in their opinion, there will be peace..."

Dostoyevsky had no time for Bakunin's atheist slogans: "As long as God exists, man is a slave" and: "Man is rational, just, free, therefore there is no

⁴³¹ Hosking, *Russia and Russians*, p. 307.

⁴³² Engels, in Chomsky, *Understanding Power*, pp. 31-32.

⁴³³ Wrangel, in Wilson, *op. cit.*, p. 269.

God.” Already in *Notes from the Underground* (1864) Dostoyevsky had demonstrated that man in his fallen state was quite *irrational*, and would never be happy with rationalist schemes for his happiness. “I would not be at all surprised, for instance, if suddenly and without the slightest possible reason a gentleman of ignoble or rather reactionary and sardonic countenance were to arise amid all that coming reign of universal common sense and, gripping his sides firmly with his hands, were to say to us all. ‘Well, gentlemen, what about giving all this common sense a great kick and letting it shiver in the dust before our feet simply to send all these logarithms to the devil so that we again live according to our silly will?’”⁴³⁴

And yet Bakunin’s anarchism was not just thunder and lightning. For him “the withering away of the State” was not, as in Marx and Engels, an essentially utopian idea that was secondary to the central idea of class struggle⁴³⁵: for him, it was the heart of the matter. Being a more consistent libertarian than any of the Marxists, he perceived that even the socialist State would be an instrument of oppression. In fact, he warned that the “red bureaucracy” would be “the vilest and most dangerous lie of the century”. And in 1870 he accurately predicted what actually took place in 1917: “Take the most radical of revolutionaries and place him on the throne of all the Russias or give him dictatorial powers... and before the year is out he will be worse than the Tsar himself...”

Bakunin’s vision of socialism looked more likely than Marx’s to triumph in the years 1869-1871, between the Basle Congress and the Paris Commune. However, Marx defeated Bakunin by claiming that the Paris Commune was the beginning of the new proletarian (as opposed to bourgeois) revolution, which would spread from France to Germany to all Europe. It did spread, but not in the way he predicted: its first success was in peasant Russia, not proletarian Germany – as Bakunin, not Marx, had predicted. For Bakunin was able to foresee, as Berlin wrote, “that [revolutions] were liable to develop not in the most industrialised societies, on a rising curve of economic progress, but in countries in which the majority of the population was near subsistence level and had least to lose by an upheaval – primitive peasants in conditions of desperate poverty in backward rural economies where capitalism was weakest, such as Spain and Russia.”⁴³⁶

Marx and Engels had this in common with Bakunin: they saw clearly that the enemy that had to be destroyed if the revolution was to succeed was Russia. As Engels said: “Not one revolution in Europe and in the whole world can attain final victory while the present Russian state exists...”⁴³⁷ And as Bakunin

⁴³⁴ Dostoyevsky, *Notes from the Underground*, in *The Best Stories of Dostoyevsky*, New York, 1955, p. 136.

⁴³⁵ Gareth Stedman-Jones writes: “Visions of the disappearance of the state [in Marx] belonged to the 1840s: 1848 dashed these innocent hopes” (“The Routes of Revolution”, *BBC History Magazine*, vol. 3 (6), June, 2002, p. 36).

⁴³⁶ Berlin, “Nationalism”, in *The Proper Study of Mankind*, London: Pimlico, 1998, p. 584.

⁴³⁷ Friedrich Engels, *Karl Marx and the Revolutionary Movement in Russia*.

said: "The goal of the revolution is Russia! It is there that its greatest power will unfold; there will attain its perfection. In Moscow the constellation of revolution will rise high and beautifully from a sea of blood and fire, to become a guiding star for all liberated humanity."

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Bakunin was the first "pure" terrorist. But he lived abroad. More typical of the young devils who came to dominate the revolutionary underground inside Russia was Nicholas Ishutin. Ronald Seth writes: "He was the son of a merchant and of a mother who came of a noble family. When he was two both his parents died, and he was brought up until he was eleven by relatives of his father. In 1863 he entered Moscow university, where he quickly gathered round him a group of young men upon whom he was soon exerting a quite extraordinary influence.

"Ishutin was not an intellectual, and though his scorn of learning might have been a pose, he had not been long at the university when he decided to give up his studies in order to devote all his time to The Cause. Many of his followers imitated their leader in this.

"The group quickly became strong and active, and determined, as they phrased it, 'to go to the people', they sacrificed not only careers but all personal belongings. As a practical step in making contact with the people they set up co-operative and friendly societies for the workmen, artisans and students."

However, this romantic Populist phase did not last long. For in fact "all Ishutin's efforts and multifarious schemes were directed to one sole end - the creation of a revolutionary force. To achieve this he tossed all scruples out of the window, and introduced a new approach to the means by which the end might be attained - naked terrorism.

"The group believed that a peasant revolution would take place within five years. Their conception of this revolution differed from any previous conception of popular revolt; it was to be radical and 'economic' and nothing must be allowed to prevent its happening.

"The ruthless extremist policy preached by Ishutin did not appeal to all the members of the group, and as a result, between 1865 and 1866, there came into being a smaller group-within-the-group who were prepared to transmute into activity the extreme ideas of their leader. Named by Ishutin *The Organization*, this smaller group consisted mostly of extremely poor young men, many of whom were the sons of country priests whose *modus vivendi* differed little from that of the peasants. A few came from peasant families.

"Even this small and select band, however, did not entirely respond to all the aims of its founder. Extremist propaganda and agitation, yes - but not out and out terrorism, and this last was dear to Ishutin's heart. So within *The*

Organization there also developed another group, a secret cell, even more select, composed of students who lived together 'in common'. They gave themselves the name *Hell*...

"The existence of *Hell* was to be kept secret even from the members of The Organisation..."⁴³⁸

It was an appropriate name for an organization, whose layers within layers recalled Weishaupt's *Illuminati*. And it was a member of *Hell*, the young nobleman Dmitry Vladimirovich Karakozov (1840-66), who made the first failed attempt to assassinate the Tsar. "Racked by remorse for his father's exploitation of the peasantry, he was personally enthusiastic about his mission. 'I have decided to destroy the evil Tsar,.. and to die for my beloved people.' On 4 April, 1866, the date predicted for the revolution in *What is to be Done?*, he rushed towards the tsar as he was leaving the Summer Garden in St. Petersburg, but as he took aim with his pistol his arm was jostled and he missed; the guards arrested him as he tried to take a second shot, and found a phial of strychnine in his jacket. 'What do you want?' the tsar asked him. 'Nothing, nothing,' he replied. Despite begging forgiveness and converting to Orthodoxy, Karakazov was executed by hanging on 3 September 1866; ten of his accomplices were sentenced to hard labour."⁴³⁹

These included Ishutin, who spent the last eleven years of his life insane...⁴⁴⁰

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The next terrorist leader was Sergius Gennadiyevich Nechayev (1847-82), a teacher of Holy Scripture who from his student years devoted himself to political activity. (The combination of seminary training and revolutionary activity was not uncommon. Dobroliubov was the son of a priest. Stalin was a seminarian...)

In 1869 Nechayev went on a false passport to Geneva, where he joined Bakunin and Ogarev, a friend of Herzen's. Like Bakunin, he was an anarchist: "We are destroyers," he declared, "others will create".

Together with Bakunin Nechayev wrote *The Revolutionary's Catechism*, which declared: "1. The revolutionary is a doomed person. He has neither his own interests, nor affairs, nor feelings, nor attractions, nor even name. Everything in him is swallowed up by a single exclusive interest, a single thought, a single passion – the revolution.

"2. In the depth of his essence he has broken – not in words only, but also in fact – every bond linking him with the civil order and with the whole civilized

⁴³⁸ Seth, *The Russian Terrorists*, London: Barrie and Rockliff, 1966, pp. 28-29.

⁴³⁹ Richard Evans, *The Pursuit of Power. Europe 1815-1914*, London: Penguin, 2017, p. 611.

⁴⁴⁰ Seth, *op. cit.*, pp. 30-31.

world, with all the laws, decencies, social conditions and morality of this world. He is its pitiless enemy, and if he were to continue to live in it, then it would only be in order to destroy it more reliably.

“3. The revolutionary despises all doctrinaire attitudes and has rejected secular science, presenting everything to future generations. He knows only one science – the science of destruction. For this and only for this has he studied mechanics, physics, chemistry and, perhaps, medicine.

“4. He despises and hates contemporary social morality in all its manifestations. Morality for him is that which aids the triumph of the revolution. Immorality and crime is everything that hinders it...

“7. The nature of the genuine revolutionary excludes all romanticism, all sensitivity, exaltation or amusement. It excludes even personal hatred and revenge. Revolutionary passion, having become in him an everyday, every-minute phenomenon, must be united with cold calculation...

“25. In coming closer to the people, we must first of all be united those elements of the people’s life which since the time of the foundation of the Muscovite State power have not ceased to protest, not in words, but in deeds, against everything that is directly or indirectly linked with the State: against the nobles, against the officials, against the popes, against the world of Guilds and against the rich peasant, the devourer of the *mir*. We shall unite with the savage world of the thieves, this true and only revolutionary in Russia...”

In Nechayev’s plan for the revolution, various public figures were to be shot, but Alexander II himself was not to be killed, but would be publicly tortured and executed “*before the face of the whole of the liberated plebs, on the ruins of the State*”.

After the great work of destruction, according to Nechayev, all power would necessarily be concentrated in the hands of a Central Committee. (In this centralism, he differed from the more democratic Bakunin.) Everybody was to undertake physical work. Dissidents were to be executed...

In August, 1869, Nechayev returned to Russia as the self-styled representative of the World Revolutionary Movement at Geneva and organized a ‘Society of National Retribution’ in Moscow. On 21 November he and four members of the Moscow ‘group of five’ murdered the fifth member of the group, a young student of the Moscow Agricultural College called Ivanov, for allegedly refusing to carry out the instructions of the Geneva committee. Ivanov was strangled, then shot, and his body was weighted with stones and thrown into the pond.

The story of Ivanov’s murder is closely matched in the story of Shatov’s murder in Dostoyevky’s *The Devils* (1872)], a spell-binding description of how a bourgeois society is as if possessed by demons and hurls itself to destruction

like the Gadarene swine of the Gospel (which is cited at the beginning of the novel). This was a stunning prophecy of the revolution, and of how well-meaning liberalism could lay society open to the most evil demonism. As Leo Shestov wrote: "If Darwin had seen in his life what Dostoyevsky saw, he would not have talked about a law of self-preservation, but about a law of self-annihilation..."⁴⁴¹

"After the murder, Nechayev, like Peter Verkhovensky in the novel, escaped first to Petersburg and then abroad. He went back to Geneva, where he rejoined Bakunin and Ogaryov and assisted them in their abortive attempt to revive Herzen's London journal *The Bell*. His ruthlessness in carrying out Bakunin's own principle that the end justifies the means appalled even Bakunin, who soon broke with him. Nechayev then went to London, where he began publishing his terrorist journal *Village Commune*, which was sharply condemned by Engels...

"He later returned to Switzerland, where he was arrested by the Swiss police on an extradition order as a criminal and not a political offender and handed over to the Russian police. On 8 January 1873 he was tried for murder by the Moscow District Court and sentenced to twenty years' penal servitude. He was not sent to Siberia, however, but incarcerated in the Peter and Paul fortress in Petersburg, where he died one year and ten months after Dostoyevsky, in November 1882."⁴⁴²

"Atheist anarchism," wrote Dostoyevsky, "is near - our children will see it. The Internationale has decreed that the European revolution should begin in Russia, and it will begin, for there is no reliable buttress against it with us, neither in the administration nor in society. The revolt will begin with atheism and the robbing of all wealth. They will begin to pull down religion, destroy the churches and turn them into barracks and stalls. They will drown the world in blood and then they themselves will get frightened..."

Frightened of what? Frightened that in displaying this demonic activity, they are themselves the unwitting agents and slaves of the demons. This was indeed the case during the Soviet period, when many people - and not only religious believers - experienced the almost palpable presence of the demons at work. A sophisticated rationalization of devilry in psychological terms was commonplace already in Dostoyevsky's time, as exemplified by Ivan Karamazov's words to the devil: "'Never for a moment have I taken you for reality,' cried Ivan with a sort of fury. 'You're a lie, you're my illness, you're a phantom. I only don't know how to destroy you and I'm afraid I shall have to suffer for a time. You are my hallucination. You're the embodiment of myself, but only of one side of me - of my thoughts and feelings, but only the most vile

⁴⁴¹ Shestov, *Na Vesakh Iova* (On the Scales of Job), Paris: YMCA Press, 1975, p. 67.

⁴⁴² Dostoyevsky, in David Magarshack's introduction to *The Devils*, London: Penguin, 1971, pp. x-xi.

and stupid. From that point of view you might even interest me, if only I had time to waste on you..."⁴⁴³

But the demons were only too real; they were no hallucination. And the nightmare of the revolution which Dostoyevsky foresaw so clearly and frighteningly, would force itself on the daylight consciousness of the whole of Russia only a generation after his death...

October 4/17, 2019.

⁴⁴³ Dostoyevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, XI, 9.

33. 1066-70: THE FIRST CHRISTIAN GENOCIDE

After his victory at Hastings in 1066, William the Conqueror became the instrument of God's wrath on the formerly Orthodox Christian people of Anglo-Saxon England. He made slow, S-shaped progress through Kent, Surrey, Hampshire and across the Thames at Wallingford to Berkhamstead north of London. As he was approaching London, near St. Alban's, the shrine of the protomartyr of Britain, he found the road blocked, according to Matthew of Paris, "by masses of great trees that had been felled and drawn across the road. The Abbot of St. Albans was sent for to explain these demonstrations, who, in answer to the king's questions, frankly and fearlessly said, 'I have done the duty appertaining to my birth [he was of royal blood] and calling; and if others of my rank and profession had performed the like, as they well could and ought, it had not been in thy power to penetrate into the land so far.' Not long after, that same Frederic was at the head of a confederacy, determined, if possible, to compel William to reign like a Saxon prince, that is, according to the ancient laws and customs, or to place... Edgar Atheling in his room. William submitted for a time, and, in a great council at Berkhamstead, swore, upon all the relics of the church of St. Albans, that he would keep the laws in question, the oath being administered by Abbot Frederic. In the end, however, the Conqueror grew too strong to be coerced by any measures, however nationally excellent or desirable, and he does not seem to have cared much about oath breaking, unless it was *he* who had enacted the oath, - the unhappy Harold, for instance, found *that* no light matter - and so William became more oppressive than ever. St. Albans, as might have been anticipated, suffered especially from his vengeance, he seized all its lands that lay between Barnet and Londonstone, and was with difficulty prevented from utterly ruining the monastery. As it was, the blow was enough for Frederic, who died of grief in the monastery of Ely, whither he had been compelled to flee."⁴⁴⁴

In November the Conqueror stayed in Canterbury, from which Archbishop Stigand had fled in order to join the national resistance in London. One night, St. Dunstan was seen leaving the church by some of the brethren. When they tried to detain him he said: "I cannot remain here on account of the filth of your evil ways and crimes in the church."⁴⁴⁵

On December 6, 1067, it was burned to the ground...

William continued his march, systematically devastating the land as he passed through it. Early in December he was in Southwark, burnt it, and drove off Prince Edgar's troops at London Bridge.

⁴⁴⁴ Translated in *Old England: A Pictorial Museum of Regal, Ecclesiastical, Baronial, Municipal and Other Popular Antiquities*, 1845, reprinted by Arno Press, New York, 1978, p. 195.

⁴⁴⁵ Osborn of Canterbury, *Vita Dunstani*; in Stubbs, *Memorials of St. Dunstan*, Rolls series, 1874, p. 142.

Important defections from the English side began to take place. The first was Edith, King Edward's widow and King Harold's sister, who gave him the key city of Winchester. Then Archbishop Stigand submitted to him at Wallingford. And at Berkhamstead, according to the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, "he was met by Bishop Aldred [of York], Prince Edgar, Earl Edwin, Earl Morcar, and all the best men from London, who submitted out of necessity."

Finally, on Christmas Day - how fateful has that day been, both for good and ill, in English history! - he was crowned king by Archbishop Aldred. "And William gave a pledge on the Gospels, and swore an oath besides, before Aldred would place the crown on his head, that he would govern this nation according to the best practice of his predecessors if they would be loyal to him."⁴⁴⁶

The Londoners also suffered from their new master. During William's coronation service, Archbishop Aldred first asked the English in English if it was their will that William be made king. They assented. Then Geoffrey, bishop of Coutances, addressed the Normans in French with the same question. When they, too, assented, those who were standing guard outside the Abbey became alarmed because of the shouting, and started to set fire to the city.

Professor Allen Brown writes: "Orderic Vitalis, in a vivid passage, describes how panic spread within the church as men and women of all degrees pressed to the doors in flight, and only a few were left to complete the coronation of King William, who, he says, was 'violently trembling'. For William this must indeed have been the one terrifying moment of his life... He believed implicitly in his right to England, and God had seemed to favour that right and to deliver His judgement on the field of Hastings. And now, at the supreme moment of anointing and sanctification at his coronation, when the Grace of God should come upon him and make him king and priest, there came a great noise, and the windows of the abbey church lit up with fire, and people fled all about him. It must have seemed to him then that in spite of all previous signs and portents he was wrong, unworthy, that his God had turned against him and rejected both him and his cause, and it is no wonder that he trembled until the awful moment had passed and the world came right again."⁴⁴⁷

After the festivities, and after giving instructions for the building of wooden castles all over the land, William returned to Normandy taking all the chief men of England with him as hostages.

“‘When the castles were built, they filled them with devils and wicked men... they levied taxes on the villages... they robbed and burned.’ Thousands

⁴⁴⁶ *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, D, 1066.

⁴⁴⁷ Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 158.

of colonists followed in their wake. There was a prolonged free-for-all at the local level as the victors advanced up to the still fluid and disputed northern and western march-lands."⁴⁴⁸

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"At first," writes François Neveux, "the new king hoped that he could win round his former adversaries. He considered that he had been quite within his rights to conquer the country, since he had been promised the throne by the previous king, Edward. 'God's judgement' having favoured him, he assumed that the English would all rally to him without any problem... At first, William presented himself as the successor of the Anglo-Saxon kings, not only Edward, but Harold also. He drafted a number of documents in Old English, and made an effort to learn the language of his new people. This attitude may be glimpsed in the Bayeux Tapestry, which is one of the first testimonies we possess of these events. In it, Harold is referred to as 'king', just as he is in a number of charters. He is even singled out and praised for his bravery. The Latin commentary is very neutral, and may be read in both a pro-English and a pro-Norman light. This early line only lasted a few years, until it came up against the harsh reality of Anglo-Saxon rebellions..."⁴⁴⁹

In December, 1067, William returned to England, and quickly put down rebellions in Kent and Hertfordshire. Then a more serious rebellion broke out in Exeter, led by King Harold's mother Countess Gytha and her older grandsons. Thither William marched with a combined army of Normans and Englishmen, and after a siege of eighteen days the city surrendered; which was followed by the submission of the Celts of Cornwall, and the cities of Gloucester and Bristol.

Meanwhile, in the North resistance was gathering around Earl Morcar, who had been allowed to return from Normandy with Earl Waltheof of Bamburgh; and there was a threat of interventions by King Malcolm of Scotland, who was sheltering Prince Edgar and had married his sister Margaret, and by King Swein of Denmark. After spending Pascha, 1068 at Winchester, William marched swiftly north and built castles in Warwick and York, where he received the submission of the local magnates and secured a truce with the Scottish king. Then he turned southward to secure the submission of Lincoln, Huntingdon and Cambridge.

But on January 28, 1069, the Norman, Robert Cumin, whom William had appointed earl of Northumbria north of the Tees was attacked in the streets of Durham and burnt to death in the house of Bishop Aethelwine. This was followed by an uprising in York, and Prince Edgar prepared to move from Scotland.

⁴⁴⁸ Tombs, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

⁴⁴⁹ Neveux, *The Normans*, Philadelphia: Running Press, 2008, p. 139.

However, as Marc Morris writes, William “wasted no time in returning to England to crush this revolt, raising the siege and dispersing the rebels. On this occasion there were no submissions. In expectation of further trouble, he ordered a second castle to be constructed on the opposite bank of the Ouse, and left William FitzOsbern in command of the city.”⁴⁵⁰ Gospatric was appointed as earl. Then, in the early summer of 1069, he returned to Normandy.

Almost immediately, however, a Danish fleet of about 240 ships sailed into the Humber. It seems that the English were now prepared to accept the Danish king Swein as their own king; for the Danes were joined by Edgar, Gospatric and Earl Waltheof.

First they destroyed the Norman garrison at York, Waltheof “cutting of their heads one by one” as they tried to escape.⁴⁵¹ Then they encamped on the southern shore of the Humber, fortifying the Isle of Axholme. This was the signal for other uprisings in Dorset, in the fens under Hereward the Wake, and in the Welsh Borders under Edric the Wild. “The Danes were welcomed by the local people, and helped Hereward recapture Peterborough in 1070 – but they then departed with the abbey treasures”.⁴⁵²

The rebels were defeated and the Danes were paid to return home. The consequences of this last major uprising against William’s rule were described by the great French historian Thierry: “The conquering army, whose divisions covered a space of a hundred miles, traversed this territory... in all directions, and the traces of their passage through it were deeply imprinted. The old historians relate that, from the Humber to the Tyne, not a piece of cultivated land, not a single inhabited village remained. The monasteries which had escaped the ravages of the Danish pagans, that of St. Peter near Wear, and that of Whitby inhabited by women, were profaned and burned. To the south of the Humber, according to the early narrators, the ravage was no less dreadful. They say, in their passionate language, that between York and the eastern sea, every living creature was put to death, from man to beast, excepting only those who took refuge in the church of St. John the archbishop [of York, +721], at Beverley. This John was a saint of the English race; and, on the approach of the conquerors, a great number of men and women flocked, with all that they had most valuable, round the church dedicated to their blessed countryman, in order that, remembering in heaven that he was a Saxon, he might protect them and their property from the fury of the foreigner. The Norman camp was then seven miles from Beverley. It was rumoured that the church of St. John was the refuge of the rich and depository of the riches of the country. Some adventurous scouts, who by the contemporary history are denominated knights, set out under the command of one Toustain, in order to be the first to seize the prize. They entered Beverley without resistance; marched to the

⁴⁵⁰ Morris, “The Anglo-Saxons’ Last Stand”, *BBC History Magazine*, January, 2017, p. 37.

⁴⁵¹ Ann Williams, *The English and the Norman Conquest*, Woodridge: Boydell, 1995, p. 57.

⁴⁵² Tombs, *The English and their History*, New York, 2015, pp. 45-46.

church-yard, where the terrified crowd were assembled; and passed its barriers, giving themselves not more concern about the Saxon saint than about the Saxons who invoked him. Toustain, the chief of the band, casting his eye over the groups of English, observed an old man richly clad, with gold bracelets in the fashion of his nation. He galloped towards him with his sword drawn, and the terrified old man fled to the church: Toustain pursued him; but he had scarcely passed the gates, when, his horse's feet slipping on the pavement, he was thrown off and stunned by the fall. At the sight of their captain half dead, the rest of the Normans turned round; and their imaginations being excited, hastened full of dread to relate this terrible example of the power of John of Beverley. When the army passed through, no one dared again to tempt the vengeance of the blessed saint; and... the territory of his church alone remained covered with habitations and produce, in the midst of the devastated country...

"... Famine, like a faithful companion of the conquest, followed their footsteps. From the year 1067, it had been desolating some provinces, which alone had then been conquered; but in 1069 it extended itself through the whole of England and appeared in all its horror in the newly conquered territories. The inhabitants of the province of York and the country to the north, after feeding on the horses which the Norman army abandoned on the roads, devoured human flesh. More than a hundred thousand people, of all ages, died of want in these countries."⁴⁵³

According to the Norman writer Ordericus Vitalis, "So terrible a famine fell upon the people, that more than 100,000 Christian folk of both sexes, young and old alike, perished of hunger... Nowhere else had William shown such cruelty. Shamefully he succumbed to this vice, for he made no effort to restrain his fury and punished the innocent with the guilty... My narrative has frequently had occasion to praise William, but for this act which condemned the innocent and guilty alike to die by slow starvation, I cannot commend him..."⁴⁵⁴

Marc Morris adds: "Another 12th-century writer, John of Worcester, reported that people were reduced to eating horses, dogs, cats and even human flesh. Simeon of Durham, adding to John's account, asserted that the land between York and Durham lay uncultivated for the next nine years, its deserted villages haunted only by wild beasts and robbers."⁴⁵⁵

"It is sometimes objected that these 12th-century chroniclers are too late to be credible, and that more closely contemporary accounts are not as

⁴⁵³ Thierry, *History of the Conquest of England by the Normans*, London: Dent, 1840, vol. I, pp. 214-217.

⁴⁵⁴ Ordericus, *Ecclesiastical History*.

⁴⁵⁵ "So great a famine prevailed that men, compelled by hunger, devoured human flesh, that of horses, dogs and cats, and whatever custom abhors... It was horrific to behold human corpses decaying in the houses, the streets and the roads." (in Jim Bradbury, *The Battle of Hastings*, Stroud: The History Press, 2010, pp. 168, 176). (V.M.)

sensational or as judgmental. But there is enough earlier evidence to corroborate the claims of earlier writers. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, a telegraphically terse account for this period, reports that William went to Yorkshire in 1069 and 'ruined it completely'. William of Jumièges, who was possibly writing his *Deeds of the Norman Dukes* at the behest of the Conqueror himself, described how the king 'massacred almost the whole population, from the very young to the old and grey'.

"Marianus Scotus, writing in Germany in the 1070s, reported that famine in England had caused people to resort to cannibalism, substantiating the account of John of Worcester. Most compelling of all, the late 11th-century chronicler at Evesham Abbey in Worcestershire penned a haunting picture of starving refugees turning up in great numbers at the abbey gates, only to die from exhaustion, or 'through eating food too ravenously' - a line that recalls the tragic fate of some of those liberated from Nazi concentration camps. 'Every day,' the Evesham chronicler lamented, 'five or six people, sometimes more, perished miserably, and were buried by the prior of this place.' ...

"In the chronicles that cover the northern shires - and, most especially, Yorkshire - the word that occurs time and again in 'waste' (Latin: *vasta*). And the counties with the most waste were those of northern England and the Welsh Marches, harried by William in 1069-70, and also Sussex, which had been ravaged during the Hastings campaign. But the overwhelming majority of waste was concentrated in Yorkshire, which accounted for more than 80 percent of the total for all of England. Other shires had recovered their values by the time of the survey, but in Yorkshire almost two-thirds of all holdings were still described as waste in 1086. Since 1066 the shire had lost more than 80,000 oxen and 150,000 people.." from a total population in the whole of England of about two million.⁴⁵⁶

Professor Douglas writes: "An eleventh-century campaign was inevitably brutal, but the methods here displayed were widely regarded as exceptional and beyond excuse, even by those who were otherwise fervent admirers of the Norman king... 'I am more disposed to pity the sorrows and sufferings of the wretched people than to undertake the hopeless task of screening one who was guilty of such wholesale massacre by lying flatteries. I assert moreover that such barbarous homicide should not pass unpunished.' Such was the view of a monk in Normandy. A writer from northern England supplies more precise details of the horrible incidents of the destruction, and recalls the rotting and putrefying corpses which littered the highways of the afflicted province. Pestilence inevitably ensued, and an annalist of Evesham tells how refugees in the last state of destitution poured into the little town. Nor is it possible to dismiss these accounts as rhetorical exaggeration, for twenty years later *Domesday Book* shows the persisting effects of the terrible visitation, and there

⁴⁵⁶ Morris, "'The Conqueror Massacred Almost the Whole Population, from the Very Young to the Old and Grey'", *BBC History Magazine*, November, 2019, pp. 26-27; "'What the Normans did for Us", *BBC History Magazine*, November, 2016, p. 34.

is evidence that these endured until the reign of Stephen..."⁴⁵⁷

So terrible was the slaughter, and the destruction of holy churches and relics, that the Norman bishops who took part in the campaign were required to do penance when they returned home. But the Pope who had blessed this unholy slaughter did no penance. Rather, he sent his legates to England, who, at the false council of Winchester in 1070, deposed Archbishop Stigand and most of the English bishops, thereby integrating the "rebellious" land into his religious empire. For the Norman Conquest was, in effect, the first crusade of the "reformed" Papacy against Orthodox Christendom. As Professor Douglas writes: "It is beyond doubt that the latter half of the eleventh century witnessed a turning-point in the history of Western Christendom, and beyond doubt Normandy and the Normans played a dominant part in the transformation which then occurred... They assisted the papacy to rise to a new political domination, and they became closely associated with the reforming movement in the Church which the papacy came to direct. They contributed also to a radical modification of the relations between Eastern and Western Europe with results that still survive. The Norman Conquest of England may thus in one sense be regarded as but part of a far-flung endeavour..."⁴⁵⁸

Before leaving events in the north, we should not forget to mention the influence of the greatest saint of the north, St. Cuthbert (+687). After the violent death of William's appointee, Robert Comin, in Durham, another expedition was sent by William to restore order. But St. Cuthbert's power, which had terrified unholy kings in the past, had not abandoned his people. For the expedition, writes C.J. Stranks, "was turned back by a thick mist, sent for the protection of his people by St. Cuthbert, when the army reached Northallerton. Then the king himself came. The frightened monks [led by Bishop Aethelwine of Durham] decided to take refuge at Lindisfarne and, of course, to take the body of their saint with them. When they reached the shore opposite to the island night had fallen and there was a storm raging. It looked as if their way was blocked, for the sea covered the causeway. They were tired and frightened and at their wits' end, when miraculously, as it seemed to them, the sea withdrew and the path to the island lay open...

"Their stay was not long, for they were back in Durham by the beginning of Lent, 1070. Two years later William the Conqueror himself felt the saint's power. He was staying in Durham for a little while on his way home from Scotland in order to begin building the castle there. Perhaps he had heard of the flight to Lindisfarne, for he thought it necessary to take an oath of the monks that St. Cuthbert's body was really at Durham. But he was still not convinced, and ordered that the tomb should be opened on All Saints' Day, threatening that if the body was not there he would execute all the officers of the monastery. The day arrived. Mass was begun, when suddenly the king was seized by a violent fever. It was obvious that the saint was angry at his

⁴⁵⁷ Douglas, *William the Conqueror*, p. 221.

⁴⁵⁸ Douglas, *William the Conqueror*, pp. 6-7.

temerity. William left the church, mounted his horse and never looked back until he had crossed the Tees and was safely out of the Patrimony of St. Cuthbert...⁴⁵⁹

"Judgement begins at the House of God" (I Peter 4.17), and God's judgement was indeed very heavy on the formerly pious English land, especially on the North, which had refused to help Harold and which was devastated with extraordinary cruelty by William... But then God takes His vengeance even on the instruments of His wrath (Isaiah 10.15). Thus when William was dying, as the Norman monk Ordericus Vitalis recounts, his conscience tormented for his deeds: "I appoint no one my heir to the crown of England, but leave it to the disposal of the eternal Creator, Whose I am, and Who ordereth all things. For I did not obtain that high honour by hereditary right, but wrested it from the perjured King in a desperate battle, with much effusion of human blood; and it was by the slaughter and banishment of his adherents that I subjugated England to my rule. I have persecuted its native inhabitants beyond all reason. Whether gentle or simple, I have cruelly oppressed them; many I unjustly disinherited; innumerable multitudes, especially in the county of York, perished through me by famine or the sword. Thus it happened: the men of Deira and other people beyond the Humber called in the troops of Sweyn, king of Denmark, as their allies against me, and put to the sword Robert Comyn and a thousand soldiers within the walls of Durham, as well as others, my barons and most esteemed knights, in various places. These events inflamed me to the highest pitch of resentment, and I fell on the English of the northern shires like a ravening lion. I commanded their houses and corn, with all their implements and chattels, to be burnt without distinction, and large herds of cattle and beasts of burden to be butchered wherever they were found. It was thus that I took revenge on the multitudes of both sexes by subjecting them to the calamity of a cruel famine; and by so doing - alas! - became the barbarous murderer of many thousands, both young and old, of that fine race of people. Having, therefore, made my way to the throne of that kingdom by many crimes, I dare not leave it to anyone but God alone, lest after my death worse should happen by my means..."⁴⁶⁰

But this confession evidently was not enough to expiate his guilt in the eyes of God. For, as Thierry writes, following Ordericus Vitalis, the horrific events surrounding his burial showed that the wrath of God on this "eleventh-century Bolshevik" and servant of papism was on him still. "His medical and other attendants, who had passed the night with him, seeing that he was dead, hastily mounted their horses, and rode off to take care of their property. The serving-men and vassals of inferior rank, when their superiors had fled, carried off the arms, vessels, clothes, linen, and other movables, and fled likewise, leaving the corpse naked on the floor. The king's body was left in this situation for several hours... At length some of the clergy, clerks and monks, having

⁴⁵⁹ Stranks, *The Life and Death of St. Cuthbert*, London: SPCK, 1964, pp. 34-35.

⁴⁶⁰ Ordericus Vitalis, *Ecclesiastical History*; translated in Douglas & Greenway, *op. cit.*, pp. 286-287.

recovered the use of their faculties, and collected their strength, arrayed a procession. Clad in the habits of their order, with crosses, tapers, and censers, they approached the corpse, and prayed for the soul of the deceased. The Archbishop of Rouen, named Guillaume, ordered the king's body to be conveyed to Caen, and buried in the basilica of St. Stephen, the first martyr, which he had built in his lifetime. But his sons, his brothers - all his relatives - were afar off: not one of his officers was present - not one offered to take charge of his obsequies; and an obscure countryman named Herluin, through pure good nature, and for the love of God (say the historians), took upon himself the trouble and expense. He hired a cart and attendants, had the body conveyed to the port on the Seine, from thence on a barge down the river, and by sea to Caen. Gilbert, Abbot of St. Stephen's, with all his monks, came to meet the coffin; and was joined by many clerks and laymen; but a fire suddenly appearing, broke up the procession... The inhumation of *the great chief - the famous baron* - as the historians of the time call him - was interrupted by fresh occurrences. On that day were assembled all the bishops and abbots of Normandy. They had the grave dug in the church, between the altar and the choir; the mass was finished, and the body was about to be lowered, when a man rose up amid the crowd, and said, with a loud voice - 'Clerks, and bishops, this ground is mine - upon it stood the house of my father. The man for whom you pray wrested it from me to build on it his church. I have neither sold my land, nor pledged it, nor forfeited it, nor given it. It is my right. I claim it. In the name of God, I forbid you to put the body of the spoiler there, or to cover it with my earth.' He who thus lifted up his voice was Asselin son of Arthur; and all present confirmed the truth of his words. The bishops told him to approach; and, making a bargain with him, delivered to him sixty sols as the price of the place of sepulture only, and engaged to indemnify him equitably for the rest of the ground. On this condition it was the corpse of the vanquisher of the English was received into the ground dug for its reception. At the moment of letting it down, it was discovered that the stone coffin was too narrow; the assistants attempted to force the body, and it burst. Incense and perfumes were burned in abundance, but without avail: the people dispersed in disgust; and the priests themselves, hurrying through the ceremony, soon deserted the church..."⁴⁶¹

October 12/25, 2019.
St. Wilfrid, Bishop of York.

⁴⁶¹ Thierry, *op. cit.*, pp. 320-322.

34. THE TSAR AND THE CONSTITUTION

Tsar Alexander II's reign had been a long and painful carrying of his cross, his responsibility for the survival and strengthening of the Russian empire. Coming to the throne at a time of national defeat and humiliation, he immediately saw that profound and difficult reforms, especially the emancipation of the serfs, were necessary, and he did not flinch from them, although his "centrist" position, neither liberal nor conservative, elicited reproaches from both sides. In the middle of the reforms, in 1866, he experienced the first attempt on his life; there were many more to follow, causing him both fear and sadness that the people did not appreciate what he was trying to do for them. His successful war against Turkey restored Russia's prestige; but at the Congress of Berlin Bismarck robbed him of the fruits of his victory, for which he suffered more opprobrium. This was not the work of a westernizer; and if western influences increased during his reign, the same could be said of almost every tsar since Peter the Great.

His greatest temptation came at the end of his reign, as his resistance to a constitution gradually weakened... The great reforms of his reign, and especially those of the *zemstva*, which had given the nobility a taste of administration, stimulated demands for the introduction of a constitutional monarchy. The initiative here came from the Moscow nobility, who in January, 1865, as V. F. Ivanov writes, "agitated for the convening of the people's representatives, thanking the Tsar for his wise beginnings. The Moscow nobility, who always strove for the good of the State, asked him not to stop on his chosen path and bring to completion the state building begun by him 'through the convening of a general assembly of elected delegates from the Russian land for the discussion of the needs that are common to the whole state'. Emperor Alexander did not accept this appeal. He underlined that 'not one assembly can speak in the name of the other classes' and that the right to care for what is useful and beneficial for the State belonged to him as emperor.

"Alexander thought and wisely foresaw that the granting of a constitution for Russia would be disastrous for the latter.

"In a private conversation with one of the composers of the appeal (Golokhvostov), Alexander said: 'What do you want? A constitutional form of administration? I give you my word, at this table, that I would be ready to sign any constitution you like if I were convinced that it was useful for Russia. *But I know that if I do this today, tomorrow Russia will disintegrate into pieces.*'..."⁴⁶²

Meanwhile, the revolutionaries did not rest, making the tsar's last years extremely difficult. In 1876 in London, the Jewish revolutionaries Liberman, Goldenburg and Zuckerman worked out a plan for the murder of the Tsar. Goldenburg was the first to offer his services as the murderer, but his

⁴⁶² Ivanov, *Ruskaia Intelligentsia i Masonstvo ot Petra I do nashikh dnei* (The Russian Intelligentsia and Masonry from Peter I to our days), Harbin, 1934, Moscow, 1997, p. 340.

suggestion was refused, "since they found that he, as a Jew, should not take upon himself this deed, for then it would not have the significance that was fitting for society and, the main thing, the people."⁴⁶³

"On April 2, 1879 the village teacher Alexander Soloviev fired at the Emperor Alexander near the Winter palace while he was going for his morning walk.

"On May 28, 1879 Soloviev was hanged, while three weeks later a secret congress of revolutionaries in Lipetsk took the decision to kill the Tsar.

"The propaganda of socialism, they argued, was impossible in Russia under the existing form of government, and for that reason it was necessary to strive for its overthrow, for the limitation of autocratic power, for the bestowal of political freedoms and the convening of the people's representatives. The means for the attainment of this goal had to be terror, by which the plotters understood the murder of people in [high] positions, and first of all the Tsar.

"On November 19, 1879 the terrorists tried to blow up the Emperor's train.⁴⁶⁴

"In 1880 a mine was laid and exploded under the Tsar's dining room in the Winter palace.

"On February 12, 1880, on the insistence of the Tsarevich-heir, a 'Supreme Investigative Commission' was founded and Loris-Melikov was given dictatorial powers.

⁴⁶³ Ivanov, *op. cit.*, p. 345.

⁴⁶⁴ "The participation of the Masons in this deed," writes Selyaninov, "cannot be doubted. This was discovered when the Russian government turned to the French government with the demand that it hand over Hartman, who was hiding in Paris under the name Meyer. Scarcely had Hartman been arrested at the request of the Russian ambassador when the French radicals raised an unimaginable noise. The Masonic deputy Engelhardt took his defence upon himself, trying to prove that Meyer and Hartman were different people. The Russian ambassador Prince Orlov began to receive threatening letters. Finally, the leftist deputies were preparing to raise a question and bring about the fall of the ministry. The latter took fright, and, without waiting for the documents promised by Orlov that could have established the identity of Hartman-Meyer, hastily agreed with the conclusions of Brother Engelhardt and helped Hartman to flee to England... In London Hartman was triumphantly received into the Masonic lodge 'The Philadelphia'." (in Ivanov, *op. cit.*, p. 346).

"In this connection an interesting correspondence took place between two high-ranking Masons, Felix Pia and Giuseppe Garibaldi. Pia wrote: 'The most recent attempt on the life of the All-Russian despot confirms your legendary phrase: "The Internationale is the sun of the future!"', and speaks about the necessity of defending 'our brave friend Hartman'. In reply, Garibaldi praised Hartman, and declared: 'Political murder is the secret of the successful realization of the revolution.' And added: 'Siberia is the not the place for the comrades of Hartman, but for the Christian clergy.' In 1881 Hartman arrived in America, where he was received with a storm of ovations. At one of the workers' meetings he declared that he had arrived in the USA with the aim of... helping the Russian people to win freedom." (in Lebedev, *op. cit.*, p. 356). (V.M.)

“From February 12 to August 6, 1880 there was established the so-called ‘dictatorship of the heart’ of Count Loris-Melikov.

“The liberals from the *zemstva* and the professors were demanding a constitution, for this was the only way to struggle with the insurrection. The terrorists were attacking the government with bombs, daggers and revolvers, while the government replied with freedoms and constitutions.

“Count Loris-Melikov was, as was only to be expected, a humanist and a liberal and was under the direct influence of the Mason Koshelev.

“Count Loris-Melikov entered into close union with the *zemstva* and the liberal organs of the press.

“The liberal Abaza was appointed to the ministry of finance⁴⁶⁵; [the Over-Procurator of the Holy Synod, Count Alexander Petrovich] Tolstoy was retired.

“Count Loris-Melikov conducted a subtle intrigue and suggested the project for a State structure that received the name of ‘the constitution of Loris-Melikov’ in society.

“He suggested stopping the creation in St. Petersburg of ‘temporary-preparatory commissions’ so that the work of these commissions should be subjected to scrutiny with the participation of people taken from the *zemstva* and ‘certain significant towns’, taken, as Tatischev put it, ‘from the elected people’.

“Lev Tikhomirov, the penitent revolutionary and former terrorist, being well acquainted with the events and people of the reign of Alexander II Nikolayevich, affirmed that Count Loris-Melikov was deceiving his Majesty and by his ‘dictatorship of the heart’ was creating a revolutionary leaven in the country.⁴⁶⁶

“Emperor Alexander II confirmed the report of his minister on the constitution on February 17, 1881, and on the morning of March 1 [13 (O.S.)] also confirmed the text announcing this measure, so that before its publication it should be debated at the session of the Council of Ministers on March 4.

⁴⁶⁵ Abaza argued in favour of a constitution as follows: “The throne cannot rest exclusively on a million bayonets and an army of officials” (quoted in Figes, *A People’s Tragedy*, p. 41).

⁴⁶⁶ Dostoyevsky’s views on the constitution are interesting: “With great fervor he had urged that the people’s representatives should have greater influence; otherwise the planned constitution would be merely a ‘landowners’ constitution’. The Tsar ought to consult the Russian peasant about what was not going right in Russia. Could he really not see that he was the father of the people?” (Geir Kjetsaa, *Fodor Dostoyevsky*, London: Macmillan, 1987, p. 368).

“On the same day that the report of Count Loris-Melikov was signed, a bomb thrown by terrorists, cut short the life of the Sovereign.”⁴⁶⁷

The future Tsar Nicholas II described the event as follows: "We were having breakfast in the Anichkov palace, my brother and I, when a frightened servant ran in and said:

"An accident has happened to the Emperor! The heir [the future Tsar Alexander III, Nicholas' father] has given the order that Great Prince Nicholas Alexandrovich (that is, I) should immediately go to the Winter palace. One must not lose time.'

"General Danilov and I ran down, got into a carriage and rushed along Nevsky to the Winter palace. When we were going up the staircase, I saw that all those who met us had pale faces and that there were big red spots on the carpet - when they had carried my grandfather up the staircase, blood from the terrible wounds he had suffered from the explosion had poured out. My parents were already in the study. My uncle and aunt were standing near the window. Nobody said a word. My grandfather was lying on the narrow camp bed on which he always slept. He was covered with the military greatcoat that served as his dressing-gown. His face was mortally pale, it was covered with small wounds. My father led me up to the bed:

"Papa,' he said, raising his voice, 'your sun ray is here.'

"I saw a fluttering of his eyelids. The light blue eyes of my grandfather opened. He tried to smile. He moved his finger, but could not raise his hand and say what he wanted, but he undoubtedly recognized me. Protopresbyter Bazhenov came up to him and gave him Communion for the last time, we all fell on our knees, and the Emperor quietly died. Thus was it pleasing to the Lord."

Ironically, Russia had been saved from a constitution by the bombs of the terrorists...

October 28 / November 10, 2019.

⁴⁶⁷ Ivanov, *op. cit.*, pp. 344-345. In broad daylight, a bomb was thrown at the Tsar's carriage. It injured some of the guards but left him unhurt. Disregarding his personal safety, he left his carriage and was attending to the injured when a second bomb was thrown, fatally wounding him and many others. He was rushed to the Winter Palace where he died in the presence of his grief-stricken family. Both his son, the future Tsar Alexander III, and his grandson, the future Tsar Nicholas II, were present.

35. ST. AUGUSTINE AND THE PELAGIAN CONTROVERSY

It is in the fifth century that the beginning of the future schism between Eastern and Western Christianity, which had such huge consequences for the history of the world, are discernible. We see it in the pretensions to universal leadership that the Roman see begins to have at this time. But we also see it in certain doctrinal controversies in which East and West may not have diverged fundamentally, but which betray different approaches to dogma that were to become more significant over time. The most important of these controversies was over the teaching on free will and grace by the British monk Pelagius, who arrived in Rome in about 380 and in 416 published his main heretical work "On Free Will". He was opposed particularly by St. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo.

"In about 411," writes Alexander Dvorkin, "when Augustine was absent from his city, there arrived there a prominent refugee from Rome. He set off for Palestine and wanted to pay a respectful visit to the noted African bishop. This was the British monk Pelagius, who lived for several years in Rome and acquired there significant popularity as a moralist and spiritual director. He did not succeed in meeting Augustine and departed. After visiting many countries Pelagius settled in Jerusalem, where, unlike Blessed Jerome, he had the most heartfelt good relations with the local clergy: soon a significant group of his spiritual children and followers was gathered. However, his friend, the lawyer Celestine, remained in Carthage; his eloquent defence of the views of Pelagius and criticism of the teaching of Augustine soon created a veritable storm in Africa.

"Pelagius, who was distinguished by the strictness of his life and demanded the same of his disciples, had many followers who set off after him to Palestine. They had to live in accordance with the commandments of God, study the Scriptures, give away their property and strive for holiness. Pelagius sincerely sorrowed over the morals of high Roman society, which took a very light-minded attitude to the challenge of the Gospel. He was profoundly disgusted by the Manichaean-pessimistic view of human nature, which, as it seemed to him, was penetrating more and more into the Church. At that time a commentary on the epistles of St. Paul by an unknown author were widespread in Rome. From the words of St. Paul in the fifth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans (verse 12): 'Therefore, as by one man sin came into the world, and through sin death, so death has passed to all men because in him all have sinned' - the author of the commentary concluded that we have all sinned together in Adam, and not that the passing of sin to Adam's descendants meant that the souls of men come from their parents, just as do their bodies...

"All this was exceptionally distasteful to Pelagius, who wrote his own commentary on the epistles of St. Paul in which he affirmed that we sin voluntarily by imitating the fall of Adam, being corrupted by our external environment and the consequent mistakes that weaken our will. In trying to express his point of view, Pelagius went so far as to deny that original sin is inherited, and affirmed that death is a natural property of man, and that the sin

of Adam changed nothing in the nature of man and that man can be saved without the help of God. Grace is necessary only to point out the way. Human nature is neutral; neither good nor evil is intrinsic to it. Sin is rooted only in our own will. New-born babies are not bearers of evil and sin – we can call them only potentially sinful. From here it is easy to draw the conclusion that the baptism of children is senseless. For justice's sake we must say that Pelagius himself never drew this conclusion, but replied to direct questions that Christ's words that nobody who is not born from on high (i.e. who is unbaptized) can enter the Kingdom of Heaven, apply to children. But, continued Pelagius, it would be absurd to suppose that the merciful Lord could sentence innocent children to hell: probably there must be a third place that they go to.

“Blessed Augustine replied that flesh begets flesh. The reason for this is lust, of which we are all guilty. Sexual relations, said Augustine, are in principle sin, which can only in part be softened by the intention of begetting a child in a lawful marriage.

“In the beginning Augustine wrote very polite letters to Pelagius, refuting his theories, but gradually the polemic became heated. Oil was added to the fire by Jerome, when Pelagius was careless enough to make critical remarks about Jerome's very Origenist interpretations of the Epistle of St. Paul to the Ephesians. It was then that Jerome called Pelagius ‘a fat dog, whose belly is stuffed with Scottish porridge’.

“In 415 Augustine sent Pelagius his young friend from Spain, Orosius. He, on the advice of Jerome, publicly declared in Jerusalem that the doctrines of Pelagius had been condemned as heretical at an African council: in them, he said, original sin and man's need of grace were denied. This stirred up a veritable storm in Palestine, where Pelagius enjoyed great popularity and authority. A council was convened in Jerusalem that justified Pelagius. But in the same year another council was convened in Lydda, at which Pelagius, after elucidating his position, was forced to make significant concessions.

“However, after studying a stenogram of the council, Augustine found Pelagius' repentance incomplete and insincere. He convened his own council in Carthage, at which Pelagianism, in spite of all the concessions made by its founder, was again condemned.

“Then Pelagius appealed to Rome to Pope Zosimas (417-419), and he, deeply impressed by the lofty moral standards of the Pelagians and their unfeigned reverence for the apostolic see, wrote to the Africans that they had apparently paid heed to a distorted exposition of Pelagius' teaching, and that in fact he was completely Orthodox. Africa literally exploded. The Pope was frightened by this reaction and wavered in his decision, while Augustine, using his authority at the emperor's court in Ravenna, obtained, on 30 April 418, an imperial edict on the expulsion of the Pelagians from Rome as presenting a threat to public

peace. Under this pressure the Pope gave in and published an official condemnation of Pelagius and Celestine."⁴⁶⁸

In 419 a Council at Carthage, which has been endorsed by the Eastern Orthodox Church, condemned the heresy, reaffirming Augustine's teaching on original sin. So did Pope Celestine a few years later; he also rebuked Augustine's critics in the West.⁴⁶⁹ These critics included Abbot Valentinus of Hadrumetium, a daughter-foundation of Hippo, who wrote to Augustine warning him "against going to the opposite extreme and thus wholly denying the freedom of the will".⁴⁷⁰ Augustine did not deny the existence of free will⁴⁷¹, but there is no doubt that some of his expressions, taken out of context, could suggest such an extreme.

A subtle and nuanced criticism of St. Augustine, quoting abundantly from the Holy Scriptures but without mentioning Augustine by name, was penned by a disciple of St. John Chrysostom living in Gaul, St. John Cassian. In the thirteenth of his *Conferences*, St. John insists on the *synergetic* cooperation of God's grace and man's free will. For "these things are mixed together and fused so indistinguishably that which is dependent on which is a great question as far as many people are concerned - that is, whether God has mercy on us because we manifest the beginnings of a good will, or we acquire the beginnings of a good will because God is merciful. For many who hold to one of these alternatives and assert it more freely than is right have fallen into different self-contradictory errors.... These two things - that is, the grace of God and free will - certainly seem mutually opposed to one another, but both are in accord, and we understand that we must accept them both in like manner because of our religion, lest by removing one of them from the human being we seem to contravene the rule of the Church's faith. For when God sees us turning in order to will what is good, He comes to us, directs us, and strengthens us... On the other hand, if he sees us unwilling or growing lukewarm, He brings to our hearts salutary exhortations by which a good will may be either repaired or formed in us."⁴⁷²

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⁴⁶⁸ Dvorkin, *op. cit.*, pp. 264-266.

⁴⁶⁹ St. Photius the Great writes: "In the letter of Celestine, bishop of Rome, to Nestorius the same heretics are condemned. Celestine also wrote to the bishops of Gaul in defence of the teaching of St. Augustine and against those who were emboldened to speak rashly by the licence allowed to the heresy." (*Biblioteca*, 53)

⁴⁷⁰ F. Van Der Meer, *Augustine the Bishop*, London: Sheed and Ward, 1961, p. 125.

⁴⁷¹ Thus, writes Fr. Seraphim Rose, "when it was objected to him that 'it is by his own fault that anyone deserts the faith, when he yields and consents to the temptation which is the cause of his desertion of the faith' (as against the teaching that God *determines* a man to desert the faith), Augustine found it necessary to make no reply except: 'Who denies it?' (*On the Gift of Perseverance*, ch. 46)." Again, he writes: "It is our part to believe and to will and His part to give to those who believe and will the ability to do good works through the Holy Spirit". A perfect statement of the Orthodox doctrine of synergy!

⁴⁷² St. John Cassian, *Conference XIII*, New York: Newman Press, 1997, pp. 476, 477-478.

Pelagianism was condemned at the Third Ecumenical Council in Ephesus in 431. Later Orthodox Western councils such as the Council of Orange (529) confirmed Augustine's position while not condemning St. John Cassian's. Moreover, they confirmed his teaching on the inheritance of original sin.⁴⁷³ However, while defeated on the continent, the heresy of Pelagius continued to thrive in Pelagius' homeland of Britain, and in 429 the Gallic bishop, St. Germanus of Auxerre, who was the trainer and instructor of a whole generation of British monks and hierarchs, was invited by the British Orthodox to come to England and help them combat the heresy. He defeated the heresy in council, and even helped the British soldiers to organize a victory over the pagan Saxon invaders (he had been a Roman general before accepting the tonsure). In 447 he came again, accompanied by St. Lupus of Troyes, and perhaps also by St. Patrick.⁴⁷⁴

But the heresy lingered on, especially, probably, in the upper classes of society⁴⁷⁵, and at some time between 545 and 569 the British Church itself convened a Council at Llandewi Brefi to refute the heretics, as told by Rhigyfarch in the eleventh century: "Since even after St. Germanus's second visit of help the Pelagian heresy was recovering its vigour and obstinacy, implanting the poison of a deadly serpent in the innermost regions of our country, a general synod is assembled of all the bishops of Britain. In addition to a gathering of 118 bishops, there was present an innumerable multitude of priests, abbots, clergy of other ranks, kings, princes, lay men and women, so that the very great host covered all the places round about. The bishops confer amongst themselves, saying: 'The multitude present is too great to enable, not only a voice, but even the sound of a trumpet to reach the ears of them all. Almost the entire throng will be untouched by our preaching, and will return home, taking with them the infection of the heresy.' Consequently, it is arranged to preach to the people in the following manner. A mound of garments was to be erected on some rising ground, and one at a time was to preach, standing upon it. Whoever should be endowed with such a gift of preaching that his discourse reached the ears of all that were furthest, he, by common consent, should be made metropolitan and archbishop. Thereupon, a

⁴⁷³ For example, Canons One and Two of the Council of Orange declare: "1. If anyone denies that it is the whole man, that is, both body and soul, that was "changed for the worse" through the offense of Adam's sin, but believes that the freedom of the soul remains unimpaired and that only the body is subject to corruption, he is deceived by the error of Pelagius and contradicts the scripture which says, "The soul that sins shall die" (Ezekiel 18:20); and, "Do you not know that if you yield yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are the slaves of the one whom you obey?" (Romans 6:126); and, "For whatever overcomes a man, to that he is enslaved" (II Peter 2:19).

"2. If anyone asserts that Adam's sin affected him alone and not his descendants also, or at least if he declares that it is only the death of the body which is the punishment for sin, and not also that sin, which is the death of the soul, passed through one man to the whole human race, he does injustice to God and contradicts the Apostle, who says, "Therefore as sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all men sinned" (Romans 5:12).

⁴⁷⁴ See "Svyatitel' Patrikij, Prosvetitel' Irlandii", *Pravoslavnaia Zhizn'*, December, 1999, p. 5.

⁴⁷⁵ In their debates with St. Germanus, the Pelagians are described as "men of obvious wealth" (Constantius of Lyons, *Life of Germanus*, 3.14).

place called Brevi is selected, a lofty mound of garments is erected, and they preach with all their might. But their words scarcely reach those that are nearest, it is as though their throats seem constricted; the people await the Word, but the largest portion does not hear it. One after another endeavours to expound, but they fail utterly. A great crisis arises; and they fear that the people will return home with the heresy uncrushed. 'We have preached,' said they, 'but we do not convince; consequently our labour is rendered useless.' Then arose one of the bishops, named Paulinus, with whom aforesaid, holy Dewi the bishop had studied; 'There is one,' said he, 'who has been made a bishop by the patriarch⁴⁷⁶, who has not attended our synod; a man of eloquence, full of grace, experienced in religion, an associate of angels, a man to be loved, attractive in countenance, magnificent in appearance, six feet in stature. Him I advise you to summon here.'

"Messengers are immediately dispatched, who come to the holy bishop, and announce the reason for their coming. But the holy bishop declined, saying: 'Let no man tempt me. Who am I to succeed where those have failed? I know my own insignificance. Go in peace.' A second and a third time messengers are sent, but not even then did he consent. Finally, the holiest and the most upright men are sent, the brethren, Daniel [Bishop of Bangor in North Wales] and Dubricius [Archbishop of Llandaff]. But the holy bishop Dewi, foreseeing it with prophetic spirit, said to the brethren: 'This day, my brethren, very holy men are visiting us. Welcome them joyfully, and for their meal procure fish in addition to bread and water.' The brethren arrive, exchange mutual greetings and converse about holy things. Food is placed on the table, but they insist that they will never eat a meal in his monastery unless he returns to the synod along with them. To this the saint replied: 'I cannot refuse you; proceed with your meal, we will go together to the synod. But then, I am unable to preach there: I will give you some help, little though it be, with my prayers.'

"So setting forth, they reach the neighbourhood of the synod, and lo, they heard a wailing and lamentation. Said the saint to his companions; 'I will go to the scene of this great lamentation.' But his companions said in reply; 'But let us go to the assembly, lest our delaying grieve those who await us.' The man of God approached the place of the mourning; and lo, there a bereaved mother was keeping watch over the body of a youth, to whom, with barbaric uncouthness, she had given a lengthy name. He comforted and raised the mother, consoling and encouraging her; but she, having heard of his fame, flung herself forward at his feet, begging him with cries of entreaty to take pity on her. Filled with compassion for human weakness, he approached the body of the dead boy, whose face he watered with his tears. At length, the limbs grew warm, the soul returned, and the body quivered. He took hold of the boy's hand and restored him to his mother. But she, her sorrowful weeping turned

⁴⁷⁶ The Patriarch of Jerusalem (probably Elias), who had consecrated David and his companions Teilo and Paternus on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. The patriarch gave David a portable altar as a gift. Today, a very ancient square stone object inscribed with crosses, which could perhaps have served as an altar, can be found today in St. David's cathedral under a large icon of the Prophet Elias.

into tears of joy, then said; 'I believed that my son was dead; let him henceforth live to God and to you.' The holy man accepted the boy, laid on his shoulder the Gospel-book which he always carried in his bosom, and made him go with him to the synod. That boy, afterwards, while life lasted, lived a holy life.

"He then enters the synod; the company of bishops is glad, the multitude is joyful, the whole assembly exults. He is asked to preach, and does not decline the synod's decision. They bid him ascend the mound piled up with garments; and, in the sight of all, a snow-white dove from heaven settled on his shoulder, and remained there as long as he preached. Whilst he preached, with a loud voice, heard equally by those who were nearest and those who were furthest, the ground beneath him grew higher, rising to a hill; and, stationed on its summit, visible to all as though standing on a lofty mountain, he raised his voice until it rang like a trumpet: on the summit of that hill a church is situated. The heresy is expelled, the faith is confirmed in sound hearts, all are of one accord, and thanks are rendered to God and St. David."⁴⁷⁷

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Some modernist twentieth-century Orthodox theologians, such as Fr. John Romanides, have concluded, from Augustine's writings on free will and other issues, that he is the fount and source of all the heresies of the West. This is unjust, to say the least. Augustine was called "holy" at the Fifth Ecumenical Council, and St. Photius the Great "embraced" him spiritually (while accepting that he may have erred at times).⁴⁷⁸ Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that the largely uncritical acclaim in which Augustine came to be held in the West, while not in itself sufficient to create the schism, became one of the main reasons why eastern and western theology diverged during the Middle Ages and the Reformation.

Thus the Roman Catholic Church came to regard St. John Cassian as "semi-Pelagian", that is, "semi-heretical", and Calvin's doctrine of predestination may be construed as a misinterpretation of St. Augustine's writings on free will. Calvin believed that all human beings are assigned by God in a completely arbitrary manner to two categories: the saved and the damned, and that there is nothing that any man can do to take himself out of one category and into the other. "Predestination" for him meant "predetermination" and fatalism; and it involved the denial of the place of freewill in our salvation. Such an error could

⁴⁷⁷ Rhigyfarch's *Life of St. David*, chapters 49-52. Shortly after this Council, says Rhigyfarch, there was another Council, called the Synod of Victory, which "reaffirmed the decisions of its predecessor". The records of these Councils were written down by St. David, but had been lost by the eleventh century. However, from a Breton manuscript we do have seven disciplinary canons attributed to a West British Synod, and another sixteen to "another Council of the Victory of Light [Luci]". It is likely that these Councils are the same as those led by St. David (A.W. Haddan and W. Stubbs, *Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents Relating to Great Britain and Ireland*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1869, 1964, vol. I, pp. 116-120

⁴⁷⁸ So, in modern times, did St. John Maximovich, and his well-known American disciple, Fr. Seraphim Rose.

have been avoided by a reading of St. John Cassian's subtler and more nuanced discussion of the subject.

November 2/15, 2019.

36. RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN THE EARLY CHURCH

In 380 the Emperor St. Theodosius the Great banned overt paganism, declaring: "It is our pleasure that all nations that are governed by our clemency should steadfastly adhere to the religion which was taught by St. Peter to the Romans, which faithful tradition has preserved and which is not professed by the Pontiff Damasus and by Bishop Peter of Alexandria, a man of apostolic holiness. According to the discipline of the Apostles, and the doctrine of the Gospel, let us believe in the sole Deity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, under an equal majesty and a pious Trinity. We authorize the followers of this doctrine to assume the title of Catholic Christians; and as we judge that all others are extravagant madmen, we brand them with the infamous name of heretics, and declare that their conventicles shall no longer usurp the respectable appellation of churches. Besides the condemnation of Divine justice, they must expect to suffer the severe penalties which our authority, guided by heavenly wisdom, shall think proper to inflict upon them."

"In practice," writes Protopresbyter James Thornton, "the religious edicts of Theodosios were never implemented in a comprehensive fashion, since, as historian A.H.M. Jones remarks, 'there were too many pagans or sympathizers with paganism for that', and pagans continued to hold to their religious beliefs, albeit with some measure of discretion to avoid unpleasantness.

"Pagan belief, by itself, was not proscribed or persecuted, nor was the open profession of that belief. Paganism, in the cities especially, thenceforth became more a private philosophical outlook, without a public cult.... [It] remained a significant force for some time, continuing 'overtly in some places for several generations, and secretly for some centuries.' Yet, it clearly was a dying movement."⁴⁷⁹

In 392, however, there was a pagan reaction under the usurpers Eugenius and the general Arbogast in the West while Theodosius was reigning in the East. "The sudden appearance of Eugenius and Arbogast in Italy sparked hopes for a pagan revival. Indeed, this is what was attempted. Eugenius permitted the pagan altar of Victory to be returned to the Senate chamber and 'temples were rapidly restored and rededicated, festivals punctually celebrated, sacrifices correctly performed and the mystery cults revived... At Ostia the temple of Hercules was rebuilt. Furthermore, Arbogast boasted that he would soon stable his horses in the cathedral of the Christians.

"Saint Theodosios, at first reluctant to go to war over the elevation of Eugenius, could not ignore the implications of this direct challenge to his authority and to Christianity. Both sides prepared for war. Saint Theodosios accompanied his army on the march north-west, through Illyricum, to seize the Alpine passes. Then, at a river the Romans called 'Frigidum', now the Vipava

⁴⁷⁹ Thornton, *Pious Kings and Right-Believing Queens*, Belmont, Mass.: Institute for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, 2013, pp. 398-399.

in Slovenia, the two armies met. Prior to leaving, Saint Theodosios had consulted an Egyptian Monk, Saint John of Lycopolis, who prophesied that the Christian army would win a great victory after much bloodshed, but that Saint Theodosios would die in Italy.

“The battle commenced on September 5, 394, with a frenzied assault by the Christians. Huge numbers perished and, by the close of the day, the Christians were thrown back. Eugenius was delighted, assuming that he had won, while there was deep gloom in the Christian camp. Saint Theodosios spent the night in prayer, and had a vision of Saints John and Philip, ‘who bade him take courage’. The following day, the assault was renewed. However, this time Almighty God intervened. Accompanying the Christian army was a wind of cyclone strength, blowing towards the enemy. The forces of Eugenius and Arbogast were blinded by great clouds of dust and their arrows and spears were deflected back towards themselves. It became nearly impossible for the infantry to hold on to its shields in the fierce wind, which pushed them back, while the same wind, catching the backs of the shields of the Christians, pulled them forward into the fray. The enemy line broke and Eugenius was captured, and later executed for treason and apostasy. Arbogast fled into the mountains and, after a few days, overwhelmed with despair, committed suicide. Saint Theodosiu entered Italy in triumph.

“Since the contest had been seen on both sides as a battle between the God of the Christians against the old gods of Rome, the effect on pagan opinion was devastating. Clearly the God of the Christians had decided the victor by direct intervention and many pagans, as a result, were immediately converted to the banner of Christ.”⁴⁸⁰

The decrees and actions of St. Theodosius the Great raise the question of religious freedom in the Roman Empire.

Contrary to what is often thought, the pagan Roman emperors had been in general tolerant of religion. This was for reasons of political expediency – a multi-ethnic and multi-faith population is more easily controlled if all its faiths are respected and legalized. Another motive was superstition. After all, calculated the ruler, the god of this people is more likely to help me if I do not persecute his people... And so in Imperial Rome before Constantine periods of persecution were intermittent and generally short-lived, and directed exclusively at Christians. As Perez Zagorin writes, Rome “was tolerant in practice in permitting the existence of many diverse religious cults, provided their votaries also complied with the worship of the divine emperor as part of the state religion. Unlike Christianity and Judaism, Roman religion had no sacred scriptures and did not depend on any creed, dogmas, or ethical principles. It consisted very largely of participation in cult acts connected with the worship of various deities and spirits that protected the Roman state and

⁴⁸⁰ Thornton, *op. cit.*, pp. 400-401. St. Theodosius died shortly afterwards in Italy, as had been prophesied.

were associated with public, family, and domestic life. At nearly all stages of their history the Romans were willing to accept foreign cults and practices; this de facto religious pluralism is entirely attributable to the polytheistic character of Roman religion and had nothing to do with principles of values sanctioning religious toleration, a concept unknown to Roman society or law and never debated by Roman philosophers or political writers."⁴⁸¹

Christianity introduced a new depth and a new complexity to the question of religious toleration. On the one hand, the Christians, like the Jews, rejected the idea of a multiplicity of gods, and insisted that there was only one name by which men could be saved – that of the One True God, Jesus Christ. This position did not logically imply that Christians wanted to persecute people of other faiths. But the “exclusivism” of Christianity, then as now, was perceived by the pagan-ecumenist majority, whether sincerely or insincerely, as a threat to themselves. On the other hand, the Christians set no value on the forcible conversion of people to the Faith: man, being in the image of God, was free, and could come to God only by his own free will. As the Christian lawyer Tertullian put it: “It does not belong to religion to force people to religion, since it must be accepted voluntarily.”⁴⁸² In his *Barring of Heretics* (ca. 200) Tertullian insisted on the truth of Christianity and declared that heretics could not be called Christians. Nevertheless, he was “opposed to compulsion in religion and stated in other works that ‘to do away with freedom of religion [*libertas religionis*]’ was wrong. While Christians, he said, worship the one God and pagans worship demons, both ‘human and natural law’ ordain that ‘each person may worship whatever he wishes’.”⁴⁸³

However, Tertullian was writing at a time when the Church, as a persecuted minority, clearly benefited from religious toleration. What if the Church herself were to gain political power? After all, the Old Testament Kings were *required* by God to defend the faith of the people *as their first duty*, and the prophets constantly reminded them that they would be judged by God in accordance with their fulfilment or non-fulfilment of this duty. This same duty was taken very seriously by the Byzantine emperors Constantine I, Theodosius I and Justinian I. Constantine is often accused of introducing religious intolerance into the State. However, in accordance with the Edict of Milan and the teaching of his tutor Lactantius, he professed and practiced a policy of religious toleration. For, as he declared: “It is one thing to undertake the contest for immortality voluntarily, another to compel others to do it likewise through fear of punishment.”⁴⁸⁴ While not hiding his Christianity, and characterizing paganism as “superstition”, he allowed the pagans to practise their faith. Thus in 324, just after defeating Licinius and taking control of the Eastern provinces, he wrote: “I wish, for the common good of the empire and of all men, that Thy people should be in peace and remain exempt from troubles. May those who

⁴⁸¹ Zagorin, *How the Idea of Religious Toleration Came to the West*, Princeton University Press, 2004, p. 4.

⁴⁸² Tertullian, *Ad Scapulam*, 2.

⁴⁸³ Zagorin, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

⁴⁸⁴ Lactantius, in Robin Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians*, London: Penguin Books, 1988, p. 637.

are in error joyfully receive the enjoyment of the same peace and tranquillity as the believers, for the sweetness of concord will have the power to correct them also and lead them on the right path." In addition to allowing the pagans to practise their religion, Constantine never excluded them "from the administration of the State: one finds them among the praetorian prefects, the prefects of Rome, the ministers and even the entourage of the Emperor."⁴⁸⁵

Timothy Barnes writes: "Constantine allowed pagans to retain their beliefs, even to build new sacred edifices. But he allowed them to worship their traditional gods only in the Christian sense of that word, not according to the traditional forms hallowed by antiquity. The emperor made the distinction underlying his policy explicit when he answered a petition from the Umbrian town of Hispellum requesting permission to build a temple of the Gens Flavia. Constantine granted the request but specified that the shrine dedicated to the imperial family must never be 'polluted by the deceits of any contagious superstition'. From 324 onwards Constantine constantly evinced official disapproval of the sacrifices and other cultic acts which constituted the essence of Greco-Roman paganism: Christianity was now the established religion of the Roman Empire and its ruler, and paganism should now conform to Christian patterns of religious observance."⁴⁸⁶

Constantine steadily went about his goal of Christianizing the empire, preaching and legislating against the enemies of the faith: by 324 pagan sacrifices had been banned, heresy was illegal, homosexuals were to be burned at the stake, and the official religion of the Empire was Orthodoxy. Constantine also defended the Christians against the Jews. He released all slaves whom the Jews had dared to circumcise, and those Jews who killed their co-religionists for converting to Christianity were executed.⁴⁸⁷

Nevertheless, the bark of the earliest Christian emperors was worse than their bite, and many of their decrees were not executed by local governors. But they had a long-term effect. By the 350s pagan sacrifices were rare. "Heretics were exiled, and Arius's books were burned, just as the anti-Christian treatise of Porphyry was destroyed by imperial order. Constantine's religious policy created an 'atmosphere' of hostility to heresy as much as to paganism."⁴⁸⁸

This raises the question, as Leithart writes: "If religion was a matter of free will, why did Constantine so vigorously oppose paganism in his decrees, letters and speeches, and how could he justify any restrictions on religion at all? If Constantine thought that religion should be free, what was he doing forbidding sacrifice?"

⁴⁸⁵ Pierre Maraval, "La Louve et la Croix" (The She-Wolf and the Cross), *Histoire* (Le Figaro), 8, June-July, 2013, p. 63.

⁴⁸⁶ Barnes, *op. cit.*, pp. 212-213.

⁴⁸⁷ L.A. Tikhomirov, *Religiozno-Filosofskie Osnovy Istorii* (The Religious-Philosophical Foundations of History), Moscow, 1997, p. 340.

⁴⁸⁸ Leithart, *op. cit.*, p. 130.

“Elizabeth Digeser offers terminology and categories that help make sense of Constantine’s policies. She distinguishes forbearance from toleration, and tolerance from ‘concord’. Forbearance is a pragmatic policy, not guided by moral or political principle. Forbearance might change to persecution if political conditions change. The periods of Roman acceptance of Christianity were periods of forbearance. Toleration is ‘disapproval or disagreement coupled with an unwillingness to take action against those viewed with disfavor in the interest of some moral or political principle.’ This principle could arise, as for Lactantius, from a theory concerning the nature of religion, or, alternatively, from a theory about human nature or about the limits of state power. By this definition, toleration does not involve an idea of the equality of all viewpoints but the opposite. Toleration assumes *disapproval* of certain religious expressions but refrains for principled reasons from using state power to suppress the disapproved religion. Beyond toleration, Digeser introduces the category of ‘concord’: ‘(1) its attitude of forbearance is dictated by some moral, political, or even religious principle and (2) it expects that by treating its dissenters with forbearance it is creating conditions under which they will ultimately change their behavior to conform to what the state accepts.’ These three strategies of religious policy build on one another: toleration assumes forbearance on principle, it expects that the forbearance will have the ultimate outcome of unity if not complete uniformity.”⁴⁸⁹

After Constantine, his successor Constantius redirected his hostility towards paganism and heresy against Orthodoxy. In 361 Julian the Apostate, a nephew of Constantine, tried forcibly to turn the clock back to paganism. However, Orthodoxy returned under the Emperor Jovian in 363, and by the end of the fourth century, all paganism and heresy had been outlawed. “Already with the enthronement of Theodosius I (379),” writes Meyendorff, “the measures directed earlier by Constantius II and Valens against the orthodox Nicaeans were turned against the various categories of Arians. Arian meetings were forbidden and their churches were transferred to the catholic bishops. Similar decrees – frequently repeated, denoting obvious difficulties in systematic enforcement – were directed against Apollinarians (who accepted Nicaea, but were at odds with the orthodox Christology of the Cappadocian Fathers, supported by Theodosius), and the older African group of the Donatists. Heretics were also excluded from all State jobs and in general deprived of civil rights. Some categories of dissenters – mainly sectarians, whose groups went back to early Christianity – were treated even more severely: Quattrodecimans, who celebrated Easter at a date different from the one adopted by the Church were punished with exile, whereas the adepts of Gnostic sects were sometimes subjected to the death penalty. It is clear, however, that practical considerations often dictated tolerance towards large and influential groups of heretics. This was the case of the Gothic troops, predominantly Arian, on which the emperor had frequently to rely for his security, and of the various Gothic rulers, who conquered the Western regions of the empire and were not only invested with imperial court title but also remained diplomatic partners until the reconquest

⁴⁸⁹ Liethart, *op. cit.*, pp. 139-140.

of the West by Justinian. The empire was also forced to exercise moderation and use diplomacy with the opponents of the council of Chalcedon (451), who constituted at least half of the population of the East. The numerically small, but intellectually influential group of Nestorians was not as fortunate. After its condemnation by the council of 451, it began a long history of survival, and also missionary expansion throughout Asia."⁴⁹⁰

Judaism was given some toleration. As Meyendorff writes, "If Roman imperial law eventually [under Theodosius I] prohibited paganism, it continued to offer limited protection to the Jews. Not only was their cultic freedom guaranteed, but the disaffection of synagogues was forbidden and their personnel – like the Christian clergy – were exempt of civil and personal charges. Arbitrary violence against Jews was punishable by law. However, since the very beginning of the Christian empire, drastic measures had been taken against Jewish proselytizing among Christians, and baptism of Jews was encouraged. Conversion of Christians to Judaism was prohibited, and Jews molesting a convert to Christianity were to be burnt at the stake.... They were not to own Christian slaves, and were deprived of legal protection if they showed disrespect to Christianity. They were also excluded from the army, the civil services and the legal profession. It does not seem, however, that – before the reign of Heraclius (610-641) – forcible baptisms of Jews were practiced within the Empire, as they began to occur in the barbarian Christian states of the West after the fifth century. The sect of the Samaritans enjoyed a status similar to that of orthodox Jews until the big Samaritan rebellions in Palestine under Justinian, which led to their forcible suppression."⁴⁹¹

Thus the early Christian emperors of the fourth century used the death penalty against some, if not all, categories of heretics. For example, in the late 340s the Donatist Marculus was executed, and in 384 Bishop Priscillian of Avila was executed on a charge of sorcery.⁴⁹² Following St. Paul's assertion that the emperor, as God's minister, does not wield the sword in vain (Romans 13.4), the Church never condemned the death penalty in all circumstances. However, from the early fifth century, and sometimes even earlier, Church writers rejected the idea of killing people for their faith. Thus the Church historian Socrates said: "It is not the custom of the Orthodox Church to persecute"⁴⁹³ And St. Athanasius the Great said: "It is a characteristic of [true] religion not to force but to persuade."⁴⁹⁴ As S.V. Troitsky writes: "Christians are called to freedom (Galatians 5.13), and every religious act of conscious Christians must bear on itself the mark of freedom. The ancient Christian writer Lactantius demonstrated that religion exists only where there is freedom, and disappears where freedom has disappeared, and that it is necessary to defend the truth with words and not with blows (*verbis, non verberibus*)."⁴⁹⁵ "The mystery

⁴⁹⁰ Meyendorff, *op. cit.*, pp. 16-17.

⁴⁹¹ Meyendorff, *op. cit.*, pp. 15-16.

⁴⁹² Jonathan Hill, *Christianity: The First 400 Years*, Oxford: Lion Hudson, 2013, pp. 233, 294.

⁴⁹³ Socrates, *Ecclesiastical History*, VII, 3.

⁴⁹⁴ St. Athanasius, *Against the Arians*, 67; P.G. 25, p. 773.

⁴⁹⁵ Lactantius, *Divine Institutes*, 19.

of salvation,' writes St. Gregory the Theologian, 'is for those who desire it, not for those who are compelled'. The 108th canon of the Council of Carthage cites the law of Honorius that 'everyone accepts the exploit of Christianity by his free choice', and Zonaras in his interpretation of this canon writes: 'Virtue must be chosen, and not forced, not involuntary, but voluntary... for that which exists by necessity and violence is not firm and constant'."⁴⁹⁶

In practice, however, degrees of coercion were applied. Thus shortly after the Second Ecumenical Council, in 383, St. Amphilochius of Iconium, a close friend of St. Basil the Great and St. Gregory the Theologian, "begged the Emperor Theodosius to send impenitent Arians into exile. The Emperor refused – such an edict would be too severe. Shortly after this Theodosius raised his small son Arcadius to the imperial throne, and sat by his side to receive his court. Amphilochius was among those waiting on the Emperor. He approached the throne and saluted Theodosius, but ignored Arcadius. 'The Emperor, thinking this neglect was due to forgetfulness, commanded Arcadius to approach and salute his son. "Sir," said he, "the honour I have paid to you is enough." Theodosius was indignant at this discourtesy, and said, "Dishonour done to my son is a rudeness done to me." "You see, sir, " returned Amphilochius, "that you do not allow your son to be dishonoured, and are bitterly angry with those who are rude to him. God too abominates those who blaspheme the Only begotten Son, and hates them as ungrateful to their Saviour and Benefactor." Theodosius immediately saw the point of the analogy, and issued the Edict of Banishment forthwith."⁴⁹⁷

St. John Chrysostom (+407) preached non-violence to heretics: "Christians above all men are forbidden to correct the stumblings of sinners by force... It is necessary to make a man better not by force but by persuasion. We neither have authority granted us by law to restrain sinners, nor, if it were, should we know how to use it, since God gives the crown to those who are kept from evil, not by force, but by choice."⁴⁹⁸

St. John interpreted the parable of the wheat and the tares to mean that the heretics (the tares) should not be killed. But they were to be resisted in other ways. "As we can see from the many occurrences of the phrase 'stop the mouths of the heretics' in his writings, St. John showed not the slightest indulgence towards false teachings; indeed, much of his life as a preacher was devoted to combating such heretics as the Eunomians, the Judaizers, and the Manichaeans. However, he was resolutely opposed to the use of violence by the authorities to subdue heretics. And it is this reservation of his that must be carefully understood, if one is to grasp what may seem to be a contradictory view of heretics. He knew from pastoral experience that heretics were far more

⁴⁹⁶ Troitsky, *Khristianskaia Philosophia Braka* (The Christian Philosophy of Marriage), Paris: YMCA Press, p. 207.

⁴⁹⁷ Margaret Strachey, *Saints and Sinners of the Fourth Century*, London: William Kimber, 1958, pp. 151=152.

⁴⁹⁸ St. John Chrysostom, quoted by Fr. Antonious Henein, orthodox-tradition@egroups.com, 8 August, 2000.

likely to be turned aside from their errors by prayer: 'And if you pray for the Heathens, you ought of course to pray for Heretics also, for we are to pray for all men, and not to persecute. And this is good also for another reason, as we are partakers of the same nature, and God commands and accepts benevolence towards one another' (*Homilies on the First Epistle to St. Timothy*, 7). Near the end of this homily on the dangers of anathematizing others, he says that 'we must anathematize heretical doctrines and refute impious teachings, from whomsoever we have received them, but show mercy to the men who advocate them and pray for their salvation.' In other words, we must love the heretic, but hate the heresy."⁴⁹⁹

However, it may be wondered whether St. John's words should be interpreted as an absolute ban on any kind of coercion in any circumstances. For there were other prominent and holy Christians contemporary with him who did approve of some measure of coercion in some circumstances. In particular, there was the question of the rights of the Christian emperor. If the Church as an institution or individual Christians could only persuade, not coerce, was it not the task of the emperor to coerce, or at any rate limit the activity of those who refused to be persuaded?

It is significant that no prominent churchman denounced the undoubtedly coercive laws passed against pagans and heretics by the Emperor Theodosius I in 395. Theodosius decreed, writes John Julius Norwich, "that only those who professed the consubstantiality of the Trinity (in other words the Nicene Creed) could be considered *Catholic Christians* – a designation that appears here for the first time. 'All others,' the edict continues, 'we pronounce to be mad and foolish, and we order that they shall bear the ignominious name of heretics, and shall not presume to bestow on their conventicles the title of churches: these are to be visited first by divine vengeance, and secondly by the stroke of our own authority, which we have received in accordance with the will of heaven.'"⁵⁰⁰

As Perez Zagorin writes, Theodosius "proscribed various heresies by name, ordered the confiscation of churches and private houses where heretics met for worship, and deprived them of the right to make wills or receive inheritances. In the case of certain heretical sects [the Manichaeans] he commanded that their members be hunted down and executed. In his attempt to enforce uniformity of belief he also instituted legislation against paganism, including a comprehensive enactment in 395 forbidding anyone of whatever rank of dignity to sacrifice to or worship 'senseless images' constructed 'by human hands', on pain of heavy fines and other penalties. He was likewise the first emperor to impose penalties on Christians who profaned their baptism by reverting to paganism.

⁴⁹⁹ Hieromonk Patapios, "On Caution regarding Anathematization", *Orthodox Tradition*, January, 2000, p. 22.

⁵⁰⁰ Norwich, *op. cit.*, pp. 117-118.

“... All subjects were expected to be worshippers in this [the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic] Church; and in addition to the spiritual and political authority its bishops wielded, it had the power of the state at its disposal to enforce its faith against heretics. The practical toleration and religious pluralism that had formerly been the Roman custom no longer existed. The change that took place is epitomised in an appeal made in 384 by Quintus Aurelius Symmachus – a Roman senator, orator, and prefect of Rome, and a defender of paganism – to the emperors Theodosius I and Valentinian II to restore the altar of the goddess victory to the Senate House (it had been removed by imperial decree after standing there for over 350 years, since the reign of the emperor Augustus at the beginning of the first century). Speaking in the name of the proscribed ancient religion of Rome, Symmachus declared that ‘each nation has its own gods and peculiar rites. The Great Mystery cannot be approached by one avenue alone... Leave us the symbol on which our oaths of allegiance have been sworn for so many generations. Leave us the system which has given prosperity to the State.’ His plea was of no avail, however, for the cross of Christ had conquered the Roman Empire, and the altar of Victory remained banished and abandoned.”⁵⁰¹

Zeal against heretics was, of course, not the exclusive preserve of the emperors and bishops. The lay Christians of Alexandria and the monks of Egypt were famous (or, in some cases, notorious) for their zeal. And when in 388 some Christians burned down the synagogue in Callinicum on the Euphrates, the Emperor Theodosius ordered its rebuilding at the Christians’ expense.

However, St. Ambrose, the famous Bishop of Milan, wrote to him: “When a report was made by the military Count of the East that a synagogue had been burnt down, and that this was done at the instigation of the bishop, you gave command that the others should be punished, and the synagogue be rebuilt by the bishop himself... The bishop’s account ought to have been waited for, for priests are the calmers of disturbances, and anxious for peace, except when even they are moved by some offence against God, or insult to the Church. Let us suppose that the bishop burned down the synagogue... It will evidently be necessary for him to take back his act or become a martyr. Both the one and the other are foreign to your rule: if he turns out to be a hero, then fear lest he end his life in martyrdom; but if he turns out to be unworthy, then fear lest you become the cause of his fall, for the seducer bears the greater responsibility. And what if others are cowardly and agree to construct the synagogue? Then... you can write on the front of the building: ‘This temple of impiety was built on contributions taken from Christians’. You are motivated by considerations of public order. But what is the order from on high? Religion was always bound to have the main significance in the State, which is why the severity of the laws

⁵⁰¹ Zagorin, *op. cit.*, pp. 23, 24. However, Hill argues that it was not Theodosius’ measures but Justinian’s persecution in the sixth century that was “the first really thorough attempt on the part of the Roman authorities to stamp out paganism, and the first time that the various laws against paganism were seriously enforced” (*op. cit.*, p. 301).

must be modified here. Remember Julian, who wanted to rebuild the temple of Jerusalem: the builders were then burned by the fire of God. Do you not take fright at what happened then?... And how many temples did the Jews not burn down under Julian at Gaza, Askalon, Beirut and other places? You did not take revenge for the churches, but now you take revenge for the synagogue!"⁵⁰² "What is more important," he asked, "the parade of discipline or the cause of religion? The maintenance of civil law is secondary to religious interest."⁵⁰³ Ambrose refused to celebrate the Liturgy until the imperial decree had been revoked. Theodosius backed down...

The "Ambrosean" position may be tentatively formulated as follows. On the one hand, in relation to those outside her the Church can herself adopt no coercive measures; she can do no more than reason, plead and threaten with *God's* justice at the Last Judgement. Her only means of "coercion", if it can be called that, is the excommunication of unrepentant Christians from her fold. On the other hand, the Church blesses the Christian State to use other, more physical means of coercion against those over whom she has no more influence. The purpose of this is not to *convert*; for only persuasion can convert, and as St. Basil the Great says, "by violence you can frighten me, but cannot persuade me". But there are other legitimate and Christian purposes for coercion: justice against evildoers, the restriction of their influence, and the protection of the young and weak in mind... But even St. Ambrose never advocated the *execution* of heretics or Jews simply because they believed wrongly.

In general, as we have seen, the Church was against the execution of heretics. And when such rare executions did take place, there was a reaction. Thus when St. Martin of Tours (+397) signed the decision of a Synod condemning the Spanish heretic Priscillian and handing him over to the Emperor for execution, he felt the reproaches of his conscience, and never again attended a Synod of Bishops. St. Ambrose of Milan and Pope Siricus of Rome also protested the execution.⁵⁰⁴

However, we cannot say that the execution of heretics is *absolutely* forbidden by Orthodoxy... In the *Lives of the Saints* we find a few instances of saints blessing the execution of heretics, even of saints who were not secular rulers executing evildoers themselves. Thus in *The Acts of the Apostles* we read how the Apostle Peter in effect executed Ananias and Sapphira. Again, the Apostles Peter and Paul by their prayers brought about the death of Simon Magus. Again, St. Basil the Great prayed for, and obtained, the death of Julian the Apostate (by the sword of St. Mercurius the Great Martyr). And the holy hierarchs Patrick of Ireland and Leo of Catania in effect executed particularly stubborn perverters of the people.

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⁵⁰² St. Ambrose, *Letter 40*, in Fomin and Fomina, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 69.

⁵⁰³ Paul Johnson, *A History of the Jews*, London: Phoenix, 1987, 1995, p. 164.

⁵⁰⁴ Hill, *op. cit.*, pp. 294-295.

Probably none of the early Fathers exercised himself more over the question of religious freedom than St. Augustine, the famous bishop of Hippo, whose influence on western theology was deep and long-lasting. Zagorin writes: "Augustine carried on a long theological combat with three formidable heresies, Manichaeism, Pelagianism, and Donatism. Among his writings against the last of these and its followers, the Donatists, he left an invaluable record of his reflections on the justification of coercion against heretics to enforce religious truth. At the time he became bishop of Hippo, Donatism, which took its name from one of its first leaders, Donatus, bishop of Carthage, had already existed in North Africa for more than eighty years and had undergone considerable persecution. Originating in the early fourth century in an ecclesiastical controversy over a bishop who had [allegedly] compromised with paganism during the persecution by the emperor Diocletian and was therefore considered a betrayer of the faith, the Donatists formed a schismatic and rival church with its own clergy. Rigorists who believed in a church composed exclusively of the holy, they maintained that an unworthy priest could not perform a valid sacrament. By insisting on the rebaptism of converts, the Donatist church declared its rejection of the sacramental character of Catholic baptism. To some extent Donatism represented an expression of social protest against the profane world as a domain ruled by Satan. Its more extreme advocates, a fanatical fringe of zealots and ascetics known as Circumcellions, sought a martyr's death by any means, including suicide; they gathered as bands of marauding peasants who attacked estates and committed other acts of violence. As a self-described church of martyrs, the Donatists condemned the alliance between Catholicism and the Roman authorities as a renunciation of Christ in favour of Caesar, and their bishop Donatus was reported to have said, 'What has the Emperor to do with the Church?' In the course of its history Donatism became a considerable movement, although it remained largely confined to North Africa.

"In his numerous writings against this heresy, one of Augustine's constant aims was to persuade its followers by means of reason and arguments to abandon their errors and return to the Catholic Church. He did his best to refute its doctrines in a number of treatises and at first opposed any use of coercion against these heretics. A lost work of 397 repudiated coercion, and in an undated letter to a Donatist churchman he wrote: "I do not intend that anyone should be forced into the Catholic communion against his will. On the contrary, it is my aim that the truth may be revealed to all who are in error and that... with the help of God, it may be made manifest so as to induce all to follow and embrace it of their own accord.' To several Donatists he wrote in around 398 that those who maintain a false and perverted opinion but without 'obstinate ill will' - and especially those 'who have not originated their error by bold presumption' but received it from their parents or others, and who see truth with a readiness to be corrected when they have found it - are not to be included among heretics. The heretic himself, however, 'swollen with hateful pride and with the assertion of evil contradiction, is to be avoided like a mad man'.

“Nevertheless, Augustine eventually reversed his position and decided to endorse coercion. Looking back at this development some years later, he said that at first he had believed that no one should be forced into the unity of Christ, and that the Church should rely only on speaking, reasoning, and persuasion ‘for fear of making pretended Catholics out of those whom we knew as open heretics’. But then proven facts caused him to give up this opinion when he saw Donatists in his own city ‘converted to Catholic unity by the fear of imperial laws’ and those in other cities recalled by the same means. Reclaimed Donatists, he contended, were now grateful that ‘fear of the laws promulgated by temporal rulers who serve the Lord in fear has been so beneficial’ to them.

“We first learn of Augustine’s change of mind in the treatise he wrote (ca. 400) as a reply to a letter by the Donatist bishop Parmenian, a leading spokesman of the movement. In this work he justified the intervention of the imperial government against the Donatists by making Saint Paul’s theology of the state, as the apostle outlined it in the thirteenth chapter of his letter to the Romans (Romans 13.1-7). There Paul instructed Christians to be obedient to the higher powers as the minister ordained by God and armed with the sword for the repression of evildoers. In the light of this apostolic teaching, Augustine insisted that the emperors and the political authorities had the God-given right and duty to crush the sacrilege and schism of the Donatists, since they were as obligated to repress a false and evil religion as to prevent the crime of pagan idolatry. He further pointed out that the Donatists were guilty of many cruelties and had themselves appealed to the emperors in the past against the dissidents in their own church. Denying that those of them condemned to death were martyrs, he described them instead as killers of souls and, because of their violence, often killers of bodies.

“One of the arguments he put forward in defense of force in this work was his interpretation of Jesus’ parable of the tares in the Gospel of Matthew (Matthew 13.24-30). This famous text was destined to be cited often during subsequent centuries in discussions of toleration and persecution, and to occupy a prominent place in the tolerationist controversies of the era of the Protestant Reformation. The parable first likens the kingdom of heaven to a good seed and then relates how a man sowed good seed in the ground, whereupon his enemy came in the night and planted tares, or weeds, there as well. When the wheat appeared, so did the tares. The man’s servants asked their master if they should pull up the tares, but he forbade them lest they also uproot the wheat. He ordered that both should be left to grow until the harvest, and then the reapers would remove and burn the tares and gather the wheat into the barn. The parable’s point would seem to be that good people and sinners alike should be allowed to await the Last Judgement to receive their due, when God would reward the good with the kingdom of heaven and punish the bad with the flames of hell. Augustine, however, drew from it a very different lesson: if the bad seed is known, it should be uprooted. According to his explanation, the only reason the master left the tares to grow until the harvest was the fear that uprooting them sooner would harm the grain. When

this fear does not exist because it is evident which is the good seed, and when someone's crime is notorious and so execrable that it is indefensible, then it is right to use severe discipline against it, for the more perversity is corrected, the more carefully charity is safeguarded. With the help of this interpretation, which reversed the parable's meaning, Augustine was able not only to justify the Roman government's repression of the Donatists but to provide a wider reason for religious persecution by the civil authorities.

“Augustine elaborated his position in favour of coercion in religion in a number of letters. In a lengthy epistle to the Donatist Vincent, he argued for the utility of coercion in inducing fear that can bring those who are subject to it to the right way of thinking. Maintaining that people could be changed for the better through the influence of fear, he concluded that ‘when the saving doctrine is added to useful fear’, then ‘the light of truth’ can drive out ‘the darkness of error’. To reinforce this view, he quoted the parable of the feast in the Gospel of Luke (Luke 14. 21-23), another of the texts that was to figure prominently in future tolerationist controversy. In this parable, a man prepared a great feast to which he invited many guests who failed to appear. After summoning from the city the poor, blind, and lame to come and eat, he found that room still remained, so he ordered his servants to ‘go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in [*compelle intrare* in the Latin Vulgate], that My house may be filled’. ‘Do you think,’ Augustine asked in a comment on this passage, ‘that no one should be forced to do right, when you read that the master of the house said to his servants, “Whomever you find, compel them to come in”’. He referred also to the example of the conversion of the apostle Paul, who ‘was forced by the great violence of Christ’s compulsion to acknowledge and hold the truth’ (Acts 9.3-18). The main point, he claimed, was not whether anyone was forced to do something, but whether the purpose of doing so was right or wrong. While no one could be made good against his will, the fear of punishment could persuade a person to repudiate a false doctrine and embrace the truth he had previously denied, as had happened to many Donatists who had thankfully become Catholics and now detested their diabolical separation.

“In dealing with heresy, Augustine thus laid great stress on what might be called the pedagogy of fear to effect a change of heart. He did not see coercion and free will as opposites in religious choice but claimed that fear plays a part in spontaneous acts of the will and may serve a good end. In one of his most important statements on the subject, contained in a letter of 417 to Boniface, the Roman governor of Africa, he propounded a distinction between two kinds of persecution. ‘[T]here is an unjust persecution,’ he said, ‘which the wicked inflict on the Church of Christ, and ... a just persecution which the Church of Christ inflicts on the wicked.’ The Church persecutes from love, the Donatists from hatred; the Church in order to correct error, the Donatists to hurl men into error. While the Church strives to save the Donatists from perdition, the latter in their fury kill Catholics to feed their passion for cruelty. Augustine was convinced that the coercion of heretics was therefore a great mercy because it rescued them from lying demons so that they could be healed in the Catholic

fold. He rejected the objection of those who said that the apostles had never called upon the kings of the earth to enforce religion, since in the apostles' time there had been no Christian emperor to whom they could appeal. It was necessary and right, however, for kings to forbid and restrain with religious severity actions contrary to God's commandments, and to serve God by sanctioning laws that commanded goodness and prohibited its opposite.

"While admitting that it was better to lead people to the worship of God by teaching than to force them through fear of suffering, Augustine nevertheless averred that the latter way could not be neglected. Experience proved, he claimed, that for many heretics it had been a blessing to be driven out by fear of bodily pain to undergo instruction in the truth and then follow up with actions what they had learned in words. Schismatics, he noted, protested that men have freedom to believe or not to believe, and that Christ never used force on anyone. To this objection he countered with his previous argument that Christ had first compelled Paul to cease his persecution of the Christian Church by striking him blind at his conversion and only then taught him. 'It is a wonderful thing,' he said, 'how he [Paul] who came to the gospel under the compulsion of bodily suffering labored more in the gospel than all the others who were called by words alone.' Once again he drew on the injunction *compelle intrare* in the Gospel of Luke to affirm that the Catholic Church was in accord with God when it compelled heretics and schismatics to come in. In other letters he denied that the 'evil will' should be left to its freedom, and cited not only this same parable and the example of Christ's compulsion of Paul, but also God's restraint of the Israelites from doing evil and compelling them to enter the land of promise (Exodus 15.22-27), as proof of the Church's justice in using coercion.

"Although after his change of mind Augustine consistently approved the policy of subjecting heretics to coercion, he never desired that they should be killed. In writing to Donatists, he often stated that he and his brethren loved them and acted for their good, and that if they hated the Catholic Church, it was because 'we do not allow you to go astray and be lost'. Donatists had been subject to previous imperial legislation against heresy, but between 405 and 410 the emperor Honorius decreed a number of heavy penalties against them that put them outside the protection of the law for their seditious actions; he ordered their heresy to be put down in 'blood and proscription'.⁵⁰⁵ Augustine frequently interceded with the Roman authorities to spare their lives. In 408 he wrote to the proconsul of Africa urging Christian clemency and praying that though heretics [should] be made to feel the effect of the laws against them, they should not be put to death, despite deserving the extreme punishment, in the hope that they might be converted. To another high official he pleaded in

⁵⁰⁵ "In January 412 Emperor Honorius officially banned Donatism. The members of the sect had to pay fines, whose amount was determined by their social and property status, and the clergy were exiled, while their church property was confiscated. The Berber Donatists organized a series of final bloody attacks on Catholic churches, and Augustine recognized that the problem of insincere conversions was not as serious as he previously thought" (Dvorkin, *Ocherki po Istorii Vselenskoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi*, p. 262) (V.M.).

behalf of some Donatists tried for murder and other violent acts that they should be deprived of their freedom but not executed that they might have the chance to repent.

“Although repression weakened Donatism, it failed to eliminate this deeply rooted heresy, which survived until the later seventh century when the Islamic conquest of North Africa destroyed every form of Christianity in this region. In the course of his career, Augustine, who was not only an outstanding thinker but a man of keen and sensitive conscience, wrestled strenuously with the problem of heresy and the achievement of Catholic unity by the use of coercion... ‘Pride’, he once wrote, ‘is the mother of all heretics,’ and fear could break down this pride and thus act as an auxiliary in the process of conversion. Whether the heretic was really sincere in professing a change of mind under the threat of bodily pain was a question that could best be left to God. Augustine certainly did not recommend the death penalty for heretics but strove tirelessly to save their souls from eternal perdition. He supported their repression by the Roman imperial government in the hope of restoring them to the Catholic Church, and because, as he said in a letter to some Donatists, ‘nothing can cause more complete death to the soul than freedom to disseminate error’.”⁵⁰⁶

But if freedom to disseminate error should be restricted, this did not mean that the truth could be known in any other mode than in freedom. As we have seen, several bishops were shocked by the execution of the heretic Priscillian in the late fourth century. For, as St. Maximus the Confessor said, “the mystery of salvation is for those who desire it, not for those who are being coerced”.⁵⁰⁷ And again he said: "I do not want heretics to be tortured, and I do not rejoice in their misfortunes, God forbid! I counsel you to do good attentively and fervently to all men and that all believers should be everything for those in need. But at the same time I say: one must not help heretics and confirm them in their mad beliefs. Here it is necessary to be sharp and irreconcilable. For I do not call it love, but hatred, and a falling away from Divine love, when someone confirms heretics in their error to the inescapable destruction of these people."

November 14/27, 2019.

⁵⁰⁶ Zagorin, *op. cit.*, pp. 26-32, 33.

⁵⁰⁷ St. Maximus, *P.G.* 90.880.

37. THE ORIGINS OF GERMAN NATIONALISM

“The idea of the nation as a political-cultural expression,” write Sebag Sebastian Montefiore, “had been propagated by the French Revolution, yet ironically it was the war of liberation against Napoleon that had really legitimized nationalism as the authentic spirit of a people.”⁵⁰⁸

In his book *The Idea of Nationalism* (1944), Hans Kohn, a Zionist of Czech-German background, made an important distinction between two dominant categories of nationalism – French-style, or Western European nationalism, and German-style, or Central and East European nationalism.

These two types of nationalism have been summarized by Shlomo Sand as follows: “Western nationalism, with an essentially voluntarist approach, which developed on either side of the Atlantic Ocean, bounded on the east by Switzerland; and the organic national identity that spread eastward from the Rhine, encompassing Germany, Poland, the Ukraine and Russia.

“Nationalism in the West, except in Ireland, is an original phenomenon that sprang from autochthonous sociopolitical forces, without outside intervention. In most cases it appears when the state, which is engaged in modernization, is well established or is being established. This nationalism draws its ideas from the traditions of the Renaissance and the Age of Enlightenment, and its principles are based on individualism and liberalism, both legal and political. The hegemonic class that engenders this national consciousness is a powerful, secular bourgeoisie, and it constructs civil institutions with political power that play a decisive role in the formation of liberal democracy. It is a self-confident bourgeoisie, and the national politics it fosters tend generally toward openness and inclusiveness. Becoming a citizen of the United States, Britain, France, the Netherlands or Switzerland depends not only on origin and birth but also on the will to join. For all the differences between national perceptions, anyone naturalized in these countries is seen, legally and ideologically, as a member of the nation, with the state as the common property of the citizenry.

“According to Kohn, the nationalism that developed in Central and Eastern Europe (the Czech case being something of an exception) was, by contrast, a historical product catalyzed principally from outside. It came into being during Napoleon’s conquests and began to take shape as a movement of resistance against the ideas and progressive values of the Enlightenment. In these countries, the national idea arose before, and in fact was unconnected with, the consolidation of a modern state apparatus. In these political cultures the middle classes were weak, and the civil institutions they founded were deferential toward the central and aristocratic authorities...”⁵⁰⁹

⁵⁰⁸ Montefiore, *The Romanovs*, London: Wedenfeld and Nicolson, 2016, p. 371.

⁵⁰⁹ Sand, *The Invention of the Jewish People*, London: Verso, 2009, pp. 46-47.

German-style nationalism was deeply influenced by Romanticism; in fact, it may be called the collective analogue of Romantic individualism. For, as M.S. Anderson writes: "From one point of view, to be a romantic was to stress the individual and the unique, genius, originality, spontaneity. Yet at the same time the romantic sense of history emphasized the impossibility of escaping completely from the past and asserted that the development of human institutions was continuous, not something that proceeded by jumps. Moreover the populism which some of the more politically radical romantics affected, like the organic conception of the state and the emphasis on corporate bodies and peasant communities which appealed to others, did not square easily with assertive individualism."⁵¹⁰

"For Byronic romantics," writes Berlin, "'I' is indeed an individual, the outsider, the adventurer, the outlaw, he who defies society and accepted values, and follows his own - it may be to his doom, but this is better than conformity, enslavement to mediocrity. But for other thinkers 'I' becomes something much more metaphysical. It is a collective - a nation, a Church, a Party, a class, an edifice in which I am only a stone, an organism of which I am only a tiny living fragment. *It* is the creator; I myself matter only in so far as I belong to the movement, the race, the nation, the class, the Church; I do not signify as a true individual within this super-person to whom my life is organically bound. Hence German nationalism: I do this not because it is good or right or because I like it - I do it because I am a German and this is the German way to live. So also modern existentialism - I do it because I commit myself to this form of existence. Nothing makes me; I do not do it because it is an objective order which I obey, or because of universal rules to which I must adhere; I do it because I create my own life as I do; being what I am, I give it direction and I am responsible for it. Denial of universal values, this emphasis on being above all an element in, and loyal to, a super-self, is a dangerous moment in European history, and has led to a great deal that has been destructive and sinister in modern times; this is where it begins, in the political ruminations and theories of the earliest German romantics and their disciples in France and elsewhere."⁵¹¹

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In its early stages Kant, Hegel and Goethe had all praised the Revolution; and Kant's disciple, Johann Gottlieb Fichte, had even declared that "henceforth the French Republic alone can be the country of the Just". Friedrich Schlegel did not see France and Germany as rivals, but wanted "a relationship of mutual cooperation and fulfillment. Novalis too wanted to overcome national rivalries in a Christian Europe. The magazine *Europa* (1803-5) was also dedicated to the

⁵¹⁰ Anderson, *The Ascendancy of Europe, 1815-1914*, London: Longman, 1985, p. 337.

⁵¹¹ Berlin, "My Intellectual Path", *The Power of Ideas*, pp. 10-11.

same end. It was edited by Friedrich Schlegel, whose brother August Wilhelm spoke of 'European patriotism'.⁵¹²

Even Prussia's overwhelming defeat by Napoleon at Jena in 1806 did not immediately dim the Germans' enthusiasm for their conqueror. Hegel called him "that world spirit", and the Swiss historian Johannes von Müller declared: "I see that God has given [Napoleon] dominion over the world; never has that been clearer to me than in this war." And his worship of Napoleon led to him being made secretary of state for Westphalia in 1807.⁵¹³

However, in the same year of 1807 there began one of the decisive, truly revolutionary turning-points in the history of ideas, when the secular, rationalist cult of the nation on the French model acquired an irrational, quasi-religious, Germanic Romantic passion that was, over the next century and more, to set much of Europe on fire. The cause was undoubtedly, as Zamoyski writes, the same event that had elicited Hegel's and von Müller's eulogies - "Napoleon's crushing defeat of the Prussians at the Battle of Jena in 1806. The humiliation of seeing the prestigious army created by the great Frederick trounced by the French led to painful self-appraisal and underlined the need for regeneration. But it also stung German pride and dispelled the last shreds of sympathy for France - and, with them, the universalist dreams of the previous decade."⁵¹⁴

The origins of Fascist nationalism go back to this reaction against the French revolution that took place in Germany after Napoleon had marched through it as a conquering and destroying hero... Against the French insistence that they were "the great nation", the universal nation, and therefore were allowed to impose themselves on all others, the Germans defended the uniqueness and holiness of their own nation. Their reaction was born of *wounded pride*, victimhood, a "form of collective humiliation", in Sir Isaiah Berlin's words.⁵¹⁵

The reaction began with a powerful movement for reform in the army. As Philip Bobbitt writes, "The Prussian military reforms from 1807 on were designed to effect this change. Here it is enough to say that the Prussian force that fought from 1813 onward waged war with the same patriotic motivation as that which inspired the French. As Clausewitz wrote, it was 'a war of the people'⁵¹⁶... In 1809 the playwright Heinrich von Kleist called Napoleon "a spirit of destruction who rises from hell"⁵¹⁷, and the Germans were now prepared to reply to violence with violence... The German Masons also changed. As Tikhomirov writes, "having betrayed their fatherland at first, they

⁵¹² Dietrich von Engelhardt, "Romanticism in Germany" in Roy Porter and Mikulas Teich (eds.), *Romanticism in National Context*, Cambridge University Press, 1988, p. 117.

⁵¹³ Von Müller, in Cohen and Major, *Quotations in History*, London: Cassell, 2004, p. 534.

⁵¹⁴ Zamoyski, *Holy Madness*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1999, p. 166.

⁵¹⁵ Berlin, "The Bent Twig: On the Rise of Nationalism", *The Crooked Timber of Humanity*, London: John Murry, p. 245.

⁵¹⁶ Bobbitt, *The Shield of Achilles*, London: Penguin, 2002, p. 539.

⁵¹⁷ Von Kleist, in Cohen and Major, *op. cit.*

raised their voices against the French, by virtue of which the German national movement arose"⁵¹⁸...

But the decisive factor was that the Germans at last found a voice, a prophetic voice sounding in the wilderness of German defeat. This was the voice of Fichte in *Addresses to the German Nation* (1807), which used Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones to describe the future regeneration of Germany: "Although the bones of our national unity... may have bleached and dried in the storms and rains and burning suns of several centuries, yet the reanimating breath of the spirit world has not ceased to inspire. It will yet raise the dead bones of our national body and join them bone to bone so that they shall stand forth grandly with a new life... No man, no god, nothing in the realm of possibility can help us, but we alone must help ourselves, as long as we deserve it..."⁵¹⁹

Fichte's quest for resurrection for the German nation owed less to the resurrection of Christian faith than to the resurrection of paganism, and of the myths of the pagan German gods; whose final burial would come over a century later, in the ruins of Nazi Berlin...

Joseph Görres described this pagan creed as follows: "Let the nation learn to trace itself to its source, delve into its roots: it will find in its innermost being a fathomless well-spring which rises from subterranean treasure; many minds have already been enriched by drawing on the hoard of the Niebelungen; and still it lies there inexhaustible, in the depths of its lair..."⁵²⁰

"Fichte," writes Paul Johnson, "was much impressed by Niccolò Machiavelli and saw life as a continuing struggle for supremacy among the nations. The nation-state most likely to survive and profit from this struggle was the one which extended its influence over the lives of its people most widely. And such a nation-state - Germany was the obvious example - would naturally be expansive. 'Every nation wants to disseminate as widely as possible the good points which are peculiar to it. And, in so far as it can, it wants to assimilate the entire human race to itself in accordance with an urge planted in men by God, an urge on which the community of nations, the friction between them, and their development towards perfection rest.'

"This was a momentous statement because it gave the authority of Germany's leading academic philosopher to the proposition that the power impulse of the state was both natural and healthy, and it placed the impulse in the context of a moral world view. Fichte's state was totalitarian and expansive, but it was not revolutionary. Its 'prince' ruled by hereditary divine right. But 'the prince belongs to his nation just as wholly and completely as it belongs to

⁵¹⁸ Tikhomirov, *Monarkhicheskaia Gosudarstvennost'* (Monarchical Statehood), St. Petersburg, 1992, p. 455.

⁵¹⁹ Cohen and Major, *op. cit.*, p. 535.

⁵²⁰ Cohen and Major, *op. cit.*, p. 535.

him. Its destiny under divine providence is laid in his hands, and he is responsible for it.' So the prince's public acts must be moral, in accordance with law and justice, and his private life must be above reproach. In relations between states, however, 'there is neither law nor justice, only the law of strength. This relationship places the divine, sovereign fights of fate and of world rule in the prince's hands, and it raises him above the commandments of personal morals and into a higher moral order whose essence is contained in the words, *Salus et decus populi suprema lex esto.*' This was an extreme and menacing statement that justified any degree of ruthlessness by the new, developing nation-state in its pursuit of self-determination and self-preservation. The notion of a 'higher moral order', to be determined by the state's convenience, was to find expression, in the 20th century, in what Lenin called 'the Revolutionary Conscience' and Hitler 'the Higher Law of the Party'. Moreover, there was no doubt what kind of state Fichte had in mind. It was not only totalitarian but German. In his *Addresses to the German Nation* (1807), he laid down as axiomatic that the state of the future can only be the national state, in particular the German national state, the German Reich."⁵²¹

The link between Fichte's egoistic metaphysics and his nationalism was indicated by Bertrand Russell. Fichte was also an idealist philosopher, who "carried subjectivism to a point which seems almost to involve a kind of insanity. He holds that the Ego is the only reality, and that it exists because it posits itself; the non-Ego, which has a subordinate reality, also exists only because the Ego posits it... The Ego as a metaphysical concept easily became confused with the empirical Fichte; since the Ego was German, it followed that the Germans were superior to all other nations. 'To have character and to be a German,' says Fichte, 'undoubtedly mean the same thing'. On this basis he worked out a whole philosophy of nationalistic totalitarianism, which had great influence in Germany"⁵²².

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"As the revolution progressed," writes Zamoyski, "the feeling grew in Germany that the French, with their habitual shallowness, had got it all wrong. They had allowed the pursuit of liberty to degenerate into mob rule and mass slaughter of innocent people because they perceived liberty in mechanical terms. German thinkers were more interested in 'real liberty', and many believed that it was the 'corrupt' nature of the French that had doomed the revolution to failure. Such conclusions allowed for a degree of smugness, suggesting as they did that the French Enlightenment, for all its brilliance, had been flawed, while German intellectual achievements had been more profound and more solid.

⁵²¹ Johnson, *The Birth of the Modern, World Society 1815-1830*, London: Phoenix, 1992, pp. 810-811.

⁵²² Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy*, London: Allen & Unwin, 1946, pp. 744-745.

“Fichte identified Germany’s greatness as lying in her essentially spiritual destiny. She would never stoop to conquer others, and while nations such as the French, the English or the Spanish scrambled for wealth and dominance, Germany’s role was to uphold the finest values of humanity.⁵²³ Similar claims to a moral mission for Germany were made by Herder, Hölderlin, Schlegel and others...

“It had been central to Herder’s argument that each nation, by virtue of its innate character, had a special role to play in the greater process of history. One after another, nations ascended the world stage to fulfil their ordained purpose. The French were crowding the proscenium, but there was a growing conviction that Germany’s time was coming, and her destiny was about to unfold. The Germans certainly seemed ready for it. The country was awash with under-employed young men, and since the days of the proto-romantic movement of *Sturm und Drang* the concept of action, both as a revolt against stultifying rational forces and as a transcendent act of self-assertion, had become well established. Fichte equated virtually any action, provided it was bold and unfettered, with liberation.

“The problem was that the nation was still not properly constituted. Some defined it by language and culture, or, like Fichte, by a level of consciousness. The Germans were, according to him, more innately creative than other nations, being the only genuine people in Europe, an *Urvolk*, speaking the only authentic language, *Ursprache*. Others saw the nation as a kind of church, defined by the ‘mission’ of the German people. Adam Müller affirmed that this mission was to serve humanity with charity, and that any man who dedicated himself to this common purpose should be considered a German. In his lectures of 1806, Fichte made the connection between committed action and nationality. Those who stood up and demonstrated their vitality were part of the *Urvolk*, those who did not were un-German. Hegel saw the people as a spiritual organism, whose expression, the collective spirit or *Volksgeist*, was its validating religion. The discussion mingled elements of theology, science and metaphysics to produce uplifting and philosophically challenging confusion.

“But in the absence of clear geographical or political parameters, Germany’s national existence was ultimately dependent on some variant of the racial concept. And this began to be stated with increasing assertiveness. ‘In itself every nationality is a completely closed and rounded whole, a common tie of blood relationship unites all its members; all... must be of one mind and must stick together like one man’, according to Joseph Görres, who had once been an enthusiastic internationalist. ‘This instinctive urge that binds all members into a whole is a law of nature which takes preference over all artificial contracts...

⁵²³ Thus Fichte said: “The genius of foreigners will be like the amiable hummingbird [or] the industrious and skilful bee which gathers in the honey... but the German spirit will be the eagle which will lift his heavy body on powerful wings and, through a long and exciting flight, climbs ever higher and higher towards the sun” (*Addresses to the German Nation*). (V.M.)

The voice of nature in ourselves warns us and points to the chasm between us and the alien’.

“The location and identification of this ‘closed and rounded whole’ involved not just defining German ethnicity, but also delving into the past in search of a typically German and organic national unit to set against the old rationalist French view of statehood based on natural law and the rights of man. The bible of this tendency was Tacitus’s *Germania*. Placed in its own time, this book is as much about Rome as about Germanic tribes. It imagines the ultimate non-Rome, a place that had not been cleared and cultivated, and a people innocent of the arts of industry and leisure. The forest life it describes is the antithesis to the classical culture of Rome. It is also in some ways the original noble savage myth, representing everything that decadent Rome had lost; beneath Tacitus’s contempt for the savage denizens of the forest lurks a vague fear that by gaining in civilization the Romans had forfeited certain rugged virtues.

“The German nationalists picked up this theme, which mirrored their relation to French culture. Roma and Germania, the city and the forest, corruption and purity, could stand as paradigms for the present situation. The ancient Teutonic hero Arminius (Hermann) had led the revolt of the German tribes against Rome and defeated the legions in the Teutoburg Forest. His descendants who aspired to throw off the ‘Roman’ universalism of France could take heart.”⁵²⁴

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Dostoyevsky developed this theme of the age-old opposition between Germany and Rome, of the perpetual revolt of the former against the latter: “Germany’s aim is one; it existed before, always. It is her *Protestantism* – not that single formula of Protestantism which was conceived in Luther’s time, but her continual Protestantism, her continual protest against the Roman world, ever since Arminius, – against everything that was Rome and Roman in aim, and subsequently – against everything that was bequeathed by ancient Rome to the new Rome and to all those peoples who inherited from Rome her idea, her formula and element; against the heir of Rome and everything that constitutes this legacy...

“Ancient Rome was the first to generate the idea of the universal unity of men, and was the first to start thinking of (and firmly believing in) putting it practically into effect in the form of universal empire. However, this formula fell before Christianity – the formula but not the idea. For this idea is that of European mankind; through this idea its civilization came into being; for it alone mankind lives.

“Only the idea of the universal Roman empire succumbed, and it was replaced by a new ideal, also universal, of a communion in Christ. This new

⁵²⁴ Zamoycki, *op. cit.*, pp. 162, 163-165.

ideal bifurcated into the Eastern ideal of a purely spiritual communion of men, and the Western European, Roman Catholic, papal ideal diametrically opposed to the Eastern one.

“This Western Roman Catholic incarnation of the idea was achieved in its own way, having lost, however, its Christian, spiritual foundation and having replaced it with the ancient Roman legacy. [The] Roman papacy proclaimed that Christianity and its idea, without the universal possession of lands and peoples, are not spiritual but political. In other words, they cannot be achieved without the realization on earth of a new universal Roman empire now headed not by the Roman emperor but by the Pope. And thus it was sought to establish a new universal empire in full accord with the spirit of the ancient Roman world, only in a different form.

“Thus, we have in the Eastern ideal – first, the spiritual communion of mankind in Christ, and thereafter, in consequence of the spiritual unity of all men in Christ and as an unchallenged deduction therefrom – a just state and social communion. In the Roman interpretation we have a reverse situation: first it is necessary to achieve firm state unity in the form of a universal empire, and only after that, perhaps, spiritual fellowship under the rule of the Pope as the potentate of this world.

“Since that time, in the Roman world this scheme has been progressing and changing uninterruptedly, and with its progress the most essential part of the Christian element has been virtually lost. Finally, having rejected Christianity spiritually, the heirs of the ancient Roman world likewise renounced [the] papacy. The dreadful French revolution has thundered. In substance, it was but the last modification and metamorphosis of the same ancient Roman formula of universal unity. The new formula, however, proved insufficient. The new idea failed to come true. There even was a moment when all the nations which had inherited the ancient Roman tradition were almost in despair. Oh, of course, that portion of society which in 1789 won political leadership, i.e. the bourgeoisie, triumphed and declared that there was no necessity of going any further. But all those minds which by virtue of the eternal laws of nature are destined to dwell in a state of everlasting universal fermentation seeking new formulae of some ideal and a new word indispensable to the progress of the human organism, - they all rushed to the humiliated and the defrauded, to all those who had not received their share in the new formula of universal unity proclaimed by the French revolution of 1789. These proclaimed a new word of their own, namely, the necessity of universal fellowship not for the equal distribution of rights allotted to a quarter, or so, of the human race, leaving the rest to serve as raw material and a means of exploitation for the happiness of that quarter of mankind, but, on the contrary – for universal equality, with each and every one sharing the blessings of this world, whatever these may prove. It was decided to put this scheme into effect by resorting to *all* means, i.e., not by the means of Christian civilisation – without stopping at anything.

“Now, what has been Germany’s part in this, throughout these two thousand years? The most characteristic and essential trait of this great, proud and peculiar people – ever since their appearance on the historical horizon – consisted of the fact that they never consented to assimilate their destiny and their principles to those of the outermost Western world, i.e. the heirs of the ancient Roman tradition. The Germans have been *protesting* against the latter throughout these two thousand years. And even though they did not (never did so far) utter ‘their word’, or set forth their strictly formulated ideal in lieu of the ancient Roman idea, nevertheless, it seems that, within themselves, they always were convinced that they were capable of uttering this ‘new word’ and of leading mankind. They struggled against the Roman world as early as the times of Arminius, and during the epoch of Roman Christianity they, more than any other nation, struggled for the sovereign power against the new Rome.

“Finally, the Germans protested most vehemently, deriving their formula of protest from the innermost spiritual, elemental foundation of the Germanic world: they proclaimed the freedom of inquiry, and raised Luther’s banner. This was a terrible, universal break: the formula of protest had been found and filled with a content; even so it still was a negative formula, and the new, *positive* word was not yet uttered.

“And now, the Germanic spirit, having uttered this ‘new word’ of protest, as it were, fainted for a while, quite parallel to an identical weakening of the former strictly formulated unity of the forces of his adversary. The outermost Western world, under the influence of the discovery of America, of new sciences and new principles, sought to reincarnate itself in a new truth, in a new phase.

“When, at the time of the French revolution, the first attempt at such a reincarnation took place, the Germanic spirit became quite perplexed, and for a time lost its identity and faith in itself. It proved impotent to say anything against the new ideas of the outermost Western world. Luther’s Protestantism had long outlived its time, while the idea of free inquiry had long been accepted by universal science. Germany’s enormous organism more than ever began to feel that it had no flesh, so to speak, and no form for self-expression. It was then that the pressing urge to consolidate itself, at least outwardly, into a harmonious organism was born in Germany in anticipation of the new future aspects of her eternal struggle against the outermost Western world...”⁵²⁵

⁵²⁵ F.M. Dostoyevsky, *The Diary of a Writer*, May-June, 1877, chapter III, 1; Haslemere: Ianmead, 1984, pp. 727, 728-730. “It may perhaps be accidental,” writes Sir Karl Popper, “but it is in any case remarkable, that there is still a cultural frontier between Western Europe and the regions of Central Europe which coincide very nearly with those regions that did not enjoy the blessings of Augustus’ Roman Empire, and that did not enjoy the blessings of the Roman peace, i.e. of the Roman civilization. The same ‘barbarian’ regions are particularly prone to be affected by mysticism, even though they did not invent mysticism. Bernard of Clairvaux had his greatest successes in Germany, where later Eckhart and his school flourished, and also Boehme.

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Let us return to the narrative of Germany's War of Liberation... "The French," continues Zamoyski, "became villains, and Napoleon himself was even portrayed as the Antichrist, a focus for the crusading struggle of deliverance that would regenerate Germany. Poets composed patriotic verse and anti-Napoleonic songs..."

"An analogous wave of renewal swept through society. In 1808 the Tugendbund or League of Virtue, a society for the propagation of civic virtue, was formed in Königsberg and quickly ramified through Prussia. In 1809 Ludwig Jahn founded the more middle-class Deutsche Bund, based in Berlin. Joseph Görres demanded that all foreign elements be expunged from national life, so that essential German characteristics might flourish, and declared that no power could stand in the way of a nation intent on defending its soul. 'That to which the Germans aspire will be granted to them, the day when, in their interior, they will have become worthy of it.' Even the archetypically Enlightenment cosmopolitan Wilhelm von Humboldt was turning into a Prussian patriot. He was reorganizing the state education system at the time, and managed to transform it into a curiously spiritual one in which education and religion of state are inextricably intertwined.

"But while the mood changed, reality had not. Germany was still divided and cowered under French hegemony. To the deep shame of much of her officer corps, Prussia was still an ally of France when Napoleon invaded Russia in 1812. Her forces, which did not take part in the march on Moscow, were to support the French and secure their flank in East Prussia. And it was when the frozen remnants were trudging back into Prussia and Poland that this support would have been most welcome. But it was precisely then that the Prussian military judged it safe to show their colours. General von Yorck, in command of 14,000 men in East Prussia, found himself in a pivotal position. With his support, Marshal Macdonald would be able to hold the line of the River Niemen and keep the Russians out of Poland; without it, he had no option but full retreat. The Prussian general had been in touch with the Russians for some time, through the intermediary of a young German officer in Russian service by the name of Carl von Clausewitz. On Christmas Day 1812 Yorck met the commander of the Russian advance guard and, by a convention he signed with them at Tauroggen, repudiated Prussia's alliance with France. It was an act of mutiny, the first in a series of acts by the German army to 'save' the fatherland against the orders of its political leaders. It was also the signal for all the nationalists to come out into the open.

"Much later Spinoza, who attempted to combine Cartesian intellectualism with mystical tendencies, rediscovered the theory of a mystical intellectual intuition, which, in spite of Kant's strong opposition, led to the post-Kantian rise of 'Idealism', to Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel" (*The Open Society and its Enemies*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966, p. 353).

“The irascible Ernst Moritz Arndt was well to the fore. ‘Oh men of Germany!’ he exhorted, ‘feel again your God, hear and fear the eternal, and you heard and fear also your Volk; you feel again in God the honour and dignity of your fathers, their glorious history rejuvenates itself again in you, their firm and gallant virtue reblossoms in you, the whole German Fatherland stands again before you in the august halo of past centuries... One faith, one love, one courage, and one enthusiasm must gather again the whole German *Volk* in brotherly community... Be Germans, be one, will to be one by love and loyalty, and no devil will vanquish you.’

“The king of Prussia did not feel quite brave enough to ‘be German’ yet. He ordered the arrest of Yorck, and then moved to Breslau, where he was out of reach of the French. In March 1813, when he saw that it was safe for him to jump on the anti-Napoleon bandwagon, Frederick William announced the formation of citizens’ volunteer forces, the Landwehr and the Landsturm. On 17 March he issued a proclamation to the effect that his soldiers would ‘fight for our independence and the honour of the *Volk*’, and summoned every son of the fatherland to participate. ‘My cause is the cause of my *Volk*,’ he concluded, less than convincingly. But nobody was looking too closely at anyone’s motives in the general excitement. The cause of the German fatherland justified everything. ‘Strike them dead!’ Heinrich von Kleist had urged the soldiers setting off to war with the French. ‘At the last judgement you will not be asked for your reasons!’

“The campaign of 1813, when the patched-up Napoleonic forces attempted to stand up to the combined armies of Russia, Prussia, Sweden and Austria, and finally succumbed at Leipzig, should, according to Chateaubriand, go down in history as ‘the campaign of young Germany, of the poets’. That was certainly the perception. The by no means young Fichte finished his lecture on the subject of duty and announced to his students at Berlin that the course was suspended until they gained liberty or death. He marched out of the hall amid wild cheers, and led the students off to put their names down for the army...

“The War of Liberation, *Freiheitskrieg*, was, above all, a war of purification and self-discovery. It did not stop with the expulsion of French forces from Germany in 1813. If anything, it was in the course of 1814, when Napoleon's forces were fighting for survival on French soil, that the War of Liberation really got going in Germany...

“But the War of Liberation was being waged no less vehemently at the cultural level. The poets were not squeamish when it came to singing of the national crusade, while the painters rallied to the cause in a memorable way. Caspar David Friedrich, who had already done so much to represent the symbolic German landscape as an object of worship through a series of paintings in which people are depicted contemplating its wonder like so many saints adoring the nativity in a medieval triptych, now turned to glorifying the nation. He painted several representations of an imaginary tomb of Hermann, evocatively set among craggy boulders and fir trees. And he also produced

various set-pieces representing the war. Other painters depicted groups of patriotic German volunteers going forth in their hats to free the fatherland. Joseph Görres led a movement demanding the completion of Cologne Cathedral as a sign of German regeneration. 'Long shall Germany live in shame and humiliation, a prey to inner conflict and alien arrogance, until her people return to the ideals from which they were seduced by selfish ambition, and until true religion and loyalty, unity of purpose and self-denial shall again render them capable of erecting such a building as this,' he wrote."⁵²⁶

And yet the majority of the German people no longer believed either in the Catholicism that had erected Cologne cathedral, or in the Protestantism that had first raised the word of *protest* against the Franco-Roman world. (Or if the peasantry believed, the intellectuals did not.) The attempt to resurrect the past was actually a sign that the past was definitely dead. Thus German nationalism and its numerous offshoots was a new, degenerate religion taking up the void in the European soul that was left by the death of Christianity.

And of liberalism, too... Under the impact of the new collectivist nationalism, individualist liberalism withered. As George L. Mosse writes: "Even a devoted Liberal like Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1835) came, in the end, to the conclusion that 'there are only two realities, God and the nation.' At first he tried to combine individualism with a confrontation of the national problem as Fichte had done, but he, too, came to the realization that 'man is nothing by himself except through the force of the whole with which he tries to fuse himself.' Such romanticism swept before it the older cosmopolitan and humanitarian ideas of the last century. The old Goethe, who still proclaimed such sentiments and who derided the new nationalism, was as isolated a figure in Weimar as, a century later, the old Benedetto Croce was to be an isolated figure in the new Italy. His concept of liberal freedom was as outdated then, so it seemed, as Goethe's was after the German wars of liberation against the French. Friedrich Ludwig Jahn was the wave of the future. His book *Volkstum* (1810) glorified the German *Volk* who represented the whole of humanity and whose task it was to civilize the world by force. But the *Volk* must keep itself pure and undefiled as a race; Rome had fallen because races had mixed. Here already we can see the leanings of the glorification of the *Volk* toward an explicit racism. The state formed by the *Volk* would be democratic – Jahn as yet kept representative institutions and did not push the mystical unity of the *Volk* to the point where it superseded all representative forms of government.

"The 'force of the whole' was the German nation singled out by God as the only valid *Volk*. Jahn organized the *Turnerschaft* to keep the people fit for the war that was coming. Significantly, the word *turnen* came from the medieval tournaments, but gymnastics were practical tasks to enable young men to be

⁵²⁶ Zamoyski, *op. cit.*, pp. 166, 167-168, 169-170. In the same year of 1813, and in the same city of Leipzig, where Napoleon was finally defeated by Prussia, the composer Richard Wagner was born. We shall see that he, too, was to make an important contribution to German nationalism...

the soldiers of tomorrow. From their founding (1811) these *Turnerschaften* became centres of German nationalism; so did the *Burschenschaften* which Jahn was also instrumental in founding (1815). Students were united in them irrespective of their province or social class. Non-Germans, like the Jews, were excluded from the fraternities. These became instruments for German unity, meeting at the Wartburg in Thuringia, the constant symbol of a glorious German past. Here Luther worked and here the old Minnesaenger had held their festivals of song. Wagner was to put this spirit on the stage in his *Die Meistersinger von Nurnberg* and in *Tannhauser* as well. This romantic nationalism was directed, above all, against France which had so recently occupied the country. Jahn's diatribes against that nation were violent, just as Wagner later castigated French perfidy in the last lines of the *Meistersinger*. This nationalism, then, was inspired by the romantic movement. It was 'total' in the sense that it was not concerned with boundaries or even with blueprints for a government, but with 'culture' as a whole. Jahn addressed his *Turners* in uniforms representing an age long past, symbolizing the organic *Volk* which has its own and superior way of life."⁵²⁷

From now on, European man would only rarely be induced to die for God or Church or Sovereign. But he could be induced to die for his country; for the nation was now seen to incarnate the highest value, whether that value was defined as simply racial superiority (Germany), or cultural eminence (France), or the rule of law in freedom (England).

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⁵²⁷ Mosse, *The Culture of Western Europe*, Boulder & London: Westview Press, 1988, pp. 58-59.

38. CAN WORKS WITHOUT FAITH BE GOOD?

The Holy Scriptures teach us that faith without works is dead, but also that works without faith are fruitless for salvation, however many and great those works are. "A brother cannot redeem, shall a man redeem?" asks David. "He shall not give to God a ransom for himself, nor the price of the redemption of his own soul, though he hath labored for ever, and shall live to the end" (Psalm 48.7-8).

The reason for this is clear: right faith in God is the very beginning and foundation of all good things, and the very condition of all that is truly good. For "what is not of faith is sin" (Romans 14.23). However, "faith by itself, without works, is dead" (James 2.17). "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for *good works*, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them" (Ephesians 2.10). Without works, faith does not *work* (for salvation). It does not show itself for what it is, the all-powerful mover of mountains, both physical and spiritual. Rather, it shows itself to be pitifully powerless. For, as St. Savva of Serbia said: "Neither can our striving to live a good life without the right faith in God be of any avail to us, nor can the right faith without good works make us worthy of seeing the face of the Lord. So let them go together in order to make us perfect without any blemish. Faith can save us only if it is united with and expressed in good works, inspired by the love of God."

Now let us look a little more closely at this teaching...

"What shall we do," asked the people of Christ, "that we may work the works of God?" And Christ answered them: "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him Whom He sent" (John 6.28-29). But this is puzzling. Is there, then, no difference between faith and works? If faith is "the work of God", then is it sufficient only to believe, as the Protestants claim?

No: the word "faith" in the writings of the Evangelists, Apostles and Holy Fathers often denotes not only the mustard seed that is "faith alone" but also the tree that grows out of the seed, just as the word "tree" often signifies not only the wood of the trunk and branches, but also the leaves and the flowers on the leaves.

Two examples will suffice to illustrate this point. First, the Lord told the sinful woman who washed His feet with her tears and anointed them with myrrh: "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace" (Luke 7.50). Again, we may wonder: why does the Lord say that the woman's *faith* has saved her, when it is her active *work* of love that strikes us most (and annoys Simon the Pharisee)? The Lord Himself provided the answer a little earlier when He said: "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much". So it *is* her work of love that has saved her; only it is seen as so inextricably linked with her faith in Him that it is called "faith".

Blessed Theophylact in his commentary on this passage makes the same linkage, almost equivalence, between faith and love: “Her sins are forgiven because she loved much, meaning, ‘because she showed great faith’.”

It follows that faith without love cannot be the faith that saves. St. James makes the same point when he points out that “even the demons believe – and tremble” (James 2.19). The demons have a very strong belief in the existence and omnipotence of God – acquired, no doubt, through their brief sojourn in heaven and consequent expulsion from it. But this bare faith is without love: in fact, it is nourished, not by love, but by hatred. Therefore it is not “faith” in the sense used by the Lord in speaking to the sinful woman: it is not the faith that saves.

Let us now turn to our second example from the Gospel, that of the good thief on the cross. The good thief was saved by faith alone, without any works. For, as St. Ambrose of Milan writes, “Paradise received the thief in the same hour it received Christ. Faith alone won the thief this honour”.

And yet there must be something special about this “faith alone” if it allowed the thief to be the very first man to enter Paradise. St. John Maximovich explains why it was so special: the thief believed that Christ was a King, moreover a King over a spiritual Kingdom beyond and above death – as he said, “Remember me, O Lord, when Thou comest into Thy Kingdom” (Luke 23.42) – when He looked anything but a King, when it was most difficult, from a human point of view, to believe in Him as anything but the most wretched of mortals. To believe in Christ as King and as God at the very moment of His maximum humiliation, when He was not working miracles or risen from the dead, when even His closest disciples had deserted him and the whole world had rejected Him – that was truly a *podvig*, a spiritual feat of the highest quality.

But to speak of a feat is surely to speak of a *work*... Yes, the thief’s confession of faith in Christ the King was truly a good work, a quite exceptionally good work. But are we not then saying that the good thief *deserved* salvation as a *reward* for his exceptionally, astonishingly good work?

No, we do not receive salvation as a reward, as if we deserved it. For salvation is given *gratis*, for free, as a gift of *grace*. “By grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing – it is the gift of God, not because of works, lest any man should boast” (Ephesians 2.9). And again, we read in the Tenth Morning Prayer: “O Saviour, save me by Thy grace, I pray Thee. For if Thou shouldst save me for my works, this would not be grace or a gift, but rather a duty.” But then why do we praise the thief? For whether we call his feat faith or works, the fact is that it is the product of God’s grace, not of human effort, “lest any man should boast”. But then, if it is all God’s doing and God’s gift, what is so exceptional or astonishing or praiseworthy about it?

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Both faith and works are the produce of the *synergy* – that is, cooperation –

between the grace of God and the will of man, a mystery denied by the Protestant Reformers with catastrophic results for Western Christianity.

First, although faith is a gift of God, we can encourage its reception by our good works. Thus when the angel appeared to Cornelius the Centurion, he said: "Cornelius, your prayer has been heard, and your alms are remembered in the sight of God. Send therefore to Joppa and call Simon here..." (Acts 10.11-12). So while Cornelius' alms did not justify him, since they were not done in the name of Christ, they did attract the grace of the faith to him.

In his famous conversation with Motovilov, St. Seraphim of Sarov stressed that only deeds done in the name of Christ are effective for salvation. But then, citing the case of Cornelius, he goes on: "The Lord uses all His Divine means to give such a man for his good works the opportunity not to lose his reward in the future life. But to this end he must begin here by a right faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Who came into the world to save sinners, and by winning for ourselves the grace of the Holy Spirit Who brings into our hearts the Kingdom of God and lays for us the path to win the blessings of the future life. Wherefore the Lord said to the Hebrews: 'If ye had not seen, ye would have had no sin; but now ye say, We see, your sin remaineth with you.' A man like Cornelius finds favour with God for his deeds, though done not for the sake of Christ; let him then but believe in the Son of God and all his works will be accounted as done for Christ's sake just for faith in Him. But in the opposite case a man has no right to complain that his good has had no effect. It never does, unless the good deed is done for Christ's sake, since good done for Him both claims in the life of the world to come a crown of righteousness and in this present life fills men with the grace of the Holy Spirit..."

Again, in the *Life* of the holy Martyrs Menas and Hermogenes (December 10) we read that Hermogenes, although "reared an impious idolater, was a good, kind man. Although he did not know Christ as the true God, he nevertheless honoured Him by his deeds, 'doing by nature the things contained in the law'. One night, while sailing to Egypt with his troops, Hermogenes had a dream in which he saw three radiant men saying to him, 'Know, Hermogenes, that God takes account of even the least good work; therefore he has accepted your deeds, although they are not virtuous in every respect. It is His desire that your voyage which was intended to bring about the death of many, should instead redound to your immortal glory and honour.'" And so the persecutor found the true faith and the crown of martyrdom...

So God takes account of all our deeds, whether done for His sake or not, but He rewards with salvation and the grace of the Holy Spirit only those deeds that are truly good, being done in the name of Christ.

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It follows from this, secondly, that faith is not given in an all or nothing way, as the Protestants assert. For just as good works can be abundant or not, and the

grace of the Holy Spirit can be abundant in a man or not, so with faith. Faith has *degrees*, because there are degrees of synergy, or cooperation, between the gift of God and the will of rational beings.

Since all knowledge of the truth is from God, we cannot deny that even the faith of the demons, the faith that makes them tremble, is given by God. But this faith serves only for their condemnation, since they do not develop it or act in accordance with it. It is a *minimal* faith, a last surviving relic from the demons' previous state of blessedness, which only serves to increase their spiritual torment in this life and in the age to come. For the torments of fallen men and angels in gehenna will be immeasurably increased by their consciousness – a consciousness that will not go away precisely because it is sustained by their undying faith in God - that they have unjustly and irreparably offended His Goodness.

At the other extreme, we have the faith of the greatest of the saints and martyrs. The supreme paradigm of this *maximal* faith described in the Scriptures is the sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham, “the father of the faithful”. For, as the Lord said, “Abraham rejoiced to see My Day and he saw and was glad” (John 8.56). But he showed his faith by his works. And so: “By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, ‘In Isaac your seed shall be called’, concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead” (Hebrews 11.17-19).

Abraham's faith had several aspects that, taken together, increased its value a hundredfold. First, he lived at a time when the whole world, following the destruction of the Tower of Babel, was plunged in paganism. As far as we know, he did not have the support of a priesthood, or a large body of believers, but sustained his spiritual life through a direct, one-to-one relationship with God alone.

Secondly, he believed the promises God had made to him, that he would become the father of many nations, even when God told him to sacrifice his beloved son, without whom those promises could not be fulfilled. The temptation to disbelieve the promises as if they did not come from God, but were a product of his imagination, must have been enormous. Still greater must have been the temptation to reject God's command to kill his son as *prelest'*. After all, was not child-sacrifice the practice of the surrounding Canaanite nations, who sacrificed to the pagan gods of Baal, Ishtar and Moloch? Not only natural paternal affection, but also plain common-sense, must have conspired to tempt him to disobey.

But Abraham knew with absolute certainty that it was the one true God Who had spoken to him. He refused to put natural affection above the Love of God, or common-sense above the Wisdom of God, or conventional morality above the Goodness of God. And if believing in God's promises while doing such violence to the heart and reasoning of the natural man meant that he was

required also to believe in the resurrection from the dead, then so be it - Abraham was up to it! Therefore Abraham's faith was truly maximal, conforming exactly to St. Symeon the Theologian's maximalist definition of faith as "readiness to die for Christ's sake, for His commandments, in the conviction that such death brings life."

"Do you not see," says the Apostle James, that Abraham's "faith was working together with his works; and by works faith was made perfect" (James 2.22) - that is, was *maximal*.

Since faith can be minimal and maximal and every degree in between, it cannot be the all-or-nothing concept of the Reformers. We do not either have faith or not have it: we have it *to a certain degree*; it can be weaker or stronger. Our faith is invariably weaker than it can and should be, so we are obliged to pray with the Apostles: "Lord, increase our faith" (Luke 17.5).

Since prayer can increase the gift of faith, it follows that God does not give the gift of faith *arbitrarily*. This was another issue that tormented and divided the Reformers. For the doctrine of salvation by faith alone, in which "faith" was understood in the most restricted, almost minimalist sense that overlapped in no way with any of the "good works" that corrupt Catholicism had so discredited in the eyes of Protestants, seemed to imply that God distributed faith to some and not to others - and therefore salvation to some and not to others - *for no reason whatsoever*. For if good works are quite distinct from faith, and therefore irrelevant to salvation, it becomes meaningless - or rather, quite false - to make even such unremarkable statements as: "Abraham was given great faith because he was a good man", or "Judas was given little faith because he was a bad man". If Abraham was good, and Judas bad, this had nothing to do with the fact that the one was given great faith and the other little, nor with the fact that the one is now in Paradise (which is called "the bosom of Abraham" in his honour) and the other in hell. God just decided it that way, predestining the one to salvation and the other to damnation. And there was nothing either could have done to avoid their fate...

The terrifying arbitrariness of salvation and damnation in the Reformers' (especially Calvin's) theology of predestination, which followed logically from their doctrine of salvation by faith alone, was so repulsive to the moral sense of Western man that gradually, in the course of the last five centuries, it has evolved into *precisely the opposite* doctrine that we find so much in vogue today: that a man's faith is irrelevant to his salvation, that what is important is only his works, that all you need is "love" understood in the most superficial, sentimental and ecumenical way.

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Let us now try and reconstruct the doctrine of faith and works in an Orthodox manner, avoiding the pitfalls and extremes of Western theology.

Salvation is indeed a gift of God, a gift of grace. This gift is given, in the first place, in and through the correct, heart-felt belief in, and open confession of, *the Orthodox faith*. “For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Romans 10.10). So the confession of faith that the catechumen makes just before his baptism is at the same time his first *work of faith* and his first step on the path to salvation. It is faith at work, faith that *works* for salvation.

The correct confession *works* for our salvation, and it is *necessary* for our salvation. But it is not *sufficient* for our salvation. If our works of faith consist only of the confession of the Orthodox faith, then we are by no means guaranteed salvation. For the demons believe and tremble – and could probably write much better treatises on the Nicene Creed than we! Even a correct dogmatic faith combined with a practical faith springing from dogmatic faith that is strong enough to move mountains is not sufficient for salvation. For St. Paul says: “though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have no love, I am nothing” (I Corinthians 13.2). But this gives us the clue to the kind and intensity of faith that *is* sufficient for salvation; it is “that faith which worketh through love” (Galatians 5.6).

The “faith which worketh through love” – that is the clue to a correct understanding of the doctrine of faith and works. True, it is faith alone that saves. But by “faith” is here meant the “faith that worketh through love”. And the faith that worketh through love is manifested in *good works*. It is the faith that saves, not the works. But at the same time it is the presence of the works that demonstrates the presence of the faith.

That is why, according to the Holy Scriptures, we are judged in accordance with our *works*. “God shall bring every *work* into judgement, with every secret thing, whether good or evil” (Ecclesiastes 12.14). “They profess to know God, but they deny Him by their *works*” (Titus 1.16). “I know your *works*: you have the name of being alive, but you are dead. Awake, and strengthen what remains and is on the point of death, for I have not found your *works* perfect in the sight of My God” (Revelation 3.1-2). “‘Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord henceforth.’ ‘Blessed indeed,’ says the Spirit, ‘that they may rest from their labours, for their *works* follow them.’” (Revelation 14.13). “Behold, I am coming soon, bringing My reward, to repay everyone according to his *works*” (Revelation 22.12).

So we are saved by our faith, but we are judged by our works. We are saved by the faith that worketh through love, and we are judged according to the love (or lack thereof) that our works manifest. The sinful woman was saved by her faith, which was manifested in works of love towards Christ. The thief on the cross was also saved by faith, which was manifested in another work of love: in rebuking his fellow-thief for slandering Him, and in recognizing that, in contrast to himself and his fellow thief, Christ had done nothing worthy of His punishment. For “we indeed [suffer] justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing

wrong" (Luke 23.41).

In addition to the good works that are the fruit of faith and the grace received in baptism, there are the "fruits worthy of repentance" (Matthew 3.8). This phrase was coined by St. John the Baptist when he saw the Pharisees coming to his baptism and rebuked them for their hypocrisy. For it was no use this "brood of vipers" coming to his "baptism of repentance" if they had no intention of repenting.

This concept provides us with the clue to understanding why God's choice of who is to receive the grace of faith is not arbitrary. For there are those who act in such a way as to prepare the ground for faith, and those who do not. The Roman centurion whose servant Christ healed prepared the ground for faith - and in great measure, for the Lord had not found "such great faith, no, not in Israel" (Matthew 8.10) - by his helping the Jews to build a synagogue. Similarly, the Roman centurion Cornelius prepared the ground for receiving the preaching of the faith by St. Peter through his prayers and almsgiving, which were "remembered in the sight of God" (Acts 10.31). Even the Apostle Paul, whose persecution of the Christians before his conversion could hardly be called a work of repentance, nevertheless through his zeal for the truth, however mistakenly conceived, together with his profound repentance after the Lord appeared to him on the road to Damascus, prepared the ground for receiving enlightenment in Holy Baptism at the hands of the Apostle Ananias.

So we may speak about two kinds of good works: the "fruits worthy of repentance" that we accomplish *before* baptism and full enlightenment in the faith, and those good works that we accomplish *after* baptism, which are the fruit precisely of that faith. The good works accomplished before faith are like the farmer's ploughing of his field in preparation for sowing. The reception of faith and enlightenment in baptism are the sowing of the seed itself. And the good works accomplished after enlightenment are the germination and flowering of the seed. Neither the works that go before, nor the works that come after, *justify* us in the sense of giving us salvation: only pure faith in the salvation that Christ has accomplished for us saves. But the works that go before make us in a sense worthy to receive the gift of faith, while the works that come after show that that faith is genuine and deep ...

So the Lord wishes that all men be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth (I Timothy 2.4) by receiving the faith that works through love. But only those who prepare the ground for the reception of that faith - and keep the ground well tilled thereafter, so as not to lose the faith again - will in fact be saved. There is therefore no arbitrariness here, but the justice of "the Father Who without partiality judges according to each man's work" (I Peter 1.17).

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