THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION:
A SPIRITUAL HISTORY

Part 2: The Gates of Hell (1917-1945)

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PART 2. THE GATES OF HELL (1917-1945)

You deserve to die, because you have not guarded your master, 
the Lord’s Anointed. 
I Samuel 26.16.

When He opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, 
“Come and see”. I looked, and behold, a pale horse. And the name of him who sat on it 
was Death, and Hades followed with him. And power was given to them over a fourth 

of the earth, to kill with sword, with hunger, with death, and by the beasts of the 
earth. 
Revelation 6.8.

Soviet power is organized civil war. 
Leon Trotsky.

The judgement of God is being carried out on the Church and the people of Russia… 
A selection is being made of those true warriors of Christ who alone will be able… 
to resist the Beast himself. 
Hieromartyr Damascene, Bishop of Glukhov (+1937).

There will come a time when churches will be opened in Russia, and the true 
Orthodox faith will triumph. Then people will be baptized, as at one time they were 
baptized under St. Vladimir… The atheist Soviet authority will vanish, and all its 

servants will perish. 
Martyr-Eldress Agatha of Belorussia (+1939).

God allowed the Russian revolution to take place in order that the Russian Church 
might become purged and purified and that the Orthodox Faith might be disseminated 
across the whole world. 
PART 2. THE GATES OF HELL (1917-1945) .................................................................2
Apocalyptic Visions ..............................................................................................4
Dual Power ..............................................................................................................7
The Religion of Leninism .......................................................................................12
The Revolution in the Church ..............................................................................22
The October Revolution .......................................................................................26
The Moscow Council of 1917-18 .......................................................................34
The Murder of the Tsar ........................................................................................51
The Goals of Leninism ..........................................................................................54
The Russian Civil War .........................................................................................65
The Church in the Civil War .................................................................................70
The Russian Church in Exile .................................................................................75
From War Communism to NEP ...........................................................................82
Communism and the Jews ....................................................................................93
The Church in the Borderlands ............................................................................99
Secret Agents in Cassocks ..................................................................................112
The Requisitioning of Church Valuables ............................................................119
The Renovationist Coup ......................................................................................124
The Patriarch and the Commissars .....................................................................138
The Fall of Renovationism ..................................................................................146
The Rise of Stalin ..................................................................................................153
Metropolitan Peter of Krutitsa ..........................................................................165
The Church Decentralised ...................................................................................174
The Declaration of Metropolitan Sergius ............................................................179
The Birth of the Catacomb Church ......................................................................187
ROCOR and Metropolitan Sergius ......................................................................195
Stalin’s War on Russia: (1) The Church ...............................................................200
Stalin’s War on Russia: (2) Collectivization .........................................................203
Stalin’s War on Russia: (3) Industrialization and Famine ....................................212
Stalin’s War on Russia: (4) The Great Purges ......................................................219
The International Civil War (I) ...........................................................................226
The International Civil War (II) ..........................................................................231
The Nazis Invade Russia ......................................................................................239
The Church in Belorussia and Ukraine ...............................................................246
ROCOR and the Germans .................................................................................250
The Stalin-Sergius Pact .......................................................................................255
The Consequences of the Pact ..........................................................................264
The Moscow Council of 1945 .............................................................................271
The Triumph of the Moscow Patriarchate: (1) Inside the USSR ......................275
The Triumph of the Moscow Patriarchate: (2) Outside the USSR .................280
Archbishop John of Shanghai .............................................................................287
The Triumph of Evil ..............................................................................................294
CONCLUSION: BEYOND NIHILISM .................................................................300
Apocalyptic Visions

On February 21, 1917, just before the February revolution, a 14-year-old Kievian novice, Olga Zosimovna Boiko, fell into a deep trance lasting for forty days during which many mysteries were revealed to her. She saw the following: “In blinding light on an indescribably wonderful throne sat the Saviour, and next to Him on His right hand – our sovereign, surrounded by angels. His Majesty was in full royal regalia: a radiant white robe, a crown, with a sceptre in his hand. And I heard the martyrs talking amongst themselves, rejoicing that the last times had come and that their number would be increased. They said that they would be tormented for the name of Christ and for refusing to accept the seal [of the Antichrist], and that the churches and monasteries would soon be destroyed, and those living in the monasteries would be driven out, and that not only the clergy and monastics would be tortured, but also all those who did not want to receive ‘the seal’ and would stand for the name of Christ, for the Faith and the Church.”

So the coming age was to be an apocalyptic struggle against the Antichrist, an age of martyrdom for Christ’s sake – and the Tsar would be among the martyrs. More was revealed a few weeks later, on March 2, 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...

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...

A third vision was given in this year to Metropolitan Macarius of Moscow, who alone in the Church’s hierarchy had refused to accept the Provisional Government because of his oath of allegiance to the Tsar: "I saw a field. The Saviour was walking along a path. I went after Him, crying,

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1 Letter of Sergius Nilus to Hierodeacon Zosimas, 6 August, 1917; in V. Gubanov, Tsar’ Nikolai II-ii i Novie Mucheniki (Tsar Nicholas II and the New Martyrs), St. Petersburg, 2000, p. 121 ©.
2 It is 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 Rossisjskoj (The Catacomb Church in the Russian Land), MS, Old Woking, 1980. See also http://www.vs-radoste.narod.ru/photoalbum09.html
"'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!'"

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.'"

Many have doubted the idea that the Russian people could be forgiven through the Tsar. However, A.Ya. Yakovitsky has expressed the following interesting interpretation. The aim of the Provisional Government was to create the conditions for 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. Now according to Yakovitsky, the vision of Metropolitan Macarius demonstrates that through his martyrlic patience the Tsar obtained from the Lord that the Constituent Assembly should not come to pass – through its dissolution by the Bolsheviks in October, 1917. 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, Sergius Fomin quotes Yakovitsky on the significance of her blood-red robe: “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?”

“This with it is impossible to disagree,” continues Yakovitsky. “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…”

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.

In the same fateful year of 1917 Elder Nectarius of Optina prophesied: "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..."

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

On March 2, a crowd assembled at the Tauris palace in Petrograd to hear Pavel Milyukov announce the formation of a temporary – usually called “Provisional” – government to oversee the administration of the country until the convening of an elected Constituent Assembly. The “poisonous question” was put to him: “Who elected you?” Many years later Milyukov wrote: “I could have read out a whole dissertation in reply. 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.”

This explains why none of the democratic leaders of the Provisional Government, from Milyukov to Lvov to Kerensky, offered any real opposition to the Bolshevik revolution in October, and were so easily swept into "the dustbin of history", in Trotsky’s phrase. Indeed, as 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 demagogy. Hence it turned out that the legalized anarchy of Prince Lvov and Kerensky naturally and inevitably gave way to the demagogic despotism of Lenin.”


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 V.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 compelled him, too, to abdicate. 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.

Since the legitimating 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 which alone, according to liberal theory, could bring a legitimate government into power. So Miliukov resorted to a deliberate paradox: they had been “elected” by the revolution. The paradox consists 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...

But if 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 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 philosophy and democratic constitutional procedure were 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. And now, on March 2, in its very first act, “Soviet Order Number One”, it rubbed the government’s nose in the dust: “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.
The immediate effect of Order Number One was to destroy discipline in the army, as soldiers refused to salute or obey their officers – or simply went home to join in the looting of landowners’ and church estates. And so the Tsar’s main purpose in abdicating – to preserve the army as a fighting force capable of defeating the Germans – was frustrated before the ink was dry on his manifesto. The lesson was clear: if the Russians did not want to be ruled by the God-anointed Tsar, then, by God’s permission and as punishment for their sins, they would be ruled by the Satan-appointed Soviets...

The inequality of the “dual-power” system was evident from the beginning. Thus M.V. Rodzianko, who more than anyone had forced the Tsar to sign his abdication, was excluded from the list of ministers as being unacceptable to the masses; and Guchkov and Miliukov, the Ministers of War and Foreign Affairs, who had also played major roles in the abdication of the Tsar, did not last beyond the April Crisis after their continued support for the war became apparent. This 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 Tsarist police was replaced by a “people’s militia”, and full civil and religious freedoms, including the removal of all restrictions on the Jews, were introduced.8

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... But 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...

Anarchy was the order of the day, and the only “justice” was imposed by lynchings.9 In an article written in 1923 G. Mglinsky explained why the

9 In 1917 Gorky claimed to have seen 10,000 cases of summary justice. See Orlando Figes, A People’s Tragedy, London: Pimlico, 1997, p. 400.
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 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.'"

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 to remain faithful to his oath, Theodore Keller.

For Orthodox monarchism was, temporarily, dead… The abdication of the Tsar was greeted with joy by people in all classes – even the peasantry, which was supposed to be the most loyal to the monarchy, and which now confused revolutionary freedom with spiritual freedom. 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

10 Mglinsky, “Grekhirusskoj intelligentsii” (The Sins of the Russian Intelligentsia), Staroe Vremia (Old Times), 1923; in N.D. Zhevakov, Vospominania (Reminiscences), Moscow, 1993 ®. Prince N.D. Zhevakho, 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, 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, № 13).” (op. cit.).

11 However, Archimandrite Vitaly (Maximenko) of Pochaev monastery, the future Archbishop of Eastern America, “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.” (“Archbishop Vitaly Maximenko”, Orthodox Life, March-April, 2010, p. 15).
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.”

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 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. And 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...

The Religion of Leninism

In February, 1917 Lenin, the Bolshevik leader, was living behind enemy
lines in Switzerland, where he was supported by the German government as
one of their agents. Lenin had been on the German payroll for some time.
Thus on December 29, 1915 the German agent Parvus (Gelfond) recorded
receiving a million rubles in Russian banknotes to support the revolutionary
movement in Russia from the German envoy in Copenhagen. Still larger
sums were given by Jewish bankers in the West. But until 1917 the German
and Jewish investment in Lenin did not seem to have paid off. His message
that the proletariat should turn the war between nations into a civil war
between classes had not been listened to even by other socialist parties.

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13 Istoki Zla (Tajna Kommunizma) (The Sources of Evil (The Secret of Communism)), Moscow,
2002, p. 35 ©.
14 See Anthony Sutton, Wall Street and the Bolshevik Revolution, Arlington, 1974; O.A. Platonov,
However, the February revolution – which took Lenin completely by surprise – changed everything. "The German special services guaranteed his passage through Germany in the sealed carriage. Among the passengers were: Zinoviev, Radek, Rozenblum, Abramovich, Usievich, and also the majors of the German General Staff, the professional spies Anders and Erich, who had been cast in for subversive and diversionary work in Russia in favour of Germany and the organization of a coup d’état. The next day there arrived in Berlin an urgent secret report from an agent of the German General Staff: ‘Lenin’s entrance into Russia achieved. He is working completely according to our desires.’…”

Although History had not revealed to her acolyte what had been abundantly obvious to many, that the Russian empire at the beginning of 1917 was on the verge of collapse, nevertheless Lenin made up for being found lagging by trying to jump ahead of her immediately he returned to Russia. Ignoring Marxist teaching that the proletarian revolution must be preceded by a period of bourgeois rule, he called for non-recognition of the Provisional Government, all power to the Soviets and the immediate cessation of the war. Even his own party found his position extreme, if not simply mad – but it was what the revolutionary masses wanted...

It was precisely the madness of Lenin that made him the man of the moment, the politician best suited for those mad times. The word “madness” here is not used in a wholly metaphorical sense. Of course, in 1917 he was not mad in the sense that he had lost contact with ordinary, everyday reality – his clever tactical manoeuvring and his final success in October proves that he was more realistic about Russian politics than many. But the photographs of him in his last illness show a man who was truly mad – post-mortems showed that his brain had been terribly damaged by syphilis. Moreover, in a spiritual sense he was mad with the madness of the devil himself: he was demonized, with an irrational rage against God and man, an urge to destroy and kill and maim that can have no rational basis.

Lenin, a hereditary nobleman of Russian, German and Jewish origins, was a professional revolutionary who lived on party funds and income from his mother’s estate. Choosing to live in the underground, he had very little direct knowledge of the way ordinary people lived, and cared even less.

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15 Istoki Zla, pp. 35-36.
16 I.P. Goldenberg saw Lenin as the successor of Bakunin, not Marx, and his tactics those of “the universal apostle of destruction” (in Robert Service, Lenin, 2000, p. 267).
17 In What is to be Done? (1902), Lenin argued that in the conditions of Tsarist Russia it was impossible for the party to live openly among the people, but had to be an underground organization with strictly limited membership. “In an autocratic state the more we confine the membership of such a party to people who are professionally engaged in revolutionary activity and who have been professionally trained in the art of combating the political police, the more difficult it will be to wipe out such an organization” (in M.J. Cohen and John Major, History in Quotations, London: Cassell, 2004, p. 678).
“According to Gorky, it was this ignorance of everyday work, and the human suffering which it entailed, which had bred in Lenin a ‘pitiless contempt, worthy of a nobleman, for the lives of the ordinary people... Life in all its complexity is unknown to Lenin. He does not know the ordinary people. He has never lived among them.””\(^\text{18}\)

This contempt was directed as much against his own people as against any other. “I spit on Russia”, he said once; and his actions showed his contempt for Russians of all classes. Nothing is further from the truth than the idea that Lenin’s revolution was carried out for the sake of Russia or the Russians: it was carried out, not out of love for anybody or anything, but simply out of irrational, demonic, universal hatred...

Lenin’s single-minded pursuit of one supreme goal to the exclusion of all other interests could be considered admirable if that goal had been good rather than evil. Moreover, by comparison with most tyrants, Lenin was personally ascetic (he lived very simply, and had only one, not very passionate affair with Inessa Armand). But, as Figes writes, “asceticism was a common trait of the revolutionaries of Lenin’s generation. They were all inspired by the self-denying revolutionary Rakhmetev in Chernyshevsky’s novel *What Is To Be Done?* By suppressing his own sentiments, by denying himself the pleasures of life, Lenin tried to strengthen his resolve and to make himself, like Rakhmetev, insensitive to the sufferings of others. This, he believed, was the ‘hardness’ required by every successful revolutionary: the ability to spill blood for political ends. ‘The terrible thing in Lenin,’ Struve once remarked, ‘was that combination in one person of self-castigation, which is the essence of all real asceticism, with the castigation of other people as expressed in abstract social hatred and cold political cruelty...”

“The root of this philistine approach to life was a burning ambition for power. The Mensheviks joked that it was impossible to compete with a man, such as Lenin, who thought about revolution twenty-four hours every day. Lenin was driven by an absolute faith in his own historical destiny. He did not doubt for a moment, as he had once put it, that he was the man who was to wield the ‘conductor’s baton’ in the party. This was the message he brought back to Russia in April 1917. Those who had known him before the war noticed a dramatic change in his personality. ‘How he had aged,’ recalled Roman Gul’, who had met him briefly in 1905. ‘Lenin’s whole appearance had altered. And not only that. There was none of the old geniality, his friendliness or comradely humour, in his relations with other people. The new Lenin that arrived was cynical, secretive and rude, a conspirator “against everyone and everything”, trusting no one, suspecting everyone, and determined to launch his drive for power.’..."
“Lenin had never been tolerant of dissent within his party’s ranks. Bukharin complained that he ‘didn’t give a damn for the opinions of others’. Lunacharsky claimed that Lenin deliberately ‘surrounded himself with fools’ who would not dare question him. During Lenin’s struggle for the April Theses this domineering attitude was magnified to almost megalomaniac proportions. Krupskaya called it his ‘rage’ – the frenzied state of her husband when engaged in clashes with his political rivals – and it was an enraged Lenin whom she had to live with for the next five years. During these fits Lenin acted like a man possessed by hatred and anger. His entire body was seized with extreme nervous tension, and he could neither sleep nor eat. His outward manner became vulgar and coarse. It was hard to believe that this was a cultivated man. He mocked his opponents, both inside and outside the party, in crude and violent language. They were ‘blockheads’, ‘bastards’, ‘dirty scum’, ‘prostitutes’, ‘cunts’, ‘shits’, ‘cretins’, ‘Russian fools’, ‘windbags’, ‘stupid hens’ and ‘silly old maids’. When the rage subsided Lenin would collapse in a state of exhaustion, listlessness and depression, until the rage erupted again. This manic alteration of mood was characteristic of Lenin’s psychological make-up. It continued almost unrelentingly between 1917 and 1922, and must have contributed to the brain haemorrhage from which he eventually died.

“Much of Lenin’s success in 1917 was no doubt explained by his towering domination over the party. No other political party had ever been so closely tied to the personality of a single man. Lenin was the first modern party leader to achieve the status of a god: Stalin, Mussolini, Hitler and Mao Zedong were all his successors in this sense. Being a Bolshevik had come to imply an oath of allegiance to Lenin as both the ‘leader’ and the ‘teacher’ of the party. It was this, above all, which distinguished the Bolsheviks from the Mensheviks (who had no close leader of their own)...”  

This point concerning the deification of Lenin is developed by Archpriest Lev Lebedev. Lenin, writes Lebedev, “understood the main thing in Marx and Marxism and created not simply a political revolutionary party on the basis of the economic and social ‘scientific’ theory of Marxism: he founded a religion, and one, moreover, in which ‘god’ turned out to be himself! In this lies the essence of all the disagreements between Lenin and the legal Marxists like Struve and Plekhanov, and the Mensheviks – that is, all those who through naivety and evident misunderstanding took Marxism to be precisely a ‘scientific’ theory able to serve the ‘radiant future’ of humanity, beginning with Russia... For Lenin, as for Marx, the only thing that was necessary and important was his personal power with the obligatory deification of his own person, regardless not only of objections or criticisms, but even simply of insufficient servility. Lenin (like Marx) considered himself to be nothing less than the ‘Messiah’ – the ‘teacher’ and ‘leader’ not only of Russian, but also of world significance. This was the psychology of the Antichrist, which was

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reflected both in Lenin’s teaching on ‘the new type of party’, and in the ‘world revolution’, and in the construction of socialism in Russia, and in his ‘philosophy’, and in his methods of ‘leadership’, when he and his ‘comrades’ came to power. In the sphere of politics Lenin was always, from the very beginning, an inveterate criminal. For him there existed no juridical, ethical or moral limitations of any kind. All means, any means, depending on the circumstances, were permissible for the attainment of his goal. Lies, deceit, slander, treachery, bribery, blackmail, murder – this was the almost daily choice of means that he and his party used, while at the same time preserving for rank-and-file party members and the masses the mask of ‘crystal honesty’, decency and humanity – which, of course, required exceptional art and skillfulness in lying. Lenin always took a special pleasure in news of murders, both individual and, still more mass murders – carried out with impunity. At such moments he was sincerely happy. This bloodthirstiness is the key to that special power that ‘the leader of the world proletariat’ received from the devil and the angels of the abyss. In the sphere of philosophy Lenin was amazingly talentless. How to lie a little more successfully – that was essentially his only concern in the sphere of ideas. But when he really had to think, he admitted blunders that were unforgivable in a ‘genius’…

“But the question is: how could a teaching that conquered millions of minds in Russia and throughout the world be created on the basis of such an intellectually impoverished, primitive basis?! An adequate answer can never be given if one does not take into account the main thing about Marxism-Leninism – that it is not simply a teaching, but a religion, a cult of the personality of its founders and each of the successive ‘leaders’, that was nourished, not by human, but by demonic forces from ‘the satanic depths’. Therefore its action on the minds took place simultaneously with a demonic delusion that blinded and darkened the reasoning powers. In order to receive such support from hell, it was necessary to deserve it in a special way, by immersing oneself (being ‘initiated’) into Satanism. And Lenin, beginning in 1905, together with his more ‘conscious comrades’ immersed himself in it (in particular, through the shedding of innocent blood), although there is not information to the effect that he personally killed anybody. The ‘leader’ had to remain ‘unsullied’… By contrast with certain other satanic religions, the religion of Bolshevism had the express character of the worship of the man-god (and of his works as sacred scripture). This was profoundly non-coincidental, since what was being formed here was nothing other than the religion of the coming Antichrist. Lenin was one of the most striking prefigurations of the Antichrist, one of his forerunners, right up to a resemblance to the beast whose name is 666 in certain concrete details of his life (his receiving of a deadly wound and healing from it). Lenin was not able to create for himself a general cult during his lifetime, since he was forced to share the worship of the party and the masses with such co-workers as, for example, Trotsky. But the ‘faithful Leninist’ Stalin was able truly to take ‘Lenin’s work’ to its conclusion, that is, to the point of absurdity… He fully attained his own cult during the life and
posthumous cult of personality of his ‘teacher’. Lenin, who called religion ‘necrophilia’, was the founder of the religion of his own corpse, the main ‘holy thing’ of Bolshevism to this day! All this conditioned, to an exceptional degree, the extraordinary power of Lenin and his party-sect…”

The Bolshevik party was indeed more like a religious sect than a political party in the conventional sense. While members of other parties, even socialist ones, had a private life separate from their political life, this was not so for the Bolsheviks and the parties modelled on them throughout the world. Thus Igor Shafarevich writes: “The German publicist V. Schlamm tells the story of how in 1919, at the age of 15, he was a fellow-traveller of the communists, but did not penetrate into the narrow circle of their functionaries. The reason was explained to him twenty years later by one of them, who by that time had broken with communism. It turns out that Schlamm, when invited to join the party, had said: ‘I am ready to give to the party everything except two evenings a week, when I listen to Mozart.’ That reply turned out to be fatal: a man having interests that he did not want to submit to the party was not suitable for it.

“Another aspect of these relations was expressed by Trotsky. Having been defeated by his opponents, in a speech that turned out to be his last at a party congress, he said: ‘I know that it is impossible to be right against the party. One can be right only with the party, for History has not created any other ways to realize rightness.’

“Finally, here is how Piatakov, already in disgrace and expelled from the party, explained his relationship to the party to his party comrade N.V. Valentinov. Remembering Lenin’s thesis: ‘the dictatorship of the proletariat is a power realized by the party and relying on violence and not bound by any laws’ (from the article, ‘The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky’), Piatakov added that the central idea here was not ‘violence’ but precisely ‘not being bound by any laws’. He said: ‘Everything that bears the seal of human will must not, cannot be considered inviolable, as being bound by certain insuperable laws. Law is a restriction, a ban, a decree that one phenomenon is impermissible, another act is possible, and yet another impossible. When the mind holds to violence as a matter of principle, is psychologically free, and is not bound by any laws, limitations or obstacles, then the sphere of possible action is enlarged to a gigantic degree, while the sphere of the impossible is squeezed to an extreme degree, to the point of nothingness… Bolshevism is the party that bears the idea of turning into life that which is considered to be impossible, unrealizable and impermissible… For the honour and glory of being in her ranks we must truly sacrifice both pride and self-love and everything else. On returning to the party, we cast out of our heads all convictions that are condemned by it, even if we defended them when we were in opposition… I agree that those who are not Bolsheviks

20 Lebedev, Velikorossia (Great Russia), St. Petersburg, 1999, pp. 445-447 ©.
and in general the category of ordinary people cannot in a moment make changes, reversals or amputations of their convictions... We are the party consisting of people who make the impossible possible; penetrated by the idea of violence, we direct it against ourselves, while if the party demands it, if it is necessary and important for the party, we can by an act of will in 24 hours cast out of our heads ideas that we have lived with for years... In suppressing our convictions and casting them out, it is necessary to reconstruct ourselves in the shortest time in such a way as to be inwardly, with all our minds, with all our essence, in agreement with this or that decision decreed by the party. Is it easy violently to cast out of one’s head that which yesterday I considered to be right, but which today, in order to be in complete agreement with the party, I consider to be false? It goes without saying – no. Nevertheless, by violence on ourselves the necessary result is attained. The rejection of life, a shot in the temple from a revolver – these are sheer trivialities by comparison with that other manifestation of will that I am talking about. This violence on oneself is felt sharply, acutely, but in the resort to this violence with the aim of breaking oneself and being in complete agreement with the party is expressed the essence of the real, convinced Bolshevik-Communist... I have heard the following form of reasoning... It (the party) can be cruelly mistaken, for example, in considering black that which is in reality clearly and unquestionably white... To all those who put this example to me, I say: yes, I will consider black that which I considered and which might appear to me to be white, since for me there is no life outside the party and outside agreement with it.”

Having completely surrendered their minds and wills to the party, much as the Jesuits surrendered their minds and wills to the Pope, the Bolsheviks were able to proceed to violence and bloodshed on a scale that far exceeded the Inquisition or any previous tyranny in the history of the world, casting aside the restraint of any and every morality. Lenin called for “mass terror against the kulaks, priests and White Guards”. And Trotsky said: “We must put an end, once and for all, to the papist-Quaker babble about the sanctity of human life”.

Again, the first issue of the Kiev Cheka, Krasnij Mech (The Red Sword) for 1918 proclaimed: “We reject the old systems of morality and ‘humanity’ invented by the bourgeoisie to oppress and exploit the ‘lower classes’. Our morality has no precedent, and our humanity is absolute because it rests on a new ideal. Our aim is to destroy all forms of oppression and violence. To us, everything is permitted, for we are the first to raise the sword not to oppress races and reduce them to slavery... Blood? Let blood flow like water! Let blood stain forever the black pirate’s

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flag flown by the bourgeoisie, and let our flag be blood-red forever! For only through the death of the old world can we liberate ourselves from the return of those jackals!”

In view of the fact that communism is by a wide margin the most bloodthirsty movement in human history, it is necessary to say a few words about this aspect of its activity, which cannot be understood, according to Archpriest Lev, without understanding the movement’s “devil-worshipping essence. For the blood it sheds is always ritualistic, it is a sacrifice to demons. St. John Chrysostom wrote: ‘It is a habit among the demons that when men give Divine worship to them with the stench and smoke of blood, they, like bloodthirsty and insatiable dogs, remain in those places for eating and enjoyment.’ It is from such bloody sacrifices that the Satanists receive those demonic energies which are so necessary to them in their struggle for power or for the sake of its preservation. It is precisely here that we decipher the enigma: the strange bloodthirstiness of all, without exception all, revolutions, and of the whole of the regime of the Bolsheviks from 1917 to 1953.”

That communism, a strictly “scientific” and atheist doctrine, should be compared to devil-worshipping may at first seem strange. And yet closer study of communist history confirms this verdict. The communists’ extraordinary hatred of God and Christians, and indeed of mankind in general, can only be explained by demon-possession – more precisely, by an unconscious compulsion to bring blood-sacrifices to the devil, who was, in Christ’s words, “a murderer from the beginning” (John 8.44)...

To illustrate this point, let us take the example of Mao-Tse-Tung – with Stalin, the foremost disciple of the Leninist faith. Mao’s biographers, Jung Chang and Jon Halliday, write: “In the winter of 1917-18, still a student as he turned twenty-four, he wrote extensive commentaries on a book called A System of Ethics, by a minor late nineteenth-century German philosopher, Friedrich Paulsen. In these notes, Mao expressed the central elements in his own character, which stayed consistent for the remaining six decades of his life and defined his rule.

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

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24 Lebedev, op.cit., p. 429.
“Mao shunned all constraints of responsibility and duty. ‘People like me only have a duty to ourselves; we have no duty to other people.’ ‘I am responsible only for the reality that I know,’ he wrote, ‘and absolutely not responsible for anything else. I don’t know about the past, I don’t know about the future. They have nothing to do with the reality of my own self.’ He explicitly rejected any responsibility towards future generations. ‘Some say one has a responsibility for history. I don’t believe it. I am only concerned about developing myself… I have my desire and act on it. I am responsible to no one.’

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

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

“‘These two should be one and the same. All our actions… are driven by impulse, and the conscience that is wise goes along with this in every instance. Sometimes… conscience restrains impulses such as over-eating or over-indulgence in sex. But conscience is only there to restrain, not oppose. And the restraint is for better completion of the impulse.’

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

“Absolute selfishness and irresponsibility lay at the heart of Mao’s outlook.

“These attributes he held to be reserved for ‘Great Heroes’ – a group to which he appointed himself. For this elite, he said:

“‘Everything outside their nature, such as restrictions and constraints, must be swept away by the great strength in their nature... When Great Heroes give full play to their impulses, they are magnificently powerful, stormy and invincible. Their power is like a hurricane arising from a deep gorge, and like a sex-maniac on heat and prowling for a lover... there is no way to stop them.’
“The other central element in his character which Mao spelt out now was the joy he took in upheaval and destruction. ‘Giant wars,’ he wrote, ‘will last as long as heaven and earth and will never become extinct... The ideal of a world of Great Equality and Harmony [da tong, Confucian ideal society] is mistaken.’ This was not just the prediction that a pessimist might make; it was Mao’s desideratum, which he asserted was what the population at large wished. ‘Long-lasting peace,’ he claimed,

‘is unendurable to human beings, and tidal waves of disturbance have to be created in this state of peace... When we look at history, we adore the times of [war] when dramas happened one after another... which make reading about them great fun. When we get to the periods of peace and prosperity, we are bored... Human nature loves sudden swift changes.’

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

“He even articulated a cavalier attitude towards death:

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

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

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

**The Revolution in the Church**

As we have seen in the first part of this work, in March, 1917 the Church - 
*de facto*, if not *de jure* - renounced Tsarism, one of the pillars of Russian 
identity for nearly 1000 years. With the exception of one or two hierarchs, 
such as Metropolitan Macarius of Moscow, the hierarchy hastened to support 
the new democratic order. As Bishop Gregory (Grabbe) writes: “There were 
few who understood the whole significance of what had happened at that 
moment. Events were evaluated in society only from a political point of view 
and proceeded from a condemnation of everything that was old. The reli-
giomoral side of what had happened could not be presented in a single organ of 
the press. Unlimited freedom was presented only for the criticism and 
condemnation of everything connected with the Church. There were few who 
understood at that moment that, in accepting this coup, the Russian people 
had committed the sin of oath-breaking, had rejected the Tsar, the Anointed 
of God, and had gone along the path of the prodigal son of the Gospel 
parable, subjecting themselves to the same destructive consequences as he 
experienced on abandoning his father.”

On March 7, with the support of Archbishop Sergius (Stragorodsky) of 
Finland, the newly appointed Over-Procurator, V.E. Lvov, transferred the 
Synod’s official organ, *Tserkovno-Obshchestvennij Vestnik (Church and Society 
Messenger)*, into the hands of the “All-Russian Union of Democratic Orthodox 
Clergy and Laity”, a left-wing grouping founded in Petrograd on the same 
day and led by Titlinov, a professor at the Petrograd Academy of which 
Sergius was the rector. Archbishop (later Patriarch) Tikhon protested against 
this transfer, and the small number of signatures for the transfer made it 
illegal. However, in his zeal to hand this important Church organ into the 
hands of the liberals, Lvov completely ignored the illegality of the act and 
handed the press over to Titlinov, who promptly began to use it to preach his 
Gospel of “Socialist Christianity”, declaring that “Christianity is on the side of 
labour, not on the side of violence and exploitation”.

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26 Grabbe, *Russkaia Tserkov’ pered litsom gospodstvuiushchego zla* (The Russian Church in the 
27 Lvov was, in the words of Bishop Gregory (Grabbe), “a not completely normal fantasist” 
(op.cit., p. 4). Grabbe’s estimate of Lvov is supported by Oliver Figes, who writes: “a 
nobleman of no particular talent or profession, he was convinced of his calling to greatness, 
yet ended up in the 1920s as a pauper and a madman living on the streets of Paris” (p. 449).
28 As Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky) testified, “already in 1917 he [Sergius] was 
dreaming of combining Orthodox Church life with the subjection of the Russian land to 
Soviet power…” (“Preemstvennost’ Grekha” (The Heritage of Sin), Tsaritsyn, p. 7 ©).
29 See Mikhail V. Shkarovskii, “The Russian Orthodox Church”, in Edward Acton, Vladimir 
Cherniaev, William Rosenberg (eds.), *Critical Companion to the Russian Revolution 1914-1921*, 
Patriarkha Tikhona na Sviashchennom Sobore Rossijskoj Tserkvi 1917-18gg.” (Towards the 
Election of his Holiness Patriarch Tikhon at the Sacred Council of the Russian Church, 1917- 
18), *Suzdal’skie Eparkhial’nie Vedomosti* (Suzdal Diocesan News), № 2, November, 1997, p. 19 
©.
On April 14, a stormy meeting took place between Lvov and the Synod during which Lvov’s actions were recognised to be “uncanonical and illegal”. At this session Archbishop Sergius apparently changed course and agreed with the other bishops in condemning the unlawful transfer. However, Lvov understood that this was only a tactical protest. So he did not include Sergius among the bishops whom he planned to purge from the Synod; he thought – rightly - that Sergius would continue to be his tool in the revolution that he was introducing in the Church. The next day Lvov marched into the Synod at the head of a detachment of soldiers and read an order for the cessation of the winter session of the Synod and the retirement of all its members with the single exception of Archbishop Sergius (Stragorodsky) of Finland.

Thus in little more than a month since the coup, the Church had been effectively placed in the hands of a lay dictator, who had single-handedly dismissed her most senior bishops in the name of the “freedom of the Church”. So there was a striking difference in the way in which the Provisional Government treated secular or political society, on the one hand, and the Church, on the other. While Prince G.E. Lvov, the head of the government, refused to impose his authority on anyone, whether rioting peasants or rampaging soldiers, granting “freedom” – that is, more or less complete licence – to any self-called political or social “authority”, Prince V.E. Lvov, the over-procurator, granted quite another kind of “freedom” to the Church – complete subjection to lay control...

On April 29, the new Synod headed by Archbishop Sergius accepted an Address to the Church concerning the establishment of the principle of the election of the episcopate, and the preparation for a Council and the establishment of a Preconciliar Council. This Address triggered a revolution in the Church. The revolution consisted in the fact that all over the country the elective principle with the participation of laymen replaced the system of “episcopal autocracy” which had prevailed thereto. In almost all dioceses Diocesan Congresses elected special “diocesan councils” or committees composed of clergy and laity that restricted the power of the bishops. The application of the elective principle to almost all ecclesiastical posts, from parish offices to episcopal sees, resulted in the removal of several bishops.

30 According to I.M. Andreyev, “the whole of the Synod had decided to go into retirement. Archbishop Sergius had taken part in this resolution. But when all the members of the Synod, together with Archbishop Sergius, actually came to give in their retirement, the Over-Procurator, who had set about organizing a new Synod, drew Archbishop Sergius to this. And he took an active part in the new Synod” (Kratkij Obzor Istoriit Russkoj Tserkvi ot revoliutsii do nashikh dnej (A Short Review of the History of the Russian Church from the Revolution to our Days), Jordanville, 1952, p. 74 ©. Bishop Gregory (Grabbe) wrote: “I can remember the opinions of those who knew him and who considered him to be a careerist and the complaints of hierarchs that he promised to retire with other members of the Synod in protest against Lvov, then he changed his mind and became head of the Synod” (Letter of April 23 / May 6, 1992 to Nicholas Churilov, Church News, April, 2003, p. 9).
from their sees and the election of new ones in their stead. Thus Archbishops
Basil (Bogoyavlensky) of Chernigov, Tikhon (Nikanorov) of Kaluga and
Anthony (Khrapovitsky) of Kharkov were removed. Archbishop Joachim
(Levitsky) of Nizhni-Novgorod was even arrested and imprisoned for a time
before being shot. The retirement of Archbishop Alexis (Dorodnitsyn) of
Vladimir was justified by his earlier closeness to Rasputin. The others were
accused of being devoted to the Autocracy.\textsuperscript{31}

Although the spirit behind this revolutionary wave was undoubtedly anti-
eclesiastical in essence, by the Providence of God it resulted in some changes
that were beneficial for the Church. Thus the staunchly monarchist
Archbishop Anthony, after being forced to retire, was later reinstated at the
demand of the people. Again, Archbishop Tikhon (Bellavin) of Lithuania was
elected metropolitan of Moscow (the lawful occupant of that see, Metropolitan
Macarius, was later reconciled with him), and Archbishop
Benjamin (Kazansky) was made metropolitan of Petrograd. However, there
were also harmful changes, such as the election of Sergius Stragorodsky as
Archbishop of Vladimir.

In the countryside, meanwhile, “there was a strong anti-clerical movement:
village communities took away the church lands, removed priests from the
parishes and refused to pay for religious services. Many of the local priests
managed to escape this fate by throwing in their lot with the revolution.”\textsuperscript{32}
However, several priests were savagely killed – the martyrdom of the Church
began, not with the Bolshevik coup, but with the liberal democratic
revolution.

The turmoil in both Church and State in Russia gave the opportunity to the
Georgian Church to reassert its autocephalous status, which it had voluntarily
given up over a century before. On March 12, without the agreement of the
Holy Synod of the Russian Church, and in spite of the protests of the exarch
of Georgia, Archbishop Platon, a group of Georgian bishops proclaimed the
autocephaly of their Church and appointed Bishop Leonid (Okropiridze) of
Mingrelia as \textit{locum tenens} of the Catholicos with a Temporary
Administration composed of clergy and laity.\textsuperscript{33} The Russian Synod sent
Bishop Theophylact to look after the non-Georgian parishes in Georgia. But
he was removed from Georgia. And the new exarch, Metropolitan Cyril
(Smirnov), was not allowed into the capital. The result was a break in
communion between the two Churches.\textsuperscript{34}

\textsuperscript{31} Monk Benjamin (Gomareteli), \textit{Letopis' tserkovnykh sobytij Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi nachinaia s 1917
goda} (Chronicle of Church Events, beginning from 1917), \texttt{www.zlatoust.ws/letopis.htm}, p. 8
\textsuperscript{32} Figes, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 350.
\textsuperscript{33} V. Egorov, \textit{K istorii provozglashenia gruzinami avtokefalii svoej Tserkvi v 1917 godu} (Towards a
History of the Proclamation by the Georgians of the Autocephaly of their Church in 1917),
Moscow, 1917, p. 9; in Monk Benjamin, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 6.
\textsuperscript{34} Monk Benjamin, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 8-9.
In the same month of March the Russian government ceased subsidising the American diocese. The ruling Archbishop Eudocimus (Mescheriakov) went to the All-Russian Council in August, leaving his vicar, Bishop Alexander (Nemolovsky) of Canada, as his deputy. But then Protopriest John Kedrovsky with a group of renovationist priests tried to remove Bishop Alexander from administering the diocese and take power into their own hands “without submitting to imperial power or hierarchical decrees”.  

From June 1 to 10 the All-Russian Congress of clergy and laity took place in Moscow consisting of 800 delegates from all the dioceses. As Shkarovskii writes, it “welcomed the revolution, but expressed the wish that the Church continue to receive the legal and material support of the state, that divinity continue to be an obligatory subject in school, and that the Orthodox Church retain its schools. Consequently, a conflict soon broke out with the government. The Synod protested against the law of 20 June which transferred the [37,000] parish church schools to the Ministry of Education. A similar clash occurred over the intention to exclude divinity from the list of compulsory subjects.”

On June 20, the Provisional Government transferred 37,000 church-parish schools into the administration of the Ministry of Enlightenment. The transfer of the church schools to the state system was disastrous for the Church because the state’s schools were infected with atheism. It would be one of the first decrees that the coming Council of the Russian Orthodox Church would seek (unsuccessfully) to have repealed...

In general, the June Congress carried forward the renovationist wave; and although the June 14 decree “On Freedom of Conscience” was welcome, the government still retained de jure control over the Church. Even when the government allowed the Church to convene its own All-Russian Local Council of the Russian Orthodox Church in August, it retained the right of veto over any new form of self-administration that Council might come up with. Moreover, the Preconciliar Council convened to prepare for the forthcoming Council was to be chaired by the Church’s leading liberal, Archbishop Sergius.

Thus it looked as if the All-Russian Council would finally seal the break with the pre-revolutionary past and bring the Russian Church into the mainstream of twentieth-century ecclesiastical life, by which the liberals meant, in effect, her Protestantization and Democratization. However, by the Providence of God, it was not to be...

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35 Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 7.
36 Shkarovskii, op. cit., p. 418.
**The October Revolution**

The abysmal failure of the Russian army’s offensive in June, 1917 made the Bolshevik coup possible. Order number one and the success of the Bolshevik 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 would be about 6000, they turned out to be 400,000. An offensive that had been designed by Kerensky and the liberals to bolster the state and the forces of law and order by bringing all classes together on a patriotic wave ended by opening the path to the final destruction of the state.

The coup began with the setting up of a separate government by the Bolshevized sailors of Kronstadt, which precipitated a confused “semi-insurrection”, in Trotsky’s words, in early July. But the insurrection failed, Kerensky became prime minister and a crackdown on the Bolsheviks began. Lenin fled into hiding in Finland, and many party members were arrested: it was left to Stalin and Sverdlov to keep the party afloat inside Russia.

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...

In spite of this setback, support for the Bolsheviks continued to grow, especially after they adopted the SR slogan, “Land to the Peasants!” recognizing the peasants’ seizure of the landowners’ estates as in keeping with “revolutionary legality”. 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 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. 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.

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37 Figes, op. cit., p. 408.
38 Figes, op. cit., p. 436.
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!” 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.

Figes 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 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.”

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40 Kornilov, in Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 727.
41 Figes, op. cit., p. 457.
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 [between the Soviet and the Provisional Government]’."\(^{42}\)

On October 10 Lenin returned secretly to Petrograd. He was determined that the Bolsheviks should mount an armed insurrection 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 very accurately summed up Lenin’s dictatorial, anti-democratic 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”.\(^{43}\) 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.”\(^{44}\) Nevertheless, by 1917 there were no major differences between the two revolutionaries, so it was logical that Trotsky should join the party eventually - it was probably his vanity and ambition that prevented him 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 in its Revolutionary Military Committee, supplied the vital element that propelled the Bolsheviks to power.

\(^{42}\) Figes, op. cit., p. 459.
\(^{43}\) Trotsky, Our Political Tasks (1904); in Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 679.
\(^{44}\) Lenin, Letter to Alexandra Kollontai, March 15, 1917; in Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 726.
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…”

The lack of opposition to the Bolshevik coup was almost farcical. First, the government decreed that the Petrograd garrison should go to the front, which so enraged the garrison that it mutinied, leaving the government no substantial forces in the capital. Then, on the night of the 24th, Kerensky, the head of the government but universally despised, fled in a stolen car. 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 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 to a room at the back of the palace, where most of the remaining cadets abandoned their posts.” 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 [the Menshevik leader] proposed the formation of a united

45 Figes, op. cit., pp. 460-461.
46 Figes, op. cit., p. 488.
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…”

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 legitimating 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 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…”

47 Figes, op. cit., pp. 489-490.
48 Figes, op. cit., p. 492.
“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…”

The idea that the October revolution was in any real sense popular was dispelled by the results of the elections to the Constituent Assembly, which took place in November. Russians voted in large numbers for socialist parties – but not necessarily for the Bolsheviks, who polled less than a quarter of the vote. Many also voted for nationalist parties. In any case, the Bolsheviks were not going to allow any such Assembly. In January, 1918, after the Assembly’s first and only session, they dispersed it, thus bringing Russian democracy to an abrupt and inglorious end...

Perhaps the best commentary on the fall of the Provisional Government, as well as on the whole history of the Romanov dynasty, came on February 25, 1918, in a sermon by the future Hieromartyr John Vostorgov, rector of St. Basil’s cathedral on Red Square, entitled “On Meatfare Sunday and the anniversary of the revolution”: "The Russian monarchy, fanned by faith and the mystical Divine anointing, like ancient Israel, had great tasks and the greatest calling from God, the greatest religious destiny, which compelled many to serve it in a religious spirit. It is impossible to serve any other power in this way. A certain mystical and providential atmosphere surrounded it, as it did the ancient God-chosen Israel, the ancient theocracy and God-anointed theocratic kingdom. But let us admit the bitter truth - in its bearers it often departed from its destiny, and often, too often repeated the words of the ancient Israel which so embittered the Prophet Samuel and God Himself: 'Give me a king, such as the pagan peoples have'. It began to take its content and spirit from unchristian sources; it changed its nature. The people often turned to it only as a weapon for the exercise of power, for the sake of earthly and personal ends; one estate often unrighteously suppressed the others; 'it chained the Church of God to the footstool of vain earthly power'; the

50 Pipes, *op. cit.*, pp. 5, 149.
spiritual enlightenment of the people was forgotten; it often tried to ingratiate itself with the enemies of Christ, it went along its historical path in accordance with their command, and, when it was necessary, under the influence of indistinct murmurings from below, to make compromises, it always hastened to compromise something of the Church's breadth of action... And the judgement of God was accomplished! It placed its hope on the nobles, and gave them most privileges in life, but the nobles betrayed it and sold it and formed, together with the intelligentsia, who were mainly from their own estate, a political party which for a hundred years corrupted the people, struggled for power and yearned hungrily for power, sparing no expense, until it prepared a rising of the people, although it itself collapsed, in accordance with the judgement of God, under the ruins of the great fall of the old order. The monarchy leaned on the officials, but the officials turned out to be hirelings, changing stripes with the greatest ease and adopting any colour so long as they preserved their own position. It leaned on the bourgeoisie and the wealthy classes, supporting their prosperity and capital in every way possible, but the bourgeoisie used the money it had gained under the protection of the monarchy to nourish only its enemies. It placed its hope on the terrible strength of the army, but the army leaders betrayed it, while the officers, a year ago, rushed around and celebrated before our eyes in automobiles draped by soldiers, students and girl-students, to the shouts of everyone in the street, with red flags of rebellion... on the eve of their own, most terrible destruction. It placed its hope on the representatives of the Church, but they, instead of taking a back seat in view of the judgement of God and the sin of man, and at any rate keeping quiet, got frightened and sent telegrams from here, from royal Moscow, welcoming the coup, and drove out their own hierarchs and in a humiliating fashion called upon and enthroned over themselves a new power foreign to the Church. And so - it is accomplished! The judgement of God has thundered out. And just as Saul was chosen by God and then rejected, so has it happened with our monarchy. It is fallen before our eyes incomprehensibly easily, and now we, after all that has happened, in view of the common collapse of life, understand the words of the ancient prophet: 'O Israel, who will help you in your destruction? Where is this king of yours? Let him save you in all your cities. Let him judge you, of whom you said, "Give me a king and a prince." Thus I gave you a king in My anger, and took him back in My wrath' (Hosea 13.9-11).

"... The former authority has voluntarily abdicated from power and, one must say, has departed in silence, behaving up to now with the greatest moral dignity. All the cries of hatred against it have gradually died down, and in this year all the personal accusations against it have collapsed one after the other."

51 This refers to the Provisional Government’s official inquiry into the deeds of the Tsar and Tsaritsa, which completely acquitted them of all wrongdoing. (V.M.)
"Those who seized power after the overthrow of the monarch have done their own will. They are responsible for it before history, before the people, before God. But God has allowed them to carry out their reward both on us and on themselves. Just like the ancient peoples who had been instruments of the punishment of Israel, they have split up endlessly in front of our eyes, overthrowing each other, and in the course of a year they have covered the distance which in antiquity would have required five hundred years.

"Immediately declaring themselves outside God and every religion, they have constructed a tower of Babylon and a Babylonian babble and have arrived at mutual incomprehension and complete division. Monomakh's cap has turned out to be heavy. It was easy to scramble onto the throne of power, but it has turned out to be very difficult to remain sitting on it, as it is in general difficult to sit on the point of a sword or bayonet... And God, O God! How terrible has your righteous judgement been in this year. Everybody has received his due reward and chained himself with his own hands.

"The parties of the intelligentsia-noblemen - where are they? Beaten, driven out, persecuted! How they yearned for power, how they sought to be the members of the first provisional 'right-believing' - with the atheists Kerensky, Guchkov and Shingarev - government! How they revelled and triumphed in the intoxication of power, how they drowned in greetings, how they rejoiced in the supposedly bloodless revolution, how they buried Russia and the people with their addresses, appeals and calls! Where are they, those first rulers? Show me just one who is still in power! They are killed, in prisons, in exile, in trembling, in obscurity!...

"And everything of which they justly accused the old power the new rulers have repeated, only a thousand times worse. What a Divine sentence is revealed in this, what shame before human history and what complete lack of any kind of justification! That is what happened to the first power, which constantly changed its members before it was destroyed by our present rulers, who came out of its ranks and were fed by it.

"... Before us appear avengers sent by God from outside - Wilhelm [the German Kaiser], and from within - the Bolsheviks. We repeat: they, too, are doing their own will, they are responsible for all their actions, all their cruelties, all the blood they have shed, all the violence they have committed, but God allows them to do their own evil will for the revelation of His own judgement. There is something terrible in all this, and something providential. They are weapons of the wrath of God, and Wilhelm has often said that. Like ancient Rome, iron-clad and bloody, pitiless and merciless, they have been enthroned over our ruined life. It is not delight in evil that speaks through my lips. You know, the prophet did not sympathize with Rome, of course, he did not rejoice in her coming - he only foretold Rome's coming with sorrow, and foretold the end of the people's history as if from a flood... But God judged
and judges still, and before our consciousness there arises this thought: God
exists, and His impartial judgement exists!

"And on the anniversary of the revolution I open the third chapter of the
mysterious book. It has the inscription: 'And at the end of the time an end
shall be put to the desolation' (Daniel 9.27).

"If Wilhelm and our present rulers do not understand the signs of the
times, the terrible judgement of God will strike them here, while they are still
on the earth. They themselves will be divided and will perish in civil war.'
And the word will be fulfilled': 'Let the sword enter into their own hearts, and
let their bows be broken' (Psalm 36.15).

"... Just as Bolshevism was the logical consequence of socialism in its search
for freedom, so the logical consequence and end of freedom will be anarchy,
and it will come to us - black, terrible, mysterious and awful. It will sweep
away the present rulers, it will once more reveal the terrible pages of the
judgement of God. And this judgement of God will reveal to us openly that
there is not and cannot be complete and absolute freedom for man, that it is
limited and must be directed by the Law of God: like steam or a steam-engine
in the absence of a good driver, it lead to the destruction of life; like a river
which flows beyond its bed and over its banks, it turns life into a bog and a
source of illnesses. And when the 'end from the flood' will appear before us,
then will begin - if we repent, of course, and are worthy of life, and not of
death, - the recreation of life. And not only in Russia, but in all humanity..."52

The Moscow Council of 1917-18

On August 15, the Local Council of the Russian Orthodox Church
convened. It assembled in the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour in Moscow was
composed of 564 delegates, including 299 laymen. On the one hand, it
included among the delegates such open Freemasons as Lvov, and on the
other, it excluded such pious hierarchs as Metropolitan Macarius of Moscow
because of his monarchist views. However, in spite of this and other flaws, it
was the first Council in the history of the Russian Church since 1682, and was
to prove to be a critical point of repose, refreshment and regrouping for the
Church before the terrible trials that awaited her. It coincided with the fall of
the Provisional Government and the Bolshevik coup, the dissolution of the
Constituent Assembly, the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk and the beginning of the
Civil War. On all these events it made declarations that expressed the opinion
of Believing Russia. In a real sense, it was the voice of Russia – or, at any rate,
of that large proportion of the population which had not been engulfed by the
revolutionary frenzy. As for the Bolsheviks, whose decrees with regard to the
Church were either ignored or outrightly defied by the Council, they made no

52 Sergius and Tatiana Fomina, Rossia pered Vtorym Prishestviem (Russia before the Second
serious attempt to impede its work before closing it down on September 20, 1918...

At the beginning, however, there was little sign that more than a minority of the delegates understood the full apocalyptic significance of the events they were living through. On August 24, and again on October 20, the Council issued statements condemning the violence, theft and sacrilege against churches, monasteries and priests that had been increasing ever since February. But in general revolutionary sentiment was dominant. Thus according to Princess Urusova, the Council even decreed that there should be no discussion of “politics” – that is, no condemnation of the revolution. Instead property questions were discussed. But then a professor from Belorussia said: “We should not be discussing these questions now! Russia is perishing, the throne is mocked. Without an Anointed of God, an Orthodox Tsar, she will soon fall under the power of darkness.” But he could not continue his speech since he had touched on “politics”...

In general, the Holy Synod, while condemning the moral degeneration taking place in the country, did not indicate the act that had opened the path to this: the nation’s – and the Synod’s – betrayal of the Tsar and Tsarism. The Council was similarly pusillanimous at first. As N. Kusakov writes, “I have long asked myself: why did the council not demand of the Provisional Government the immediate release of the Royal Family from under guard? Why did Metropolitan Pitirim of Petrograd and Metropolitan Macarius of Moscow remain in prison under the Provisional Government during the days of the Council? The cold breath of February blew in the corridors of the Council…”

On October 21, during Vespers in the Dormition cathedral of the Kremlin, two people dressed in soldiers’ uniforms went up to the shrine and relics of St. Hermogen, Patriarch of Moscow, threw off the covers and began to remove the vestments. When taken to the commissariat, they told the police

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53 Metropolitan Tikhon said: “Look! Her unfortunate, maddened children are tormenting our dear mother, your native Rus’, they are trying to tear her to pieces, they wish to take away her hallowed treasure – the Orthodox Faith. They defame your Father-Tsar, they destroy His portraits, they disparage his Imperial decrees, and mock him. Can your heart be calm before this, O Russian man? Again ask of your conscience. It will remind you of your truly loyal oath. It will say to you – be a loving son of your native land” (in Archimandrite Luke, “Nationalism, Russia, and the Restoration of the Patriarchate”, *Orthodox Life*, vol. 51, № 6, November-December, 2001, pp. 30-31).


55 Kusakov, in *Prazvoslavnej Tsar-Muchenik* (The Orthodox Tsar-Martyr), Moscow: The Orthodox Pilgrim, 1997, pp. 727-728 ®. Bishop Diomedes of Anadyr and Chukotka writes that “the revolutionary council petitioned the Bolsheviks for the release of many of its members who had been arrested, and gained what it asked for in practically every case. However, this council… in the course of almost one year did not petition even by a single word for the release from prison of Tsar Nicholas Alexandrovich with his wife and children”.

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that “now there is freedom and everyone can do anything he wants”. Three
days later a penitential moleben was carried out in front of the shrine. The
next day, the October revolution took place. St. Hermogen, who been
canonized by the Church only a few years before, was notable for his refusal
to recognize the government of the False Demetrius, and for his call to the
nation to rise up in arms against it. For those with eyes to see, the incident at
his shrine just before the Bolshevik coup was a sign that the time had come to
act in his spirit, against another false or anti-government.

The Council seemed to understand this, for after the Bolsheviks came to
power on October 25, a new spirit of defiance began to prevail in it, a spirit
that became still stronger after the Bolsheviks dispersed the Constituent
Assembly in January. One of the delegates, Metropolitan Eulogius of Paris
and Western Europe, described the change thus: “Russian life in those days
was like a sea tossed by the storm of revolution. Church life had fallen into
a state of disorganization. The external appearance of the Council, because of
the diversity of its composition, its irreconcilability and the mutual hostility of
its different tendencies and states of mind, was at first matter for anxiety and
sadness and even seemed to constitute a cause for apprehension... Some
members of the Council had already been carried away by the wave of
revolution. The intelligentsia, peasants, workers and professors all tended
irresistibly to the left. Among the clergy there were also different elements.
Some of them proved to be ‘leftist’ participants of the previous revolutionary
Moscow Diocesan Congress, who stood for a thorough and many-sided
reform of church life. Disunion, disorder, dissatisfaction, even mutual
distrust... – such was the state of the Council at first. But – O miracle of God!
– everything began gradually to change... The disorderly assembly, moved
by the revolution and in contact with its sombre elements, began to change
into something like a harmonious whole, showing external order and internal
solidarity. People became peaceable and serious in their tasks and began to
feel differently and to look on things in a different way. This process of
prayerful regeneration was evident to every observant eye and perceptible to
every participant in the Council. A spirit of peace, renewal and unanimity
inspired us all...”

The three most important decisions of the Council were (1) the restoration
of the Patriarchate (November, 1917), (2) the anathematization of Soviet
power (February, 1918), and (3) the declaration of the invalidity of all
defrockings of clergy for their political opinions (August, 1918).

1. The Restoration of the Patriarchate. The election of Metropolitan
Tikhon of Moscow as Patriarch of Moscow and All-Russia was a profoundly
conservative act, a recreation of one of the major institutions of Muscovite
Russia that Peter the Great had destroyed, at a time when open war had just

56 Translated in Nicholas Zernov, “The 1917 Council of the Russian Orthodox Church”,
been proclaimed on the whole of the Russian past. Through it the wish of one of the peasant delegates was fulfilled: “We have a tsar no more; no father whom we love. It is impossible to love a synod; and therefore we, the peasants, want a Patriarch.” Archbishop Hilarion said in triumph: “The eagle of Petrine autocracy, shaped in imitation of the West, tore asunder the Patriarchate, that sacred heart of Russian Orthodoxy. The sacrilegious hand of the impious Peter pulled down the senior hierarch of the Russian Church from his traditional seat in the Dormition Cathedral. The Council, by the authority given it by God, has once more placed the patriarch of Moscow in the chair, which belongs to him by inalienable right.”

Metropolitan Tikhon was enthroned on November 21 in the Kremlin cathedral of the Dormition to the sound of rifle fire from the battle for Moscow outside. With the enthronement of the patriarch, as Sergius Firsov writes, “an historical event took place – the Orthodox Church received its canonical head, whose voice had not been heard for a whole 217 years. Not only formally, but effectively this was the closing of the last page in the history of the Synodal period.”

According to the new constitution of the Russian Church agreed at the Council, the Church’s supreme organ was the Sacred All-Russian Council, composed of bishops, clergy and laity, which was to be periodically convoked by the Patriarch but to which the Patriarch himself was responsible. Between Councils, the Patriarch administered the Church with the aid of two permanent bodies: the Synod of Bishops, and the Higher Church Council, on which parish clergy and laity could sit. Questions relating to theology, religious discipline and ecclesiastical administration were to be the prerogative of the Synod of Bishops, while secular-juridical, charity and other church-related social questions were to be the prerogative of the Higher Church Council. On December 7 the Holy Synod was elected, and on December 8 – the Higher Church Council.

On January 25, the Council heard that Metropolitan Vladimir of Kiev had been murdered by the Bolsheviks. These events concentrated minds on the danger the Patriarch was in; and on the same day the Council immediately

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57 Hilarion, quoted in John Shelton, *Church and State in Russia: The Last Years of the Empire 1900-1917*, New York: Octagon Books, 1965, p. 260. Archimandrite Luke writes: “The idea that a Patriarch would replace the Tsar (especially after his execution) was not absent from the delegates’ understanding. ‘The proponents for the scheme to re-establish the Patriarchate emphasized the fact that “the state desired to be non-confessional, openly severing its alliance with the church”, and consequently the Church “must become militant and have its own spiritual leader”’. ‘Somehow the thought of Patriarch became associated with that of Tsar, while those opposed to the reestablishment of the Patriarchate brought forward democratic and republican principles.’” (“Nationalism, Russia and the Restoration of the Patriarchate”, *Orthodox Life*, November-December, 2001, p. 32)

58 Firsov, *Russkaia Tserkov’ nakanune Peremen (konets 1890-x ~ 1918 gg.)* (The Russian Church on the eve of the Changes (end of the 1890s to 1918), Moscow, 2002, p. 542 ©.
passed a resolution entrusting him with the drawing up of the names of three men who could serve as locum tenentes of the Patriarch in the event of his death and before the election of a new Patriarch. These names were to be kept secret - on February 3/16 Prince Trubestkoy said that there had been “a closed session of the Council” to discuss this question, and that “it was decreed that the whole fullness of the rights of the Patriarch should pass to the locum tenens”, and that “it is not fitting to speak about all the motivation behind the decision taken in an open session”.59

The Patriarch’s will was revised by him towards the end of 1924, and was published only after his death in 1925. It was read out in the presence of sixty hierarchs and declared: “In the event of our death our patriarchal rights and obligations, until the canonical election of a new Patriarch, we grant temporarily to his Eminence Metropolitan Cyril (Smirnov). In the event of the impossibility, by reason of whatever circumstances, of his entering upon the exercise of the indicated rights and obligations, they will pass to his Eminence Metropolitan Agathangelus (Preobrazhensky). If this metropolitan, too, does not succeed in accomplishing this, then our patriarchal rights and obligations will pass to his Eminence Peter (Polyansky), Metropolitan of Krutitsa.” Since both Metropolitans Cyril and Agathangelus were in exile at the time of the Patriarch’s death, Metropolitan Peter became the patriarchal locum tenens.

Patriarch Tikhon’s choice turned out to be inspired, although Metropolitan Peter was not well known at the time of the Council. As Regelson comments: “That the first-hierarchical authority in the Russian Church after the death of Patriarch Tikhon was able to be preserved was thanks only to the fact that one of the patriarchal locum tenentes Patriarch Tikhon chose in 1918 was Metropolitan Peter, who at the moment of the choice was only a servant of the Synod! Many hierarchs were amazed and disturbed by his subsequent swift ‘career’, which changed him in the course of six years into the metropolitan of Krutitsa and Kolomna... But it was precisely thanks to the extraordinary nature of his destiny that he turned out to be the only one chosen by the Patriarch (in actual fact, chosen by the Council, as entrusted to the Patriarch) who was left in freedom at the moment of the death of Patriarch Tikhon. It is difficult even to conjecture how complicated and, besides, tragic would have been the destiny of the Russian Church if the wise thought of the Council and the Patriarch had not been realized in life.”60

2. The Attitude towards Soviet power. The Council refused to recognize the legitimacy of Soviet power. Thus when, on the day after the coup, October 26, Lenin nationalized all land, making the Church’s and parish priests’ property illegal, the Council addressed a letter to the faithful on November 11, calling the revolution “descended from the Antichrist and possessed by atheism”: “Open combat is fought against the Christian Faith, in opposition to

59 Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 15.
60 Regelson, op. cit., p. 67.
all that is sacred, arrogantly abasing all that bears the name of God (II Thessalonians 2.4)... But no earthly kingdom founded on ungodliness can ever survive: it will perish from internal strife and party dissension. Thus, because of its frenzy of atheism, the State of Russia will fall... For those who use the sole foundation of their power in the coercion of the whole people by one class, no motherland or holy place exists. They have become traitors to the motherland and instigated an appalling betrayal of Russia and her true allies. But, to our grief, as yet no government has arisen which is sufficiently one with the people to deserve the blessing of the Orthodox Church. And such will not appear on Russian soil until we turn with agonizing prayer and tears of repentance to Him, without Whom we labour in vain to lay foundations...”

This recognition of the real nature of the revolution came none too early. On November 15, a Tver peasant, Michael Yefimovich Nikonov, wrote to the Council: “We think that the Most Holy Synod made an irreparable mistake when the bishops went to meet the revolution. We do not know the reasons for this. Was it for fear of the Jews? In accordance with the prompting of their heart, or for some laudable reasons? Whatever the reason, their act produced a great temptation in the believers, and not only in the Orthodox, but even among the Old Ritualists. Forgive me for touching on this question – it is not our business to judge that: this is a matter for the Council, I am only placing on view the judgement of the people. People are saying that by this act of the Synod many right-thinking people were led into error, and also many among the clergy. We could hardly believe our ears at what we heard at parish and deanery meetings. Spiritual fathers, tempted by the deception of freedom and equality, demanded that hierarchs they dislike be removed together with their sees, and that they should elect those whom they wanted. Readers demanded the same equality, so as not to be subject to their superiors. That is the absurdity we arrived at when we emphasized the satanic idea of the revolution. The Orthodox Russian people is convinced that the Most Holy Council in the interests of our holy mother, the Church, the Fatherland and Batyushka Tsar, should give over to anathema and curse all self-called persons and all traitors who trampled on their oath together with the satanic idea of the revolution. And the Most Holy Council will show to its flock who will take over the helm of administration in the great State. We suppose it must be he who is in prison [the Tsar], but if he does not want to rule over us traitors,... then let it indicate who is to accept the government of the State; that is only common sense. The act of Sacred Coronation and Anointing with holy oil of our tsars in the Dormition Cathedral [of the Moscow Kremlin] was no simple comedy. It was they who received from God the authority to rule the people, giving account to Him alone, and by no means a constitution or some kind of parliament of not quite decent people capable only of revolutionary arts and possessed by the love of power... Everything that I

61 On the same day, however, the Council decreed that those killed on both sides in the conflict should be given Christian burials.
have written here is not my personal composition alone, but the voice of the Russian Orthodox people, the 100-million-strong village Russia in which I live."\(^{62}\)

Many people were indeed disturbed by such questions as: had the Church betrayed the Tsar in March 1917? Were Christians guilty of breaking their oath to the Tsar by accepting the Provisional Government? Should the Church formally absolve the people of their oath to the Tsar? The leadership of the Council passed consideration of these questions, together with Nikonov’s letter, to a subsection entitled “On Church Discipline”. This subsection had several meetings in the course of the next nine months, but came to no definite decisions…\(^{63}\)

The Council’s decree of December 2, “On the Legal Status of the Russian Orthodox Church”, ruled, on the one hand, that the State could issue no law relating to the Church without prior consultation with and approval by her, and on the other hand, that any decree and by-laws issued by the Orthodox Church that did not directly contradict state laws were to be systematically recognized by the State as legally binding. Church holidays were to remain state holidays, blasphemy and attempts to lure members of the Church away from her were to remain illegal, and schools of all levels organized and run by the Church were to be recognised by the State on a par with the secular schools. It is clear from this decree that the Church was determined to go Her own way in complete defiance of the so-called “authorities”.

On December 11 Lenin decreed that all Church schools be transferred to the Council of People’s Commissars. As a result, the Church was deprived of all its academies, seminaries, schools and all the property linked with them. Then, on December 18, ecclesiastical marriage was deprived of its legal status and civil marriage introduced in its place.

As if to test the decree “On the Legal Status of the Russian Orthodox Church”, on January 13, Alexandra Kollontai, the People’s Commissar of Social Welfare (and Lenin’s mistress), sent a detachment of sailors to occupy the Alexander Nevsky monastery and turn it into a sanctuary for war invalids. They were met by an angry crowd of worshippers and in the struggle which followed one priest, Fr. Peter Skipetrov, was shot dead.\(^{64}\)

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According to Orlando Figes, Lenin was not yet ready for a confrontation with the Church, but Kollontai’s actions forced his hand. On January 20 a law on freedom of conscience, later named the “Decree on the Separation of the Church from the State and of the School from the Church”, was passed (it was published three days later in Izvestia). This was the Bolsheviks’ fiercest attack yet on the Church. It forbade religious bodies from owning property (all property of religious organizations was declared to be the heritage of the people), from levying dues, from organizing into hierarchical organizations, and from teaching religion to persons under 18 years of age. Ecclesiastical and religious societies did not have the rights of a juridical person. The registering of marriages was to be done exclusively by the civil authorities. Thus, far from being a blow struck for freedom of conscience, it was, as the Council put it, a decree on freedom from conscience, and an excuse for large-scale pillaging of churches and murders, often in the most bestial manner.

Fr. Alexander Mazyrin points out that this decree in effect deprived the Church of its rights as a legal person. “This meant that de jure the Church ceased to exist as a single organization. Only local religious communities could exist in legal terms, the authorities signing with them agreements on the use of Church property. The Eighth Department of the People’s Commissariat of Justice, which was due to put into practice Lenin’s decree, was officially dubbed the ‘Liquidation’ Department. It was the elimination of the Church, not its legalization as a social institution, that was the aim pursued by the ‘people’s commissars’ government.”

On January 19 / February 1, Patriarch Tikhon, anticipating the decree, and even before the Council had reconvened, issued his famous anathema against the Bolsheviks: “By the power given to Us by God, we forbid you to approach the Mysteries of Christ, we anathematise you, if only you bear Christian names and although by birth you belong to the Orthodox Church. We also adjure all of you, faithful children of the Orthodox Church of Christ, not to enter into any communion with such outcasts of the human race: ‘Remove the evil one from among you’ (I Corinthians 5.13).” The decree ended with an appeal to defend the Church, if necessary, to the death. For “the gates of hell shall not prevail against Her” (Matthew 16.18).

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66 Professor Ivan Andreyev, “The Catacomb Church in the Soviet Union”, Orthodox Life, March-April, 1951. For details of the destruction wrought against the Church in these years, see Vladimir Rusak, Pir Satany (Satan’s Feast), London, Canada: Zarya, 1991 ®.
68 “When they asked the holy Patriarch why he had issued his epistle on the eve of the Council’s Sitting, Vladyka replied that he did not want to put the Council under the hammer and preferred to take it on himself alone” (Andreyev, op. cit., p. 9).
69 Russian text in M.E. Gubonin, Akty Sviateishego Patriarkha Tikhona (The Acts of His Holiness Patriarch Tikhon), Moscow: St. Tikhon’s Theological Institute, 1994, pp. 82-85 ®; Deiania
The significance of this anathema lies not so much in the casting out of the Bolsheviks themselves, as in the command to the faithful to have no communion with them. In other words, the government were to be regarded, not only as apostates from Christ (that was obvious), but also as having no moral authority, no claim to obedience whatsoever – an attitude taken by the Church to no other government in the whole of Her history. Coming so soon after the Bolsheviks’ dissolution of the Constituent Assembly, it indicated that now that constitutionalism had proved its uselessness in the face of demonic barbarism, it was time for the Church to enter the struggle in earnest...

It has been argued that the Patriarch’s decree did not anathematise Soviet power as such, but only those who were committing acts of violence and sacrilege against the Church. However, this argument fails to take into account several facts. First, the patriarch himself, in his declarations of June 16 and July 1, 1923, repented precisely of his “anathematisation of Soviet power”. Secondly, even if the decree did not formally anathematise Soviet power as such, since Soviet power sanctioned and initiated the acts of violence, the faithful were in effect being exhorted to having nothing to do with it. And thirdly, in his Epistle to the Council of People’s Commissars on the first anniversary of the revolution, November 7, 1918, the Patriarch obliquely but clearly confirmed his non-recognition of Soviet power, saying: “It is not our business to make judgments about earthly authorities. Every power allowed by God would attract to itself Our blessing if it were truly ‘the servant of God’, for the good of those subject to it, and were ‘terrible not for good works, but for evil’ (Romans 13.3,4). But now to you, who have used authority for the persecution of the innocent, We extend this Our word of exhortation...”

It was important that the true significance of the anathema for the Church’s relationship with the State be pointed out. This was done immediately after the proclamation of the anathema, when Count D.A. Olsufyev pointed out that at the moleben they had just sung ‘many years’ to the powers that be – that is, to the Bolsheviks whom they had just anathematized! “I understand that the Apostle called for obedience to all authorities – but hardly that ‘many years’ should be sung to them. I know that his ‘most pious and most autocratic’ [majesty] was replaced by ‘the right-believing Provisional Government’ of Kerensky and company... And I think that the time for unworthy compromises has passed.”

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70 In a letter to Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky) that was captured by the Bolsheviks, the Patriarch called the Bolsheviks “oprichniki” – that is, he compared them to the murderous henchmen of Ivan the Terrible (Za Khrista Postradavshie, Moscow, 1997, vol. 1, p. 426 ©).
71 Gubonin, op. cit, pp. 280, 296.
72 Gubonin, op. cit, p. 151.
On January 22 / February 4 the Patriarch’s anathema was discussed in a session of the Council presided over by Metropolitan Arsenius of Novgorod, and the following resolution put forward by a special commission attached to the Conciliar Council was officially accepted by the Council: “The Sacred Council of the Orthodox Russian Church welcomes with love the epistle of his Holiness Patriarch Tikhon, which punishes the evil-doers and rebukes the enemies of the Church of Christ. From the height of the patriarchal throne there has thundered the word of excommunication [preschenia] and a spiritual sword has been raised against those who continually mock the faith and conscience of the people. The Sacred Council witnesses that it remains in the fullest union with the father and intercessor of the Russian Church, pays heed to his appeal and is ready in a sacrificial spirit to confess the Faith of Christ against her blasphemers. The Sacred Council calls on the whole of the Russian Church headed by her archpastors and pastors to unite now around the Patriarch, so as not to allow the mocking of our holy faith.” (Act 67.35-37).

At this session A.A. Vasiliev said: “We thank the Lord for giving us what we have been waiting for – that is, finally to hear the true Church voice of our Most Holy Father and Patriarch. For the first time in this year of disorder, a truly ecclesiastical word, a word spoken with regard to the events about

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74 Deiania, op. cit., vol. 6, p. 36.

Another source quotes the following response of the Council to the patriarch’s anathema:

“The Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia in his epistle to the beloved in the Lord archpastors, pastors and all faithful children of the Orthodox Church of Christ has drawn the spiritual sword against the outcasts of the human race – the Bolsheviks, and anathematised them. The head of the Russian Orthodox Church adjures all her faithful children not to enter into any communion with these outcasts. For their satanic deeds they are cursed in this life and in the life to come. Orthodox! His Holiness the Patriarch has been given the right to bind and to loose according to the word of the Saviour… Do not destroy your souls, cease communion with the servants of Satan – the Bolsheviks. Parents, if your children are Bolsheviks, demand authoritatively that they renounce their errors, that they bring forth repentance for their eternal sin, and if they do not obey you, renounce them. Wives, if your husbands are Bolsheviks and stubbornly continue to serve Satan, leave your husbands, save yourselves and your children from the soul-destroying infection. An Orthodox Christian cannot have communion with the servants of the devil… Repent, and with burning prayer call for help from the Lord of Hosts and thrust away from yourselves ‘the hand of strangers’ – the age-old enemies of the Christian faith, who have declared themselves in self-appointed fashion ‘the people’s power’… If you do not obey the Church, you will not be her sons, but participants in the cruel and satanic deeds wrought by the open and secret enemies of Christian truth… Dare! Do not delay! Do not destroy your soul and hand it over to the devil and his stooges.” (“Iz sobrania Tsentral’nogo gosudarstvennogo arkhiva Oktyabr’skoj revoliutsii: listovka bez vykhodnykh dannyh, pod № 1011” (From the collection of the Central State Archive of the October Revolution: pamphlet without dates, under № 1011), Nauka i Religia (Science and Religion), 1989, № 4 ®; partly translated in Arfed Gustavson, The Catacomb Church, Jordanville, N.Y.: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1960, p. 9). One member of the Council said: “If the father, mother, brothers and sisters did not receive the returning evil-doer, but expelled him, saying: ‘You are a scoundrel, your hands are covered in blood, you are not our son, nor our brother,’ the disorders would cease.” (Deiania, op. cit., vol. 6, p. 40).
which nothing has been said up to now. And a pastoral judgement delivered on all those who are guilty of these events... Our Christian conscience must suggest to each of us what concessions he can and cannot make, and when he must lay down his life for the truth. People are puzzled about precisely who is subject to this ban which his Holiness the Patriarch speaks about in his epistle. After all, it is not just since yesterday, and not since the coming of the Bolsheviks, that we have been experiencing a real satanic attack on the Church of Christ, these fratricides, fights and mutual hatred. At the very beginning of the revolution the authorities carried out an act of apostasy from God (voices: “Right!”). Prayer was banned in the armies, banners with the cross of Christ were replaced by red rags. It is not only the present powers that be that are guilty of this, but also those who have already departed from the scene. We shall continue to hope that the present rulers also, who are now shedding blood, will depart from the scene.”75

Then Fr. Vladimir Vostokov spoke: “In this hall too much has been said about the terrible things that have been suffered, and if we were to list and describe them all, it this huge hall would be filled with books. So I am not going to speak about the horrors. I want to point to the root from which these horrors have been created. I understand this present assembly of ours as a spiritual council of doctors consulting over our dangerously ill mother, our homeland. When doctors come up to treat a sick person, they do not stop at the latest manifestations of the illness, but they look deeper, they investigate the root cause of the illness. So in the given case it is necessary to reveal the root of the illness that the homeland is suffering. From this platform, before the enlightener of Russia, the holy Prince Vladimir, I witness to my priestly conscience that the Russian people is being deceived, and that up to this time no-one has told them the whole truth. The moment has come when the Council, as the only gathering that is lawful and truly elected by the people must tell the people the holy truth, fearing nobody except God Himself...

“...The derailing of the train of history took place at the end of February, 1917; it was aided first of all by the Jewish-Masonic global organization, which cast into the masses the slogans of socialism, the slogans of a mythical freedom... So much has been said here about the terrors brought upon the country by Bolshevism. But what is Bolshevism? - the natural and logical development of Socialism. And Socialism is - that antichristian movement which in the final analysis produces Bolshevism as its highest development and which engenders those phenomena completely contrary to the principles of Christian asceticism that we are living through now.

“Unfortunately, many of our professors and writers have arrayed Socialism in beautiful clothes, calling it similar to Christianity, and thereby they together with the agitators of revolution have led the uneducated people into error. Fathers and brothers! What fruits did we expect of Socialism, when

75 Deiania, op. cit., vol. 6, p. 40; Yakovitsky, op. cit.
we not only did not fight against it, but also defended it at times, or almost always were shyly silent before its contagion? We must serve the Church by faith, and save the country from destructive tendencies, and for that it is necessary to speak the truth to the people without delay, telling them what Socialism consists of and what it leads to.

“The Council must say that in February-March a violent coup took place which for the Orthodox Christian is oath-breaking that requires purification through repentance. We all, beginning with Your Holiness and ending with myself, the last member of the Council, must bow the knee before God, and beseech Him to forgive us for allowing the growth in the country of evil teachings and violence. Only after sincere repentance by the whole people will the country be pacified and regenerated. And God will bestow upon us His mercy and grace. But if we continue only to anathematize without repenting, without declaring the truth to the people, then they will with just cause say to us: You, too, are guilty that the country has been reduced to this crime, for which the anathema now sounds out; you by your pusillanimity have allowed the development of evil and have been slow to call the facts and phenomena of state life by their real names!

“Pastors of the Church, search out the soul of the people! If we do not tell the people the whole truth, if we do not call on them now to offer nationwide repentance for definite sins, we will leave this conciliar chamber as turncoats and traitors of the Church and the Homeland. I am so unshakeably convinced of what I say now that I would not hesitate to repeat it even if I were on the verge of death. It is necessary to regenerate in the minds of people the idea of a pure central authority – the idea that has been darkened by the pan-Russian deception. We overthrew the Tsar and subjected ourselves to the Jews! [Voices of members of the Council: ‘True, true…’] The only salvation for the Russian people is a wise Russian Orthodox Tsar. Only through the election of a wise, Orthodox, Russian Tsar can Russia be placed on the good, historical path and re-establish good order. As long as we will not have a wise Orthodox tsar, there will be no order among us, and the people’s blood will continue to be shed, and the centrifugal forces will divide the one people into hostile pieces, until the train of history is completely destroyed or until foreign peoples enslave us as a crowd incapable of independent State life…

“We all must unite into one Christian family under the banner of the Holy and Life-Creating Cross and under the leadership of his Holiness the Patriarch, to say that Socialism, which calls people as if to brotherhood, is an openly antichristian and evil phenomenon, that the Russian people has become the plaything of the Jewish-Masonic organizations behind which the Antichrist is already visible in the form of an internationalist tsar, that by playing on false freedom, the people is forging for itself slavery to the Judaeo-
Masons. If we say this openly and honestly, then I do not know what will happen to us, but I know that Russian will be alive!“76

On February 27 / March 12, 1918 (94th Act) the Council reaffirmed the patriarch’s anathema, proclaiming: “To those who utter blasphemies and lies against our holy faith and Church, who rise up against the holy churches and monasteries, encroaching on the inheritance of the Church, while abusing and killing the priests of the Lord and zealots of the patristic faith: Anathema”.

The Bolshevik decree on the separation of Church and State elicited strong reactions from individual members of the Council. Thus one exclaimed: “We overthrew the tsar and subjected ourselves to the Jews!” And another said: “The sole means of salvation for the Russian nation is a wise Orthodox Russian tsar!” In reply to this remark, Protopriest Elijah Gromoglasov said: “Our only hope is not that we may have an earthly tsar or president... but that there should be a heavenly Tsar, Christ”77

The section of the Council appointed to report on the decree made the following recommendations: “The individuals wielding the governmental authority audaciously attempt to destroy the very existence of the Orthodox Church. In order to realize this satanic design, the Soviet of People’s Commissars published the decree concerning the separation of the Church from the State, which legalized an open persecution not only of the Orthodox Church, but of all other religious communions, Christian or non-Christian. Not despising deceit, the enemies of Christ fraudulently put on the appearance of granting by it religious liberty.

“Welcoming all real extension of liberty of conscience, the Council at the same time points out that by the provisions of the said decree, the freedom of the Orthodox Church, as well as of all other religious organizations and communions in general, is rendered void. Under the pretence of ‘the separation of the Church from the State’, the Soviet of People’s Commissars attempts to render impossible the very existence of the churches, the ecclesiastical institutions, and the clergy.

“Under the guise of taking over the ecclesiastical property, the said decree aims to destroy the very possibility of Divine worship and ministration. It declares that ‘no ecclesiastical or religious association has the right to possess property’, and ‘all property of the existing ecclesiastical and religious associations in Russia is declared to be national wealth.’ Thereby the Orthodox churches and monasteries, those resting-places of the relics of the saints revered by all Orthodox people, become the common property of all citizens irrespective of their credal differences – of Christians, Jews, Muslims and pagans, and the holy objects designated for the Divine service, i.e. the

76 Deiania, op. cit., vol. 6, pp. 41-43.
77 Deiania, op. cit., p. 159.
holy Cross, the holy Gospel, the sacred vessels, the holy miracle-working icons are at the disposal of the governmental authorities, which may either permit or not (as they wish) their use by the parishes.

“Let the Russian people understand that they (the authorities) wish to deprive them of God’s churches with their sacred objects! As soon as all property of the Church is taken away, it is not possible to offer any aid to it, for in accordance with the intention of the decree everything donated shall be taken away. The support of monasteries, churches and the clergy alike becomes impossible.

“But that is not all: in consequence of the confiscation of the printing establishments, it is impossible for the Church independently to publish the holy Gospel as well as other sacred and liturgical books in their wonted purity and authenticity.

“In the same manner, the decree affects the pastors of the Church. Declaring that ‘no one may refuse to perform his civil duties on account of his religious views’, it thereby constrains them to fulfil military obligations forbidden them by the 83rd canon of the holy Apostles. At the same time, ministers of the altar are removed from educating the people. The very teaching of the law of God, not only in governmental, but even in private schools, is not permitted; likewise all theological institutions are doomed to be closed. The Church is thus excluded from the possibility of educating her own pastors.

“Declaring that ‘the governmental functions or those of other public-juridical institutions shall not be accompanied by any religious rites or ceremonies,’ the decree thereby sacrilegiously sunders all connections of the government with the sanctities of the faith.

“On the basis of all these considerations, the holy Council decrees:

“1. The decree published by the Soviet of People’s Commissars regarding the separation of the Church from the State represents in itself, under the guise of a law declaring liberty of conscience, an inimical attempt upon the life of the Orthodox Church, and is an act of open persecution.

“2. All participation, either in the publication of the law so injurious to the Church, or in attempts to put it into practice, is not reconcilable with membership of the Orthodox Church, and subjects all transgressors belonging to the Orthodox communion to the heaviest penalties, to the extent of excommunicating them from the Church (in accordance with the 73rd canon of the holy Apostles, and the 13th canon of the Seventh Ecumenical Council).”

These recommendations were then adopted by the Council as its official reply to the decree (February 7). In the same spirit, on April 15 the Council decreed: “Clergymen serving in anti-ecclesiastical institutions, as well as those who put into effect the decrees on freedom of conscience which are inimical to the Church and similar acts, are subject to being banned from serving and, in the case of impenitence, are deprived of their rank.”

Although, as we have said, it was unprecedented for a Local Church to anathematise a government, there have been occasions in the history of the Church when individual hierarchs have not only refused to obey or pray for a political leader, but have actually prayed against him. Thus in the fourth century St. Basil the Great prayed for the defeat of Julian the Apostate, and it was through his prayers that the apostate was killed, as was revealed by God to the holy hermit Julian of Mesopotamia. Neither St. Basil nor his friend, St. Gregory the Theologian, recognised the rule of Julian the Apostate to be legitimate. Moreover, they considered that St. Gregory’s brother, St. Caesarius, should not remain at the court of Julian, although he thought that, being a doctor, he could help his relatives and friends through his position there. This and other examples show that, while the principle of authority as such is from God (Romans 13.1), individual authorities or rulers are sometimes not from God, but are only allowed by Him, in which case the Church must offer resistance to them out of loyalty to God Himself.

As Bishop Gregory (Grabbe), the foremost canonist of the Russian Church Abroad, wrote: “With regard to the question of the commemoration of authorities, we must bear in mind that now we are having dealings not simply with a pagan government like Nero’s, but with the apostasy of the last times. Not with a so far unenlightened authority, but with apostasy. The Holy Fathers did not relate to Julian the Apostate in the same way as they did to the other pagan Emperors. And we cannot relate to the antichristian authorities in the same way as to any other, for its nature is purely satanic.”

There were some who took the anathema very seriously and fulfilled it to the letter. Thus in 1918, the clairvoyant Elder Nicholas (Parthenov), later Hieromartyr Bishop of Aktar, “following the anathema contained in the Epistle of his Holiness Patriarch Tikhon, and not wishing to enter into relations with ‘the outcasts of the human race’, went into reclusion...”
The Council had exhorted the faithful to protect church property, and soon there were reports of people mobbing the officials and soldiers detailed to carry out the decree. Several hundred thousand people marched through Petrograd in protest. Shkarovskii writes: “Numerous religious processions, some of which were fired upon, took place in the towns; services in defence of the patriarchate were held in public places and petitions were sent to the government. There followed a mass religious upsurge in Russia. From 1918, thousands of new converts, including some prominent intellectuals, joined the now persecuted Orthodox Church. And an ‘All-Russian Union of United Orthodox Parishes’ was also formed.

“The Sovnarkom had expected its decree to be implemented quickly and relatively painlessly, but this was prevented first and foremost by the opposition of millions of peasants, who supported the expropriation of church and monastic property but were against making births, marriages and deaths a purely civil affair, depriving parishes of their property rights, and dropping divinity from the school curriculum. Peasants thus resisted Bolshevik efforts to break the ‘unshakable traditions’ of ‘a life of faith’ in the Russian countryside. The implementation of the law was also hindered by the lack of suitable officials to carry it out, and by the inconsistence of the local authorities’ understanding of the law.”

A Barmenkov wrote: “Some school workers began to interpret [the principle of Church-School separation] as a transition to secular education, in which both religious and anti-religious propaganda in school would be excluded. They supposed that the school had to remain neutral in relation to religion and the Church. A.V. Lunacharsky and N.K. Krupskaia spoke against this incorrect interpretation..., emphasising that in the Soviet state the concept of the people’s enlightenment had unfailingly to include ‘a striving to cast out of the people’s head religious trash and replace it with the light of science.’”

“On March 14/27,” writes Peter Sokolov, “still hoping that the existence of the Church could be preserved under the communist regime and with the aim of establishing direct relations with the higher state authorities, a Church deputation set out in the name of the Council to the Council of People’s Commissars in Moscow. They wanted to meet Lenin personally, and personally present him with their ideas about the conditions acceptable to the Church for her existence in the state of the new type.” This initiative hardly accorded with the anathema against the Bolsheviks, which forbade the faithful from having any relations with them. It was therefore unsuccessful.

Nicholas (Parthenov), Bishop of Aktar, fool for Christ, ‘the little batyushka’), Prawoslavnaia Rus’, № 17 (1782), September 1/14, 2005, p. 5 ®.


“The deputation was not received by Lenin. The commissars (of insurance and justice) that conversed with it did not satisfy its requests. A second address to the authorities in the name of the Council that followed soon after the first unsuccessful audience was also unsuccessful.”

3. The Amnesty for Political Traitors. The Council made two other decisions relating to Soviet power and its institutions. On April 15 it decreed: “Clergymen serving in anti-ecclesiastical institutions... are subject to being banned from serving and, in the case of impenitence, are deprived of their rank”. On the assumption that “anti-ecclesiastical institutions” included all Soviet institutions, this would seem to have been a clearly anti-Soviet measure.

However, on August 15, 1918, the Council appeared to take a step in the opposite direction, declaring invalid all defrockings based on political considerations, applying this particularly to Metropolitan Arsenius (Matsevich) of Rostov and Priest Gregory Petrov. Metropolitan Arsenius had indeed been unjustly defrocked in the reign of Catherine II for his righteous opposition to her anti-Church measures. However, Fr. Gregory Petrov had been one of the leaders of the Cadet party in the Duma in 1905 and was an enemy of the monarchical order. How could his defrocking be said to have been unjust in view of the fact that the Church had officially prayed for the Orthodox Autocracy, and Petrov had worked directly against the fulfilment of the Church’s prayers?

The problem was: too many people, including several hierarchs, had welcomed the fall of the Tsarist regime. If the Church was not to divide along political lines, a general amnesty was considered necessary. On the other hand, as Bishop Dionysius (Alferov) of Novgorod writes, the Council could be criticised for its “weakening of Church discipline, its legitimisation of complete freedom of political orientation and activity, and, besides, its rehabilitation of the Church revolutionaries like Gregory Petrov. By all this it doomed the Russian Church to collapse, presenting to her enemies the best conditions for her cutting up and annihilation piece by piece.

“That this Council... did not express the voice of the complete fullness of the Russian Church is proved by the decisions of two other Councils of the time: that of Karlovtsy in 1921, and that of Vladivostok in 1922.

“At the Karlovtsy Council remembrance was finally made of the St. Sergius’ blessing of the Christian Sovereign Demetrius Donskoj for his battle with the enemies of the Church and the fatherland, and of the struggle for the

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Orthodox Kingdom of the holy Hierarch Hermogenes of Moscow. The question was raised of the ‘sin of February’, but because some of the prominent activists of the Council had participated in this, the question was left without detailed review. The decisions of this Council did not receive further official development in Church life because of the schisms that began both in the Church Abroad and in the monarchist movement. But the question of the re-establishment of the Orthodox Kingdom in Russia had been raised, and thinkers abroad worked out this thought in detail in the works, first of Prince N.D. Zhevakhov and Protopriest V. Vostokov, and then, more profoundly, in the works of Archbishop Seraphim (Sobolev), Professor M.V. Zyzykin, Archimandrite Constantine Zaitsev, V.N. Voejkov and N.P. Kusakov.

“The Church-land Council in Vladivostok, which is now almost forgotten, expressed itself more definitely, recognizing the Orthodox autocracy to be the only lawful authority in Russia.”

**The Murder of the Tsar**

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 extraordinarily improbable. Again, Kornilov’s attempted coup, and Kerensky’s reaction to it, had played into their hands at a critical time. But it was one thing for the Bolsheviks to have won power: it was quite another thing to keep it. Everybody was against them, even the other socialist parties, who felt – rightly – that they had been tricked into surrendering power to them at the Congress of Soviets in October.

That the Bolsheviks hung on to power in their first year was probably owing to three factors. First, they decided very quickly not to nationalise 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 Feliz 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 to neutralize the external threat coming from his own paymasters, the Germans.

In March, 1918 the Bolsheviks took Russia out of the First World War in the most shameful way possible: they signed the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk with Germany, depriving Russia of about a quarter of her territory, a third of her population and a half of her industry. It was immediately denounced by Patriarch Tikhon, but justified by Lenin on the grounds that now Soviet Russia could recuperate while Germany and the Western Powers fought each other. 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, in order to turn the international war into a civil war fought, not against Germans (of whom Lenin was, after all, a paid agent90), 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.

The critical question was: were the Whites going to fight under the banner of Orthodoxy and Tsarism or not? Tsarism meant, not Tsar Nicholas necessarily, who had abdicated, but the monarchical principle. However, the physical presence of Tsar Nicholas, whether as the actual ruler or as the senior representative of the old dynasty, was important. 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 proceeded to kill the Tsar... For, 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...” 91 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 Tsar Nicholas II was shot in Yekaterinburg together with Tsarina Alexandra, the Tsarevich Alexis, the Tsarevnas Olga, Tatiana, Maria and Anastasia, and several family servants in a decidedly Judaist-ritualistic manner. Strange cabbalistic symbols were 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.”92

90 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, op. cit., p. 39).
92 See Nikolai Kozlov, Krestnij Put’ (The Way of the Cross), Moscow, 1993; Enel, "Zhertva" (Sacrifice), Kolokol’ (Bell), Moscow, 1990, № 5, pp. 17-37, and Michael Orlov, "Ekaterinburgskaya Golgofa" (The Golgotha of Yekaterinburg), Kolokol’ (Bell), 1990, № 5, pp.
The Royal Family had given a wonderful example of truly Christian love in their lives. 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 the following 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.

The next day, at Alapayevsk, Grand Duchess Elizabeth was killed together with her faithful companion, the Nun Barbara, and several Great Princes.

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…”

On hearing the news 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

37-55; Prince Felix Yusupov, Memoary (Memoirs), Moscow, 1998, p. 249; Lebedev, op. cit., p. 519 ©. However, some 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).

93 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” (Religioznomisticheskij smysl ubienia 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 ©.
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…”

However, the people as a whole did not condemn the evil deed. The result was a significant increase in the suffering of the people... In August, 1918 an attempt was made on the life of Lenin. Shaken, the Bolsheviks began what has been called the Red Terror. Of course, the Bolsheviks had been terrorizing the population of the former empire from the beginning, and their leaders had never pretended to be humanitarians. But now this terror assumed more organized forms, and was on a much greater scale...

*The Goals of Leninism*

We have seen that Leninism, far from being a scientifically based doctrine, was much closer in essence to pagan demon-worship with its incessant demand for more and more blood. As the number of victims mounted, the Church, slow hitherto in exposing the full horror of its antichristianity (a criticism levelled at the Council by Count Yuri Alexandrovich Olsufyev and Protopriest Vladimir Vostokov), began to protest more loudly. Thus on August 8, 1918, in an address “to all the faithful children of the Russian Orthodox Church”, the Patriarch said: “Sin has fanned everywhere the flame of the passions, enmity and wrath; brother has risen up against brother; the prisons are filled with captives; the earth is soaked in innocent blood, shed by a brother’s hand; it is defiled by violence, pillaging, fornication and every uncleanness. From this same poisonous source of sin has issued the great deception of material earthly goods, by which our people is enticed, forgetting the one thing necessary. We have not rejected this temptation, as the Saviour Christ rejected it in the wilderness. We have wanted to create a paradise on earth, but without God and His holy commandments. God is not mocked. And so we hunger and thirst and are naked upon the earth, blessed with an abundance of nature’s gifts, and the seal of the curse has fallen on the very work of the people and on all the undertakings of our hands. Sin, heavy and unrepented of, has summoned Satan from the abyss, and he is now bellowing his slander against the Lord and against His Christ, and is raising an open persecution against the Church.”

In characterizing Socialism in similar terms to those used by Dostoyevsky’s Grand Inquisitor, as the temptation to create bread out of stones which Christ rejected, the Patriarch certainly gave a valid critique of Socialism as it was and still is popularly understood – that is, as a striving for social justice on earth, or, as the former Marxist Fr. Sergius Bulgakov put it in 1917, “the thought that first of all and at any price hunger must be conquered and the chains of

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94 Gubonin, op. cit., p. 143.
95 Regelson, op. cit., p. 52; Gubonin, op. cit., p. 146.
poverty broken... Socialism does not signify a radical reform of life, it is charity, one of its forms as indicated by contemporary life – and nothing more. The triumph of socialism would not introduce anything essentially new into life.” From this point of view, Socialism is essentially a well-intentioned movement that has gone wrong because it fails to take into account God, the commandments of God and the fallenness of human nature. The guilt of the Socialists consists in the fact that, rather than seeking paradise in heaven and with God through the fulfilment of His commandments, they “have wanted to create a paradise on earth, but without God and His holy commandments”. The result has been hell in this life and (to quote from the anathema of 1918) “the fire of Gehenna in the life to come”...

However, as Igor Shafarevich has demonstrated, Socialism in its more radical form – that is, Revolutionary Socialism (Bolshevism, Leninism) as opposed to Welfare Socialism - is very little concerned with justice and not at all with charity. Its real motivation is simply satanic hatred, hatred of the whole of the old world and all those in it, and the desire to destroy it to its very foundations. Its supposed striving for social justice is only a cover, a fig-leaf, a propaganda tool for the attainment of this purely destructive aim, which can be analyzed into four objects: the destruction of: (i) hierarchy, (ii) private property, (iii) the family, and (iv) religion.97

1. Hierarchy. Hierarchy had already largely been destroyed by the time the Bolsheviks came to power: from that time the only hierarchy was the Communist Party and all others were equally miserable in relation to it.

2. Private Property. Lenin’s famous slogan: “Loot the loot” (grab’ nagrablennoe) expresses the Party’s relationship to property. And by the end of the Civil War all property and privilege of any significance had passed into the hands of the new aristocracy, the Communist Party. Lenin’s plans were aided by a characteristic of the peasants (not all of them, of course, but probably the majority) that has already been noted: their refusal to admit the right of any but peasants to the land. Pipes writes: “The peasant was revolutionary in one respect only: he did not acknowledge private ownership of land. Although on the eve of the Revolution he owned nine-tenths of the country’s arable, he craved for the remaining 10 percent held by landlords, merchants, and noncommunal peasants. No economic or legal arguments could change his mind: he felt he had a God-given right to that land and that someday it would be his. And by his he meant the commune’s, which would allocate it justly to its members. The prevalence of communal landholding in European Russia was, along with the legacy of serfdom, a fundamental fact of Russian social history. It meant that along with a poorly developed sense for law, the peasant also had little respect for private property. Both tendencies

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96 Bulgakov, Sotsializm i Khristianstvo (Socialism and Christianity), Moscow, 1917; quoted in Shafarevich, op. cit., pp. 288, 289.
97 Shafarevich, op. cit., p. 265.
were exploited and exacerbated by radical intellectuals for their own ends to incite the peasants against the status quo.

“Russia’s industrial workers were potentially destabilizing not because they assimilated revolutionary ideologies – very few of them did and even they were excluded from leadership positions in the revolutionary parties. Rather, since most of them were one or at most two generations removed from the village and only superficially urbanized, they carried with them to the factory rural attitudes only slightly adjusted to industrial conditions. They were not socialists but syndicalists, believing that as their village relatives were entitled to all the land, so they had a right to the factories…”

3. The Family. Oliver Figes writes: “The Bolsheviks envisaged the building of their Communist utopia as a constant battle against custom and habit. With the end of the Civil War they prepared for a new and longer struggle on the ‘internal front’, a revolutionary war for the liberation of the communistic personality through the eradication of individualistic (‘bourgeois’) behaviour and deviant habits (prostitution, alcoholism, hooliganism and religion) inherited from the old society. There was little dispute among the Bolsheviks that this battle to transform human nature would take decades. There was only disagreement about when the battle should begin. Marx had taught that the alteration of consciousness was dependent on changes to the material base, and Lenin, when he introduced the NEP, affirmed that until the material conditions of a Communist society had been created – a process that would take an entire historical epoch – there was no point trying to engineer a Communist system of morality in private life. But most Bolsheviks did not accept that the NEP required a retreat from the private sphere. On the contrary, as they were increasingly inclined to think, active engagement was essential at every moment and in every battlefield of everyday life – in the family, the home and the inner world of the individual, where the persistence of old mentalities was a major threat to the Party’s basic ideological goals. And as they watched the individualistic instincts of the ‘petty-bourgeois’ masses become stronger in the culture of the NEP, they redoubled their efforts. As Anatoly Lunacharsky wrote in 1927: ‘The so-called sphere of private life cannot slip away from us, because it is precisely here that the final goal of the Revolution is to be reached.’

“The family was the first arena in which the Bolsheviks engaged the struggle. In the 1920s, they took it as an article of faith that the ‘bourgeois family’ was socially harmful: it was inward-looking and conservative, a stronghold of religion, superstition, ignorance and prejudice; it fostered egotism and material acquisitiveness, and oppressed women and children. The Bolsheviks expected that the family would disappear as Soviet Russia developed into a fully socialist system, in which the state took responsibility for all the basic household functions, providing nurseries, laundries and

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98 Pipes, op. cit., p. 494.

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canteens in public centres and apartment blocks. Liberated from labour in the home, women would be free to enter the workforce on an equal footing with men. The patriarchal marriage, with its attendant sexual morals, would die out – to be replaced, the radicals believed, by ‘free unions of love’.

“As the Bolsheviks saw it, the family was the biggest obstacle to the socialization of children. ‘By loving a child, the family turns him into an egotistical being, encouraging him to see himself as the centre of the universe,’ wrote the Soviet educational thinker Zlata Lilina. Bolshevik theorists agreed on the need to replace this ‘egotistic love’ with the ‘rational love’ of a broader ‘social family’. The ABC of Communism (1919) envisaged a future society in which parents would no longer use the word ‘my’ to refer to their children, but would care for all the children in their community. Among the Bolsheviks there were different views about how long this change would take. Radicals argued that the Party should take direct action to undermine the family immediately, but most accepted the arguments of Bukharin and NEP theorists that in a peasant country such as Soviet Russia the family would remain for some time the primary unity of production and consumption and that it would weaken gradually as the country made the transition to an urban socialist society.

“Meanwhile the Bolsheviks adopted various strategies – such as the transformation of domestic space – intended to accelerate the disintegration of the family. To tackle the housing shortages in the overcrowded cities the Bolsheviks compelled wealthy families to share their apartments with the urban poor – a policy known as ‘condensation’ (uplotnenie). During the 1920s the most common type of communal apartment (kommunal’ka) was one in which the original owners occupied the main rooms on the ‘parade side’ while the back rooms were filled by other families. At that time it was still possible for the former owners to select their co-inhabitants, provided they fulfilled the ‘sanitary norm’ (a per capita allowance of living space which fell from 13.5 square metres in 1926 to just 9 square metres in 1931). Many families brought in servants or acquaintances to prevent strangers being moved in to fill up the surplus living space. The policy had a strong ideological appeal, not just as a war on privilege, which is how it was presented in the propaganda of the new regime (‘War against the Palaces!’), but also as part of a crusade to engineer a more collective way of life. By forcing people to share communal apartments, the Bolsheviks believed that they could make them communistic in their basic thinking and behaviour. Private space and property would disappear, the individual (‘bourgeois’) family would be replaced by communistic fraternity and organization, and the life of the individual would become immersed in the community. From the middle of the 1920s, new types of housing were designed with this transformation in mind. The most radical Soviet architects, like the Constructivists in the Union of Contemporary Architects, proposed the complete obliteration of the private sphere by building ‘commune houses’
(doma kommuny) where all the property, including even clothes and underwear, would be shared by the inhabitants, where domestic tasks like cooking and childcare would be assigned to teams on a rotating basis, and where everybody would sleep in one big dormitory, divided by gender, with private rooms for sexual liaisons. Few houses of this sort were ever built, although they loomed large in the utopian imagination and futuristic novels such as Yevgeny Zamiatin’s We (1920). Most of the projects which did materialize, like the Narkomfin (Ministry of Finance) house in Moscow (1930) designed by the Constructivist Moisei Ginzburg, tended to stop short of the full communal form and included both private living spaces and communalized blocks for laundries, baths, dining rooms and kitchens, nurseries and schools. Yet the goal remained to marshal architecture in a way that would induce the individual to move away from private (‘bourgeois’) forms of domesticity to a more collective way of life.

“The Bolsheviks also intervened more directly in domestic life. The new Code on Marriage and the Family (1918) established a legislative framework that clearly aimed to facilitate the breakdown of the traditional family. It removed the influence of the Church from marriage and divorce, making both a process of simple registration with the state. It granted the same legal rights to de facto marriages (couples living together) as it gave to legal marriages. The Code turned divorce from a luxury for the rich to something that was easy and affordable for all. The result was a huge increase in casual marriages and the highest rate of divorce in the world – three times higher than in France or Germany and twenty-six times higher than in England by 1926 – as the collapse of the Christian-patriarchal order and the chaos of the revolutionary years loosened sexual morals along with family and communal ties.”

99 Figes, The Whisperers, pp. 7-10. Figes continues: “In the early years of Soviet power, family breakdown was so common among revolutionary activists that it almost constituted an occupational hazard. Casual relationships were practically the norm in Bolshevik circles during the Civil War, when any comrade could be sent at a moment’s notice to some distant sector of the front. Such relaxed attitudes remained common through the 1920s, as Party activists and their young emulators in the Komsomol [Communist Youth League] were taught to put their commitment to the proletariat before romantic love or family. Sexual promiscuity was more pronounced in the Party’s youthful ranks than among Soviet youth in general. Many Bolsheviks regarded sexual licence as a form of liberation from bourgeois moral conventions and as a sign of ‘Soviet modernity’. Some even advocated promiscuity as a way to counteract the formation of coupling relationships that separated lovers from the collective and detracted from their loyalty to the Party.

“It was a commonplace that the Bolshevik made a bad husband a father because the demands of the Party took him away from the home. ‘We Communists don’t know our own families,’ remarked one Moscow Bolshevik. ‘You leave early and come home late. You seldom see your wife and almost never your children.’ At Party congresses, where the issue was discussed throughout the 1920s, it was recognized that Bolsheviks were far more likely than non-Party husbands to abandon wives and families, and that this had much to do with the primacy of Party loyalties over sexual fidelity. But in fact the problem of absent wives and mothers was almost as acute in Party circles, as indeed it was in the broader circle of the Soviet intelligentsia, where most women were involved in the public sphere.
In November, 1920 the Bolsheviks also legalized abortions; they were made available free of charge at the mother’s request.100

“In Soviet Russia,” writes Pipes, “as in the rest of Europe, World War I led to a loosening of sexual mores, which here was justified on moral grounds. The apostle of free love in Soviet Russia was Alexandra Kollontai, the most prominent woman Bolshevik. Whether she practiced what she preached or preached what she practiced, is not for the historian to determine; but the evidence suggests that she had an uncontrollable sex drive coupled with an inability to form enduring relationships. Born the daughter of a wealthy general, terribly spoiled in childhood, she reacted to the love lavished on her with rebellion. In 1906 she joined the Mensheviks, then, in 1915, switched to Lenin, whose antiwar stand she admired. Subsequently, she performed for him valuable services as agent and courier.

“In her writings, Kollontai argued that the modern family had lost its traditional economic function, which meant that women should be set free to choose their partners. In 1919 she published The New Morality and the Working Class, a work based on the writings of the German feminist Grete Meisel-Hess. In it she maintained that women had to be emancipated not only economically but also psychologically. The ideal of ‘grand amour’ was very difficult to realize, especially for men, because it clashed with their worldly ambitions. To be capable of it, individuals had to undergo an apprenticeship in the form of ‘love games’ or ‘erotic friendships’, which taught them to engage in sexual relations free of both emotional attachment and personal domination. Casual sex alone conditioned women to safeguard their individuality in a society dominated by men. Every form of sexual relationship was acceptable: Kollontai advocated what she called ‘successive polygamy’. In the capacity of Commissar of Guardianship (Prizrenia) she promoted communal kitchens as a way of ‘separating the kitchen from marriage’. She, too, wanted the care of children to be assumed by the community. She predicted that in time the family would disappear, and women should learn to treat all children as their own. She popularized her theories in a novel, Free Love: The Love of Worker Bees (Svobodnaia liubov’: liubov’ pchel trudovykh) (1924), one part of which was called, ‘The Love of Three Generations’. Its heroine preached divorcing sex from morality as well as from politics. Generous with her body, she said she loved everybody, from Lenin down, and gave herself to any man who happened to attract her.

“Trotsky argued that the Bolsheviks were more affected than others by domestic breakdown because they were ‘most exposed to the influence of new conditions’. As pioneers of a modern way of life, Trotsky wrote in 1923, the ‘Communist vanguard merely passes sooner and more violently through what is inevitable’ for the population as a whole. In many Party households there was certainly a sense of pioneering a new type of family – one that liberated both parents for public activities – albeit at the cost of intimate involvement with their children.” (pp. 10-11)

100 Pipes, op. cit., p. 330.
“Although often regarded as the authoritarian theoretician of Communist sex morals, Kollontai was very much the exception who scandalized her colleagues. Lenin regarded ‘free love’ as a ‘bourgeois’ idea – by which he meant not so much extramarital affairs (with which he himself had had experience) as casual sex…

“Studies of the sexual mores of Soviet youth conducted in the 1920s revealed considerable discrepancy between what young people said they believed and what they actually practiced: unusually, in this instance behaviour was less promiscuous than theory. Russia’s young people stated they considered love and marriage ‘bourgeois’ relics and thought Communists should enjoy a sexual life unhampered by any inhibitions: the less affection and commitment entered into male-female relations, the more ‘communist’ they were. According to opinion surveys, students looked on marriage as confining and, for women, degrading: the largest number of respondents – 50.8 percent of the women and 67.3 of the women – expressed a preference for long-term relationships based on mutual affection but without the formality of marriage.

“Deeper probing of their attitudes, however, revealed that behind the façade of defiance of tradition, old attitudes survived intact. Relations based on love were the ideal of 82.6 percent of the men and 90.5 percent of the women: ‘This is what they secretly long for and dream about,’ according to the author of the survey. Few approved of the kind of casual sex advocated by Kollontai and widely associated with early Communism: a mere 13.3 percent of the men and 10.6 of the women. Strong emotional and moral factors continued to inhibit casual sex: one Soviet survey revealed that over half of the female student respondents were virgins…”

In this continuing conservatism of Soviet youth we see the continuing influence of the Orthodox Church, into which most Russians had been baptized. The Church resisted all the Soviet innovations, including civil marriage, abortion and divorce on demand. And soon the State, too, reversed its teaching, outlawing abortion in 1936 and condemning free love…

4. Religion. Of these four destructive ends of Bolshevism, the most fundamental is the destruction of religion – if not all religion (for Socialism itself is arguably a kind of religion), at any rate the true religion, Christianity. The incompatibility between Socialism and Christianity was never doubted by the apostles of Socialism. Religion was to Marx “opium for the people”, and to Lenin – “spiritual vodka”. Lenin wrote that “every religious idea, every idea of a god, even flirting with the idea of God is unutterable vileness...

of the most dangerous kind". And in 1918 he said to Krasin: “Electricity will take the place of God. Let the peasant pray to electricity; he’s going to feel the power of the central authorities more than that of heaven.”

As regards the Bolshevik attitude to law, this was described by Latsis: “In the investigation don’t search for materials and proofs that the accused acted in word or deed against Soviet power. The first question which you must put to him is: what is his origin, education, upbringing or profession. These are the questions that must decide the fate of the accused… If it is possible to accuse the Cheka of anything it is not in excessive zeal in executions, but in not applying the supreme penalty enough… We were always too soft and magnanimous towards the defeated foe!”

As for morality, in his address to the Third All-Russian congress of the Union of Russian Youth in October, 1920, Lenin wrote: "In what sense do we reject morality and ethics? In the sense in which it is preached by the bourgeoisie, which has derived this morality from the commandments of God. Of course, as regards God, we say that we do not believe in Him, and we very well know that it was in the name of God that the clergy used to speak, that the landowners spoke, that the bourgeoisie spoke, so as to promote their exploitative interests. Or… they derived morality from idealistic or semi-idealistic phrases, which always came down to something very similar to the commandments of God. All such morality which is taken from extra-human, extra-class conceptions, we reject. We say that it is a deception, that it is a swindle, that it is oppression of the minds of the workers and peasants in the interests of the landowners and capitalists. We say that our morality is entirely subject to the interests of the class struggle of the proletariat. Our morality derives from the interests of the class struggle of the proletariat."

Of course, there is an inner contradiction here. If God exists, and all the older systems of morality are nonsense, why entertain any notions of good and evil? And why prefer the interests of the proletariat to anyone else’s? In fact, if God does not exist, then, as Dostoyevsky said, everything is permitted and nothing is sacred – not even the interests of the proletariat. And this is what we find in Bolshevism – a complete disregard of the interests of any class or person, excepting only of the Communist Party and its leader. In any case, as Alexander Solzhenitsyn wrote: “The line dividing good and evil passes not

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104 Latsis, Ezhenedel'nik ChK (Cheka Weekly), № 1, November 1, 1918; in Priest Vladimir Dmitriev, Simbirskaja Golgota (Simbirsk’s Golgotha), Moscow, 1997, p. 4 ®.

105 Lenin, op. cit., vol. 41, p. 309.
between states, not between classes, and not between parties – it passes through each human heart – and through all human hearts...”\(^{106}\) And again he wrote: “Within the philosophical system of Marx and Lenin, and at the heart of their psychology, hatred of God is the principal driving force, more fundamental than all their political and economic pretensions. Militant atheism is not merely incidental or marginal to Communist policy. It is not a side-effect, but the central pivot...”\(^{107}\)

That militant atheism, and the rejection of all religiously based morality, was the central pivot of Marxism-Leninism was to become abundantly evident in the next seventy years. And in proportion as the Bolsheviks’ actions became more bloody, so the Patriarch’s condemnation became sterner. Using his position as the head of the Church and last man in Russia who was allowed to speak his mind, on October 26, 1918 he wrote to the Sovnarkom: “’All those who take up the sword will perish by the sword’ (Matthew 26.52). This prophecy of the Saviour we apply to you, the present determiners of the destinies of our fatherland, who call yourselves ‘people’s commissars’. For a whole year you have held State power in your hands and you are already preparing to celebrate the anniversary of the October revolution, but the blood poured out in torrents of our brothers pitilessly slaughtered in accordance with your appeals, cries out to heaven and forces us to speak to you this bitter word of righteousness.

“In truth you gave it a stone instead of bread and a serpent instead of a fish (Matthew 7.9, 10). You promised to give the people, worn out by bloody war, peace ‘without annexations and requisitions’. In seizing power and calling on the people to trust you, what promises did you give it and how did you carry out these promises? What conquests could you renounce when you had brought Russia to a shameful peace [the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk] whose humiliating conditions you yourselves did not even decide to publish fully? Instead of annexations and requisitions our great homeland has been conquered, reduced and divided, and in payment of the tribute imposed on it you will secretly export to Germany the gold which was accumulated by others than you... You have divided the whole people into warring camps, and plunged them into a fratricide of unprecedented ferocity. You have openly exchanged the love of Christ for hatred, and instead of peace you have artificially inflamed class enmity. And there is no end in sight to the war you have started, since you are trying to use the workers and peasants to bring victory to the spectre of world revolution... It is not enough that you have drenched the hands of the Russian people in the blood of brothers, covering yourselves with contributions, requisitions and nationalisations under various names: you have incited the people to the most blatant and shameless looting.


At your instigation there has been the looting or confiscation of lands, estates, factories, houses and cattle; money, objects, furniture and clothing are looted. At first you robbed the more wealthy and industrious peasants under the name of ‘bourgeois’, thereby multiplying the numbers of the poor, although you could not fail to realise that by devastating a great number of individual citizens the people’s wealth is being destroyed and the country itself ravaged.

“Having seduced the dark and ignorant people with the opportunity of easy and unpunished profit, you darkened their consciences and drowned out in them the consciousness of sin. But with whatever names you cover your evil deeds – murder, violence and looting will always remain heavy sins and crimes that cry out to heaven for revenge.

“You promised freedom. Rightly understood, as freedom from evil, that does not restrict others, and does not pass over into licence and self-will, freedom is a great good. But you have not given that kind of freedom: the freedom given by you consists in indulging in every way the base passions of the mob, and in not punishing murder and robbery. Every manifestation both of true civil and the higher spiritual freedom of mankind is mercilessly suppressed by you. Is it freedom when nobody can get food for himself, or rent a flat, or move from city to city without special permission? Is it freedom when families, and sometimes the populations of whole houses are resettled and their property thrown out into the street, and when citizens are artificially divided into categories, some of which are given over to hunger and pillaging? Is it freedom when nobody can openly express his opinion for fear of being accused of counter-revolution?

“Where is freedom of the word and the press, where is the freedom of Church preaching? Many bold Church preachers have already paid with the blood of their martyrdom; the voice of social and state discussion and reproach is suppressed; the press, except for the narrowly Bolshevik press, has been completely smothered. The violation of freedom in matters of the faith is especially painful and cruel. There does not pass a day in which the most monstrous slanders against the Church of Christ and her servers, and malicious blasphemies and sacrilege, are not published in the organs of your press. You mock the servers of the altar, you force a bishop to dig ditches (Bishop Hermogen of Tobolsk), and you send priests to do dirty work. You have placed your hands on the heritage of the Church, which has been gathered by generations of believing people, and you have not hesitated to violate their last will. You have closed a series of monasteries and house churches without any reason or cause. You have cut off access to the Moscow Kremlin, that sacred heritage of the whole believing people… It is not our task to judge earthly powers; every power allowed by God would attract to itself Our blessing if it were in truth a servant of God subject to the good, and was ‘terrible not for good deeds, but for evil’ (Romans 13.3,4). Now we extend to you, who are using your power for the persecution of your neighbours and
the destruction of the innocent, Our word of exhortation: celebrate the anniversary of your coming to power by liberating the imprisoned, by stopping the blood-letting, violence, destruction and restriction of the faith. Turn not to destruction, but to the establishment of order and legality. Give the people the rest from civil war that they desire and deserve. Otherwise ‘from you will be required all the righteous blood that you have shed’ (Luke 11.51), ‘and you who have taken up the sword will perish by the sword’.”

Pipes writes: “The effect that persecution had on religious sentiments and practices during the first decade of Communist rule is difficult to assess. There is a great deal of circumstantial evidence, however, that people continued to observe religious rituals and customs, treating the Communists as they would heathen conquerors. Although the observance of religious holidays had been outlawed, the prohibition could not be enforced. As early as 1918 workers received permission to celebrate Easter provided they did not absent themselves from work for more than five days. Later on, the authorities acquiesced in the suspension of work on Christmas under both the old and new calendars. There are reports of religious processions (krestnye khody) in the capital as well as in provincial towns. In the rural districts, the peasants insisted on regarding as legitimate only marriages performed by a priest.

“Religious fervor, which, along with monarchic sentiments, had perceptibly ebbed in 1917, revived in the spring of 1918, when many Christians courted martyrdom by demonstrating, holding protest meetings, and fasting. The fervor increased with each year: in 1920, ‘The Churches filled with worshippers; among them there was not that predominance of women that could be noted before the revolution. Confession acquired particular importance… Church holidays attracted immense crowds. Church life in 1920 was fully restored and perhaps even exceeded the old, pre-Revolutionary one. Without a doubt, the inner growth of church self-consciousness among Russian believers attained a height unknown during the preceding two centuries.’

“Tikhon confirmed this judgement in an interview with an American journalist the same year, saying that ‘the influence of the church on the lives of the people was stronger than ever in all its history’. Confirming these impressions, one well-informed observer concluded in 1926 that the church had emerged victorious from its conflict with the Communists: ‘The only thing the Bolsheviks had achieved was to loosen the hierarchy and split the church’.

“But ahead of it lay trials such as no church had ever endured…”

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The Russian Civil War

The Russian Civil War was the bloodiest conflict in human history to that date, causing the deaths of up to twenty million people according to some estimates, eight or nine million according to others. Pipes estimates the human casualties of the revolution until 1922 at 23 million. By August, 1920, 29 percent of the age group 16-49 had been eliminated.\(^{110}\)

The defeat of the Whites has been attributed to many factors – the Reds’ occupation of the centre, the Whites’ difficulties of communication, the fitful and unenthusiastic intervention of the western powers, the betrayal of the Whites by the Poles… Certainly the Reds did not represent a formidable opponent. Having destroyed the old Imperial army, it was extremely difficult for them to build up an effective new army. By the spring of 1920 80% of the officer corps was staffed by former tsarist officers, who services were retained only by the threat that their families would be massacred if they did not comply. As it was, there were vast numbers of desertions to the Whites – 1.76 million in 1919 alone.\(^{111}\)

But the sad and most fundamental fact was that, as Elder Aristocles of Moscow (+1918) said, “The spirit [among the Whites] is not right.” For many of them were aiming, not at the restoration of Orthodoxy and the Orthodox tsardom, but at the reconvening of the Constituent Assembly or the restoration of the landowners’ lands.\(^{112}\)

Of course, as noted above, if the White armies approaching Yekaterinburg from the East in July, 1918 had managed to rescue the Tsar and his family alive, the task of the Whites would have been easier – which is precisely why the Reds killed them. But even a living Tsar would probably have availed little in view of the fact that in their majority neither the White soldiers nor the populations whose interests they sought to represent were monarchists. Thus in 1919, when the Romanov Great Princes who were in the Crimea approached General Denikin with a request to enter the ranks of the White Army, they were refused. “The reasons,” writes Prince Felix Yusupov, “were political: the presence of relatives of the imperial family in the ranks of the White Army was not desirable. The refusal greatly upset us…”\(^{113}\)

\(^{110}\) Pipes, op. cit., p. 509.
\(^{111}\) Pipes, op. cit., p. 60.
\(^{112}\) Gregory Benevich goes so far as to say that “the Civil War was not a war between the true Christians and unbelievers. It was a war between those who were seduced only by Western culture and spirituality, and those who went up to the end in their fall, down to communism. Both of them were not true Orthodox Christians. Both of them were punished by God” ("The Jewish Question in the Orthodox Church", http://www.intratext.com/IXT/ENG0443/P3.HTM). However, this is an exaggerated opinion.
\(^{113}\) Yusupov, Memuary (Memoirs), Moscow, 1998, p. 250 ©.
Again, as Michael Nazarov points out, “there sat in the White governments at that time activists like, for example, the head of the Archangel government Tchaikovsky, who gave to the West as an explanation of the Bolshevik savageries the idea that ’we put up with the destructive autocratic regime for too long,… our people were less educated politically than the other allied peoples’”\textsuperscript{114}

Again, the leading White General A.I. Denikin said: “It is not given us to know what state structure Russia would have accepted in the event of the victory of the White armies in 1919-20. I am sure, however, that after an inevitable, but short-lived struggle of various political tendencies, a normal structure would have been established in Russia based on the principles of law, freedom and private property. And in any case – no less democratic than that which the reposed Marshal [Pisludsky] introduced in Poland…”\textsuperscript{115}

Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky) comments: “Unfortunately, the most noble and pious leader of this [the White] army listened to those unfitting counsellors who were foreign to Russia and sat in his Special council and destroyed the undertaking. The Russian people, the real people, the believing and struggling people, did not need the bare formula: ‘a united and undivided Russia’. They needed neither ‘Christian Russia’, nor ‘Faithless Russia’, nor ‘Tsarist Russia’, nor ‘the Landowners’ Russia’ (by which they will always understand a republic). They needed the combination of the three dear words – ‘for the Faith, the Tsar and the Fatherland’. Most of all, they needed the first word, since faith rules the whole of the state’s life; the second word was necessary since the Tsar guards and protects the first; and the third was needed since the people is the bearer of the first words.”\textsuperscript{116}

Not having firmly Orthodox and monarchical convictions, but rather, as V. Shambarov writes, “a complete absence of a political programme”\textsuperscript{117}, the Whites were bound to be disunited amongst themselves and weak in opposing Red propaganda in their rear. This was especially evident on the northern front, where Red propaganda was effective amongst both the White Russians and the British.\textsuperscript{118} But it was hardly less true on the other fronts.

\textsuperscript{114} Nazarov, \textit{Tajna Rossii} (The Mystery of Russia), Moscow: “Russkaia Idea”, 1999, pp. 85-86 \textsuperscript{®}.

\textsuperscript{115} Denikin, \textit{Kto spas Sovetskuiu vlast’ ot gibeli?} (Who Saved Soviet Power from Destruction?), Paris, 1937, in A.I. Denikin and A.A. von Lampe, \textit{Tragedia Beloj Armii} (The Tragedy of the White Army), Moscow, 1991, p. 8 \textsuperscript{®}. Denikin said during the war: “You think that I’m going to Moscow to restore the throne of the Romanovs? Never!”

\textsuperscript{116} Khrapovitsky, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 4.

\textsuperscript{117} Shambarov, \textit{Belogvardeischina} (Whiteguardism), Moscow, 2002 \textsuperscript{®}.

\textsuperscript{118} Anthony Lockley, “Propaganda and the First Cold War in North Russia, 1918-1919”, \textit{History Today}, vol. 53 (9), September, 2003, pp. 46-53.
In this failure, the Whites lost their own major weapon in the propaganda war. For as Trotsky said: “If the White Guardists had thought of unfurling the slogan of the kulaks’ Tsar, we would not have lasted for two weeks…” So anti-monarchism not only destroyed the monarchy: it destroyed any chance of delivering Russia from the Bolshevik nightmare.

St. John Maximovich sums up the situation: “If the higher military leaders, instead of beseeching his Majesty ‘on their knees’ to abdicate, had carried out what they were bound to do in accordance with their oath, the artificially incited rebellion would have been suppressed and Russia would have been saved… A terrible sin before God and a state crime was carried out. God only knows the extent to which any of them expiated their sin. But there was hardly any open repentance. After the fall of the Provisional Government, and the loss of the power it had seized, there was a call to struggle for Russia. But although it elicited noble feelings among many and a corresponding movement, there was no expression of repentance on the part of the main criminals, who continued to think of themselves as heroes and saviours of Russia. Meanwhile, Trotsky in his Memoirs admitted that they (the Soviets) feared above all the proclamation of a Tsar, since then the fall of Soviet power would have been inevitable. However, this did not happen, the ‘leaders’ were also afraid. They inspired many to struggle, but their call was belated and their courage did not save Russia. Some of them laid down their lives and shed their blood in this struggle, but far more innocent blood was shed. It continues to be poured out throughout Russia, crying out to heaven.”

Another weakness of the Whites was their failure to curb anti-semitic excesses in their ranks, especially among the Cossacks. However, as Pipes writes, “while the Cossack detachments of the Southern Army committed numerous atrocities (none can be attributed to the Volunteer army), a careful reckoning of the pogroms by Jewish organizations indicates that the worst crimes were the work of independent gangs of Ukrainians.”

The fact is that hatred of Jews was common to all classes of society, of all ideological persuasions, at this time, and similar atrocities committed by the Reds have been glossed over by historians.

Nevertheless, the fact is that shameful acts of plunder, torture and rape took place; and while, as Pipes goes on to say, “it is incorrect to lay wholesale blame for the massacres of the Jews on the White Army, it is true that Denikin [commander of the Volunteer Army] remained passive in the face of these atrocities, which not only stained the reputation of his army but also demoralized it…

“Personally, Denikin was not a typical anti-Semite of the time: at any rate, in his five-volume chronicle of the Civil War he does not blame the Jews

either for Communism or for his defeat. On the contrary, he expresses shame at their treatment in his army as well as the pogroms and shows awareness of the debilitating effect these had on the army’s morale. But he was a weak, politically inexperienced man who had little control over the behaviour of his troops. He yielded to the pressures of anti-Semites in his officer corps from fear of appearing pro-Jewish and from a sense of the futility of fighting against prevailing passions. In June 1919 he told a Jewish delegation that urged him to issue a declaration condemning the pogroms, that ‘words here were powerless, that any unnecessary clamor in regard to this question will only make the situation of Jews harder, irritating the masses and bringing out the customary accusations of “selling out to the Yids”.’ Whatever the justice of such excuses for passivity in the face of civilian massacres, they must have impressed the army as well as the population at large that the White Army command viewed Jews with suspicion and if it did not actively encourage pogroms, neither was it exercised about them...

“The only prominent public figure to condemn the pogroms openly and unequivocally was the head of the Orthodox Church, Patriarch Tikhon. In an Epistle issued on July 21, 1919, he called violence against Jews ‘dishonor for the perpetrators, dishonour for the Holy Church’.”121

Paradoxically, the population was probably more anti-Bolshevik in the Red-occupied areas than elsewhere – because they had had direct experience of Bolshevik cruelty. As General A.A. von Lampe writes, “the border regions, which naturally attracted to themselves the attention of those Russians who did not want to submit to the dictatorship established in the centre, did not know Bolshevism, that is, they probably did not know the results of its practical application on the skin of the natives. They had not experienced the delights of the Soviet paradise and were not able to exert themselves fully to avoid the trials and torments that were coming upon them.

“The population of these provinces, of course, knew the war that was exhausting the whole of Russia. The population also knew the revolution, which gave them the so-called ‘freedoms’!... The population, with the complicity of the soldiers, who had known on the front only the declaration of rights, but not the obligations of the soldier, knew only about their rights and did not at all represent to themselves that all these rights were bound up with certain obligations.

“On the territory of this population a real war was being waged, a civil war with its gunfights that did not always hit only those who were fighting in the direct line of fire; with its repressions, not only in relation to people and their property, but also to the settlements themselves, which sometimes, in the course of a battle, were mercilessly and inexorably razed to the ground... The population had to sacrifice their rights and their comforts. The White army

121 Pipes, op. cit., pp. 110, 111.
was not that equipped and organized army that we are accustomed to imagine when we pronounce that word; immediately on coming into contact with the population it was forced to take from it fodder, horses, reserves of food and, finally, the people themselves!

“War on a given territory always brings with it many deprivations and sufferings. War, and in particular civil war, feeds itself and supplements itself! And, of course, the population could not welcome this; it, as I have already said, thought not about its responsibilities, but only about its rights, and it expected from the Whites only the immediate restoration of order and normal conditions of life, not thinking on its side to offer it any help at all.

“The whole sum of unpleasantnesses brought by the drawn-out war was very sharply experienced by the population; and at the same time it was being forcibly corrupted by the Red and socialist propaganda promising them deliverance from all these woes, promises of complete prosperity and complete dominion, promises which, as we know, have seduced not only Russia, but are disturbing no small part of the population of the whole world to this day…

“All this came down to the fact that the inconveniences caused by the Whites ranged the population against them…

“The Reds threatened and threatened very unambiguously to take everything and in fact took a part – the population was deceived and… relieved. The Whites promised legality, and took only a little – and the population was embittered…

“The Reds promised everything, the Whites only that which was fitting according to the law…

“The Reds had terror and machine-guns as arguments and measures of persuasion; the Whites threatened – with the law…

“The Reds decisively rejected everything and raised arbitrariness into a law; the Whites, in rejecting the Reds, of course could not also reject the methods of arbitrariness and violence employed by the Reds…

“The population demanded nothing from the Reds since the only thing they could wish for once they had fallen into their hands was peace, and they did not, of course, demand that! But from the Whites the population demanded… a miracle, they demanded that the Whites, with one wave of their white hands, should remove all the blood from Russia…”

The Church in the Civil War

However, a miracle was not forthcoming, because Russia was yet worthy of it, nor able to profit from it spiritually. Moreover, to bless the White armies would have been equivalent to a call to the population in the Red-occupied areas to rise up against their oppressors. And it is probably for these reasons that in mid-1918, in spite of the pleas of his close advisor, Prince G.I. Trubetskov, the Patriarch refused to bless a White general in the south, saying that he was not engaging in politics.

In Siberia, however, the White armies under Admiral A.V. Kolchak, the most monarchist of the White leaders and their formal head, were close to the Church; and in November, 1918, in view of the lack of communication with the Patriarch, an autonomous Temporary Higher Church Authority (THCA) was formed under the leadership of Archbishop Sylvester of Omsk. At the request of Admiral Kolchak, it moved to Omsk, and sent 2000 out of the 3500 clergy living on the territories occupied by Kolchak’s armies to serve in the armies as military chaplains. In April, 1919 a Council of the THCA took place in Omsk which anathematised the leaders of the Bolshevik party and ordered the commemoration of Kolchak during Divine services as the Supreme Ruler of Russia. In an address to the clergy the Council declared: “The pastors of the Church have the moral right to struggle against Bolshevism, and nobody must look on this struggle as unfitting to the Church, as the Church’s interference into political and social affairs of the State.”

Kolchak believed that the Orthodox Church combined with an authoritarian system of power based on theocratic principles would help him stabilize the situation in Siberia. “The spiritual power of the soldiers has weakened,” he said. “Political slogans and the ideas of the Constituent Assembly and of an undivided Russia no longer have any effect. Much more comprehensible is the struggle for the faith, and this only religion can do.”

Perhaps for this reason, in January, 1919 the Patriarch appeared to reverse his apolitical stance, at any rate in relation to the Siberian armies. For to Admiral Kolchak he sent a disguised priest with a tiny photograph of an icon of St. Nicholas the following message: “As is well known to all Russians and, of course, to your Excellency, before this Icon, revered by the whole of Russia, every day on December 6, the day of the Winter Nicholas feast, there was a prayer service, which ended with the whole people chanting: ‘Save, O Lord, Thy people...’ with all the worshippers on their knees. And then on December 6, 1917, after the October revolution, the people of Moscow, faithful to the faith and tradition, at the end of the prayer service, chanted on their knees: ‘Save, O Lord...’ Soldiers and police came up and drove away the

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123 Monk Benjamin, op. cit., pp. 35-36.
worshippers, and fired at the Icon from rifles and weapons. The holy hierarch on this icon on the wall of the Kremlin was depicted with a cross in his left hand and a sword in his right. The bullets of the fanatics flew around the holy hierarch without touching the God-pleaser anywhere. However, fragments of shells from the explosions tore off the plaster on the left side of the Wonderworker, which destroyed almost the whole of the left side of the holy hierarch on the Icon with the hand in which was the cross. On the same day, on the orders of the powers of the antichrist this Holy Icon was draped with a big red flag with a satanic emblem. It was firmly attached to the lower and side edges. On the wall of the Kremlin the inscription was made: ‘Death to the Faith – the Opium of the People’. On December 6 in the next year, many people gathered for the prayer service, which was coming to its end undisturbed by anyone! But when the people fell on their knees and began to chant: ‘Save, O Lord…’ the flag fell from the Icon of the Wonderworker. The atmosphere of prayerful ecstasy cannot be described! One had to see it, and he who saw it remembers it and feels it to this day. There was chanting, sobbing, cries and hands raised on high, rifle fire, many were wounded, many were killed... and... the place was cleared. The next day, early in the morning, with My Blessing, it was declared in front of the whole people what the Lord had shown through His God-pleaser to the Russian people in Moscow on December 6, 1918. I am sending you a photographic copy of the Wonderworking Icon as my blessing to you, Your Excellency, in your struggle with the temporary atheist power over the suffering people of Russia... I ask you, honoured Alexander Vasilievich, look how the Bolsheviks succeeded in striking out the left hand of the God-pleaser with the cross, which demonstrates as it were the temporary trampling of the Orthodox faith... But the punishing sword of the God-pleaser has remained as a help and blessing to your Excellency in your Christian struggle for the salvation of the Orthodox Church in Russia.”

However, this anti-Soviet stance was not maintained. On October 8, 1919, much to the sorrow of the Whites, the Patriarch issued a decree entitled “On the non-interference of the clergy in the civil war”, in which he called on the clergy to “refrain from participation in political parties and demonstrations”, and to submit to the “orders” of the Soviet authorities. “People point out that with a change in authority the Church servers sometimes welcome this change with the ringing of bells and the organization of triumphant services and various ecclesiastical festivities. But if this happens in some places, it takes place either at the demand of the new authorities themselves, or in

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125 Kniazev, V.V. Zhizn’ za vsekh i smert’ za vsekh (Life for all and death for all), Jordanville: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1971, pp. 20-23; S. Volkov, Admiral Aleksandr Vasilievich Kolchak, Moscow, 1991, pp. 70-81; Fr. Stefan Krasovitsky, "Otvet apologetu kommunisticheskoi ideologii" (Reply to an Apologist of the Communist Ideology), Pravoslavnaia Rus’ (Orthodox Russia), № 1553, February 15/28, 1996, p. 15 ®. According to another source, the Patriarch sent Bishop Nestor with the icon of St. Nicholas to Kolchak in Omsk with the following instruction: “Tell the people that if they do not unite and take Moscow again by armed force, then we will perish and Holy Rus’ will perish with us” (Gubanov, op.cit., p. 131).
accordance with the desire of the masses of the people, but not at all at the initiative of the Church servers, who in accordance with their rank must stand higher and beyond all political interests. They must remember the canonical rules of the Holy Church, by which She forbids Her servers from interfering in the political life of the country, and from belonging to any parties, and still more from making service rites and sacred actions into an instrument of political demonstrations.\textsuperscript{126}

This statement marks the beginning of a significant shift in the Church’s attitude from one of open enmity towards the Bolsheviks to qualified neutrality and civil obedience. \textit{Izvestia} commented on it as follows: “The Patriarch and the circles around him have evidently become convinced of the solidity of Soviet power and become more cautious. [Soviet power], of course, is not expecting that the Patriarch should invite the clergy subject to him to express sympathy for Soviet power. The most that these circles are capable of is neutrality. Such tactics are recommended by the Patriarch’s appeal... In any case, the epistle of the Patriarch is characteristic in this respect, that it involuntarily confirms the strength of Soviet power, and that the Orthodox clergy are now too frightened to quarrel with it openly.”\textsuperscript{127}

This shift in attitude took place when Denikin’s Volunteer Army looked on the point of breaking through to Moscow. So we cannot excuse it on the grounds that the Patriarch thought that the Reds were going to win the war. More probably, the Patriarch realised that the Whites, though better than the Reds, were motivated, as we have seen, not so much by the positive ideal of Orthodoxy as by the negative ideal of anti-Bolshevism - and only that which is truly positive and spiritual can merit the blessing of God and His Church.

It may well have been right for the Patriarch not to follow the example of St. Hermogen and call the people to rise up against Bolshevism. Nevertheless, the failure of the Church to issue an unequivocal condemnation of Bolshevism was a weakness that her enemies, both political and ecclesiastical, were quick to exploit. And so the Patriarch’s anti-Soviet statements were construed as dabbling in politics; while his refusal to bless the White armies was construed as the equivalent of a blessing on the Soviet State...

However, even if the Church did not expose the evil of Bolshevism with complete clarity, the Bolsheviks were providing their own proofs of their antichristianity by their behaviour. Thus Shkarovskii writes: “The spread of civil war was accompanied by a hardening of Bolshevik anti-religious policies. The RKP(b) anticipated that religious faith and the Church would soon die away completely, and that with a ‘purposeful education system’ and ‘revolutionary action’, including the use of force, they could be overcome

\textsuperscript{126} Regelson, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 237; Sokolov, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 16; Shkarovskii, “The Russian Orthodox Church”, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 423; Monk Benjamin, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 38-39; Zhukov, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 92.

\textsuperscript{127} \textit{Izvestia}, October 22, 1919; in Zhukov, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 92-93, footnote 50.
fairly quickly. At a later stage Soviet atheist literature referred to this period as 'Sturm und Drang'. In the programme adopted at the Eighth RKP(b) Congress in March 1919, the party proposed a total assault on religion, and talked of the coming 'complete disappearance of religious prejudice'.

“In order to attain this goal the authorities brought in ever-increasing restrictions. On 3 April 1919 the Commissariat of Justice decreed that voluntary monetary collections among the faithful were permissible ‘only for the needs of a particular church building’. At the beginning of 1919 a complete ban was introduced on religious instruction for anybody under the age of 18. Existing monasteries were only permitted to function if they turned themselves into labour communes or workshops. The closure of cloisters began at the end of 1918. By 1921, 722 monasteries had been nationalized, over half of those existing in Russia. From the summer of 1918 the authorities waged a campaign to destroy ‘holy relics’. This offended the faithful and was a crude intervention in the affairs of the Church, an attempt to regulate its way of life and worship. In the spring of 1919 these actions became widespread, and became a means of conducting anti-religious propaganda by deeds. On 14 March the Commissariat of Justice decreed that they should be welcomed. The authorities also looked upon the Church as a ready source of additional state funds. In 1919 they began a speculative trade in valuable artefacts, including items which they had seized from churches....

“... Despite all the obstacles placed in its way, the Orthodox Church was able to conserve its structure during the civil war. Thousands of small churches which were supposed to have been closed down, even in the capitals, continued to function, as did religious schools. Charitable works continued, and religious processions took place, until the autumn of 1921 in Petrograd.

“A very small number of priests served in the Red Army. The right-wing section of the clergy was active in its support of the White cause... Military chaplains served with the White armies – Kolchak had around 2,000, Denikin had more than 1,000, and Wrangel had over 500. All this provided further ammunition for the Bolsheviks’ anti-clerical campaign. During 1920 state bodies continued the tactic of excluding religion from all aspects of life. A circular issued by the People’s Commissariat of Justice on 18 May resulted in almost all the diocesan councils being liquidated in Russia. A further 58 holy relics were uncovered by the summer.128 On 29 July the Sovnarkom approved

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128 The campaign was often counter-productive from the Bolsheviks’ point of view because the relics of the saints were often found to be incorrupt. Thus “St. Sergius of Radonezh was said to have been found perfectly preserved, to the rapturous joy of the onlookers and the consternation of the monastery’s communist custodian, who was subsequently beaten up by the crowd.” (Richard Overy, The Dictators, London: Penguin, 2005, p. 274). The relics of St. Theodosius of Chernigov were also found to be incorrupt (see photograph opposite page 182 in I.M. Andreyev, Russia’s Catacomb Saints, Platina, Ca.: St. Herman of Alaska Press, 1982. (V.M.)
a proposal from the justice commissariat ‘On the Countrywide Liquidation of Relics’. However, the authority of the Church prevented this proposal from being carried out in full. Eight months late, on 1 April 1921, a secret circular issued by the commissariat admitted defeat on this score. By the autumn of 1920 the nationalization of church property had been completed. A report produced by the Eighth Department of the Commissariat of Justice stated that 7,150 million roubles, 828,000 desiatiny of church lands, and 1,112 buildings for rent had been expropriated by the state.\textsuperscript{129}

Still more staggering than the material losses in this period were the losses in lives. Thus in 1918-19, according to Ermhardt, 28 bishops and 1,414 priests were killed\textsuperscript{130}; according to Edward E. Roslof, estimates of numbers of clergy killed between 1918 and 1921 range from 1434 to 9000\textsuperscript{131}; while by the end of 1922, according to Shumilin, 2233 clergy of all ranks and two million laymen had been executed.\textsuperscript{132}

These figures prove the truth of Vladimir Rusak’s assertion: “The Bolsheviks’ relationship to the Church was realized independently of legislation. Violence, bayonets and bullets – these were the instruments of the Bolsheviks ‘ideological’ struggle against the Church.”\textsuperscript{133}

However, as Shkarovskii writes, “the first wave of attacks on religion had not brought the results which had been expected by such Bolshevik theorists as N.I. Bukharin. The majority of the population of Russia remained religious, for all the barbaric methods which had been tried to tear people away from the Church. The patriarchate also emerged from the civil war undefeated.”\textsuperscript{134}

Moreover, with the gradual suppression of all military and political opposition to the Bolsheviks after the war, the Church remained the only significant anti-communist force in the country. (It should be remembered that this was exclusively an anti-Orthodox rather than an anti-religious struggle; for Lenin viewed Islam as an ally in spreading world revolution to the countries of the East, and he did not persecute the Catholics or Protestants.) So the Bolsheviks were compelled to resort to a kind of warfare that had a far higher and more sophisticated ideological content...

\textsuperscript{129} Shkarovskii, “The Russian Orthodox Church”, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 422, 423.
\textsuperscript{130} \textit{Russkaia pravoslavnaia tserkov’ i kommunistichesko gosudarstvo, 1917-1941} (The Russian Orthodox Church and the Communist State, 1917-1941), Moscow: Terra, 1996, p. 69 ®.
\textsuperscript{132} Gustavson, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 34. In Petrograd alone 550 clergy and monks of all ranks were shot in the period 1917-1922 (Anatoly Latyshev, "Provesti besposhadnij Massovij Terror Protiv Popov" (Undertake a Ruthless Mass Terror against the Priests), \textit{Argumenty i Fakty} (Arguments and Facts), № 26, 1996 ®).
\textsuperscript{133} Rusak, \textit{Pir Satany, op. cit.}
\textsuperscript{134} Shkarovskii, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 423-424.
The Russian Church in Exile

Out of the chaos of the Russian Civil War there was formed the Russian Orthodox Church in Exile, later known as the Russian Church Outside of Russia (ROCOR). A.F. Traskovsky writes: “The part of the Russian Orthodox Church which was abroad already had quite a long history before the formation of ROCOR. In Western Europe Russian Orthodox churches had been built beginning from the eighteenth century at Russian embassies and holy places that were often visited by Russians on trips abroad. In the East, thanks to the missionary activities of the Russian Orthodox Church missions were founded in China and Japan that later became dioceses, as well as a mission in Jerusalem. The spread of Orthodoxy in Alaska and North America also led to the creation of a diocese. In the “Statute concerning the convening of an Emigration Assembly of the Russian Churches”, mention was made that in 1921 there were 15 emigration regions which had Russian bishops and 14 districts where there were Russian Orthodox parishes but no bishops. The regions included: North America, Japan, China, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Germany, France, Italy, Serbia, Bulgaria, Turkey and the Far East. The districts included: Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, England, Switzerland, Czechia, Hungary, Austria, Romania, Palestine, Greece and the city of Bizert in Tunisia. All the emigration missions, parishes and dioceses were in canonical submission to the higher ecclesiastical authorities in Russia – the Holy Ruling Synod until the restoration of the patriarchate in 1917, and his Holiness the Patriarch after 1917. But then after the revolution there began the Civil War and anarchy. The Bolsheviks began to persecute the Church. The majority of emigration missions and dioceses found themselves either deprived of the possibility of normal relations with the higher ecclesiastical authorities of Russia, or such relations were exceptionally difficult. Moreover, in Russia itself many dioceses were cut off by the front from his Holiness Patriarch Tikhon (Bellavin)’s leadership. After the defeat of the White army, a huge flood of émigrés flooded abroad, amongst whom were not a few representatives of the clergy, including bishops and metropolitans. On the shoulders of the clerics who were abroad and the clergy who had emigrated lay the burden of care for the spiritual nourishment of the huge Russian diaspora. That was the situation in which the part of the Russian Church that was abroad found itself on the eve of the formation of the Church Abroad.

“What was the prehistory of the Russian Church Abroad? Her beginnings went back to 1919, in Russia. In Stavropol in May, 1919 there took place the South Russian Church Council headed by the oldest hierarch in the South of Russia, Archbishop Agathodorus of Stavropol. There took part in the Council all the bishops who were on the territory of the Voluntary army, the members of the All-Russian Ecclesiastical Council and four people from each diocesan council. At the Council there was formed the Higher Church Administration of the South of Russia (HCA of the South of Russia), which consisted of:
President – Archbishop Metrophanes of Novocherkassk, Assistant to the President – Archbishop Demetrius of Tauris, Protopresbyter G. Shavelsky, Protopriest A.P. Rozhdestvensky, Count V.V. Musin-Pushkin and Professor of theology P.V. Verkhovsky. In November, 1919 the Higher Church Administration was headed by Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky) of Kiev and Galich, who had arrived from Kiev.135

“The aim of the creation of the HCA was the organization of the leadership of church life on the territory of the Volunteer army in view of the difficulties Patriarch Tikhon was experiencing in administering the dioceses on the other side of the front line. A little earlier, in November, 1918, an analogous Temporary Higher Church Administration had been created in Siberia headed by Archbishop Sylvester of Omsk. Later, a part of the clergy that submitted to this HCA emigrated after the defeat of Kolchak’s army and entered the composition of the Chinese dioceses of the Russian Orthodox Church. The HCA of the South of Russia, like the Siberian HCA, was, in spite of its self-government, nevertheless in canonical submission to his Holiness Patriarch Tikhon, and in this way Church unity was maintained.

“After the defeat of the armies of Denikin, in the spring of 1920 the head of the HCA of the South of Russia, Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky), was evacuated from Novorossiysk to Constantinople136, and was then for a time in a monastery on Mount Athos. However, in September, 1920, at the invitation of General Wrangel, he returned to Russia, to the Crimea, where he continued his work. The final evacuation of the HCA of the South of Russia took place in November, 1920, together with the remains of Wrangel’s army. On the steamer “Alexander Mikhailovich” there set out from the Crimea to Constantinople the leaders of the HCA and a large number of simple priests.

“On arriving in Constantinople, as Archbishop Nicon (Rklitsky) indicates in his Biography of Metropolitan Anthony, Metropolitan Anthony ‘first considered that from now on all the activities of the Russian Higher Church Administration should be brought to an end and all the care for the spiritual welfare of the Russian Orthodox people should be taken upon herself by the Church of Constantinople and the Local Orthodox Churches in whose bounds


136 Before being evacuated, while still in Yekaterinodar, Metropolitan Anthony came out of the cathedral, accompanied by all the clergy, and addressed the thousands of faithful, asking them – for one knows, he said, that “the voice of the people is the voice of God” - whether they should leave with the White Army or stay in Russia and suffer for the faith. The crowd replied that they should leave (Monk Anthony (Chernov), Archvêque Theophane de Poltava (Archbishop Theophan of Poltava), Lavardac: Monastère de St. Michael, 1988, p. 73 (in French)) (V.M.).
the Russian Orthodox people found themselves.’ However, as soon became clear, the realization of this variant became extremely problematic in view of the fact that huge masses of Russian refugees did not know the language and customs of those countries to which they had come, and the nourishment of such a large flock by priests speaking other languages (for example Greeks) presented very many problems. Moreover, the numerous émigré Russian clergy, who were fully able to deal with these problems, would not be involved. Therefore it was decided to continue the activities of the Higher Church Administration.

“In order to work out a plan of further action, the first session of the HCA outside the borders of Russia took place on November 19, 1920… Metropolitan Dorotheus [the locum tenens of the patriarchal throne of Constantinople] gave his agreement [to the HCA’s decisions] and the HCA of the South of Russia was transformed into the Higher Church Administration Abroad.

“Literally the day after the above-mentioned session, on November 20, 1920, an event took place in Moscow that had an exceptional significance for the Russian Church Abroad – his Holiness Patriarch Tikhon passed decree № 362 concerning the self-governance of church dioceses in the case of a break of communications between this or that diocese and his Holiness the Patriarch for external reasons over which they had no control (what they had in mind was war or repression by the authorities). This is the main content of this decree:

“1. With the blessing of his Holiness the Patriarch, the Holy Synod and the Higher Church Council, in a joint session, judged concerning the necessity of… giving the diocesan Hierarch… instructions in case of a disconnection with the higher church administration or the cessation of the activity of the latter...

“2. If dioceses, as a result of the movement of the front, changes of state boundaries, etc., find themselves unable to communicate with the higher church administration or the higher church administration itself together with his Holiness the Patriarch for some reason ceases its activity, the diocesan hierarch will immediately enter into relations with the hierarchs of neighbouring dioceses in order to organize a higher instance of church administration."

On that day more than 125 ships arrived in Constantinople with about 150,000 people on board (Zhukov, op. cit., p. 67). The session of the HCA took place on board the steamer Great Prince Alexander Mikhailovich. In it took part Metropolitan Anthony of Kiev, Metropolitan Plato of Odessa, Archbishop Theophan of Poltava and Bishop Benjamin of Sebastopol. It was decided to continue the prerogatives of the members of the HCA, discussing all aspects of the Church life of the refugees and soldiers in all states having relations with the Ecumenical Patriarch (Monk Benjamin, op. cit., pp. 47-48). (V.M.)

At the second session, on November 22, it was decided to include Archbishop Anastasy of Kishinev, who was already living in Constantinople, in the HCA (Zhukov, op. cit., p. 69)
authority for several dioceses in the same conditions (in the form of a temporary higher church government or metropolitan region, or something similar).

"3. The care for the organization of the higher church authority for the whole group who are in the situation indicated in point 2 is the obligatory duty of the eldest ranked hierarch in the indicated group…’

"This wise decree of his Holiness Patriarch Tikhon, which was passed in conditions of anti-church terror, was given to the foreign bishops a year after its passing with the help of Bishop Meletius of Nerchenk. It served as the canonical basis for the formation of the Russian Church Abroad, since the émigré clergy were in the situation indicated in points 2 and 3.

"Meanwhile the HCA in Constantinople continued to work out a plan for further action. At the sessions of April 19-21, 1921, it was decided to convene a ‘Congress of the representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad to unite, regulate and revive church activity abroad’, which was later renamed the ‘Russian Church Council Abroad’, also known in the literature as the Karlovtsy Council. Soon, at the invitation of Patriarch Demetrius of Serbia, the HCA led by Metropolitan Anthony moved to Sremskie Karlovtsy in Serbia – a fraternal country which in the course of many years proved to be a safe haven for the leadership of the Church Abroad."¹³⁸

Sremskie Karlovtsy was a significant centre for the Russian Church in Exile because in 1691 37,000 Serbian families had fled there from Turkish-ruled Serbia with the blessing of Patriarch Arsenius III, forming an autonomous metropolitanate in 1712. Just as the Serbs fled there from the Turks, so the Russians now fled there from the Bolsheviks.

ROCOR found greater sympathy among the Serbs than among the Greeks. "Serbia repaid mercy [Russia’s defence of Serbia in 1914] with mercy. Alexander I never identified Russia with her new communist government. Being a deeply believing Orthodox man, King Alexander could not contemplate the destiny of Russia and the Russian Orthodox Church without pain… During the Civil war, by command of the Monarch of Yugoslavia, a Serbian corps of volunteers was formed in the South of Russia to fight against the Bolsheviks. When the civil war was lost and the remains of the Volunteer Army, thanks to the efforts of General Wrangel, were saved and left their homeland, Alexander I magnanimously stretched out his hand of help and received those who were without a homeland, the Russian refugees who were needed by nobody, and gave them the opportunity to set themselves up, work and live in this country. The young Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and

Slovenes needed cultural and intellectual forces. It well understood this, but it did not give refuge to Russian people out of avaricious motives – it strove to repay good with good, to repay the joyful hospitality it received from Russia when it was a political émigré, and for help in the war.”

Meanwhile, at the end of 1920 200,000 Russian refugees with the retreating remnants of the White armies in Siberia crossed from Siberia into China. Among them were six bishops and many priests. This large colony of Russians, together with the Russian Spiritual Mission in Jerusalem, recognised the authority of the HCA in Serbia.

The canonical status of ROCOR was unique in the history of the Orthodox Church. It always called herself a part of the Local Russian Church, being that part of the Russian Church situated outside Russia and having jurisdiction exclusively outside Russia (point 1 of the Polozhenie or Statute of ROCOR). And yet she had dioceses and parishes on all six continents of Europe, North and South America, Asia, Africa and Australia, and was in canonical submission to none of the Local Orthodox Churches already existing in those places. Moreover, at the beginning of the 1990s, when she returned to Russia, she claimed jurisdiction in Russia as well! And so ROCOR was, in effect, a world-wide jurisdiction claiming to have jurisdiction in every part of the globe, but which claimed to be only a part of one Local Church, the Russian!

This clearly anomalous situation was seen as being justified on a temporary basis, - until the fall of communism in Russia, according to the Polozhenie - not only by ROCOR herself, but also by what came to be called the Catacomb Church in Russia and, at least for a time, such established Local Churches as Serbia and Jerusalem. The situation was seen as justified on the grounds, first, of the extraordinarily difficult situation of the three million or so Russian Orthodox scattered around the world, whose spiritual and physical needs had to be met by Russian-speaking pastors. And secondly, on the grounds of the critical situation in the Orthodox Church as a whole, when even the leaders of Orthodoxy were falling into heresy.

The First All-Emigration Council opened in Sremskie Karlovtsy on November 21, 1921. 11 Russian and 2 Serbian bishops took part; 24 Russian bishops who could not be at the Council sent telegrams indicating their recognition of its authority. Clergy, monastics and laity also took part in the Council – 163 people in all. Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky) was the president of the Council, and Patriarch Demetrius of Serbia its honorary president. However, when the Bulgarian Metropolitan Stefan of Sophia arrived, bringing a greeting from the Bulgarian Holy Synod, this upset the

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

140 Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 51.
Patriarch of Serbia, whose relations with the Bulgarians were not good. So he did not come, while Metropolitan Stefan immediately returned to Bulgaria.

Bishop Seraphim (Sobolev), who was in charge of the Russian communities in Bulgaria, reported to the Council about the great difficulty of their position in Bulgaria because of the Bulgarian schism and the impossibility of concelebrating with the Bulgarian clergy. The hierarchs discussed this matter from all sides and declared that they would like to restore communion with the Bulgarian Church, but could not exceed their canonical prerogatives without the participation of the other Local Churches, and in particular of the Church of Constantinople. In spite of that, continuing the practice of the Russian Church and basing themselves on the canons (71, 81, 88 and 122 of Carthage), the delegates allowed the Russian priests and deacons to serve all kinds of Divine services and sacraments with the bishops and clergy of the Bulgarian Church, and they also allowed the Russian bishops to serve with the Bulgarian clergy. Between bishops only joint serving of molebens, pannikhidas, etc. was allowed, but “in no way the celebration of the Divine Liturgy and other holy sacraments of the Orthodox Church”.

The Council called on the Genoa conference to refuse recognition to the Bolshevik regime and help the Russian people to overthrow it. And it declared: “May [God] return to the All-Russian throne his Anointed One, strong in the love of the people, a lawful tsar from the House of the Romanovs”. However, Archbishop Eulogius and Anastasy voted against the Epistle (Anastasy was not anti-monarchist, but did not want the Romanovs to be mentioned). The hierarchs were split in two, two-thirds of the clergy abstained, and the Epistle was issued only thanks to the votes of the laity.

The strongly monarchist tone of the Karlovtsy Council (as of the Far Eastern Council of 1922) marks an important step in the spiritual recovery of the Russian Church. As we have seen, the Holy Synod in February, 1917 had done little, if anything, to protect the monarchy. And the Councils that took place during the Civil War shied clear of any commitment to monarchism. As A.A. Kostriukov writes: “Both the Stavropol Council and the HTCA created by it tried to adopt a restrained political position. While speaking out against the Bolshevik dictatorship, the leadership of the Church in the south of Russia distanced itself from the monarchy and tried to stand on democratic principles. So as not to destroy the fragile peace between the representatives of various parties represented in the White armies. Recalling this period, Protopriest Vladimir Vostokov wrote in 1922: ‘In May, 1919 the South Russian Council in Stavropol under the presidency of Archbishop Metrophanes, and through the exceptional participation of Protopriest [George] Shavelsky, who at that time was working in agreement with the chief of staff General

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141 Ivan Snegarov, Otnosheniata mezhdu B'lgarskata ts'r'kva i drugite pravoslavni ts'r'kvi sled prov'zglisuvaneto na skhizmata (Relations between the Bulgarian Church and other Orthodox Churches following the declaration of the schism) (B); Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 61.
Romanovsky, did not allow those members to speak who tried to express themselves definitively in relation to ‘socialism’ and ‘the internationalist executioners’. And the word ‘Tsar’ was feared at the Council like fire.’

“According to the witness of Protopriest Vladimir Vostokov, even the open condemnation of regicide and the appeal to the people to repent of this sin dates to the period when the HTCA of the South-East of Russia was already in the Crimea. However, ‘not even the Crimean Church administration resolved on appealing’ for the reestablishment of the monarchy’.”

However, final defeat in the Civil War and the experience of exile gave the Karlovtsy Council, which was in many ways the successor to the Stavropol Council, the spiritual freedom to speak openly for the restoration of the monarchy. And the Russian Church in Exile continued to preserve the traditions of monarchism until the very end of its existence. This position was, however, intensely feared by the Bolsheviks, for whom the threat of the restoration of the monarchy remained real for many years. And so, under pressure from the Bolsheviks, Patriarch Tikhon resolved: “To close the Council (it was already closed), and to recognise the resolutions of the Karlovtsy Council as having no canonical significance in view of its invasion into the political sphere which does not belong to it. To demand the materials of the Council abroad, so as to judge on the degree of guilt of the participants in the Council.” The Synod added: “To enter into discussion of the activity of those responsible for the Council, and to give them over to ecclesiastical trial after the establishment of the normal life of the Russian Synod.”

In defence of the Karlovtsy Council’s position, Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky) said: “If by politics one understands all that touches upon the life of the people, beginning with the rightful position of the Church within the realm, then the ecclesiastical authorities and Church councils must participate in political life, and from this point of view definite demands are made upon it. Thus, the holy hierarch Hermogenes laid his life on the line by first demanding that the people be loyal to Tsar Basil Shuisky, and when the Poles imprisoned him he demanded the election of Tsar Michael Romanov. At the present time, the paths of the political life of the people are diverging in various directions in a far more definite way: some, in a positive sense, for the Faith and the Church, others in an inimical sense; some in support of the army and against socialism and communism, others exactly the opposite. Thus the Karlovtsy Council not only had the right, but was obliged to bless the army for the struggle against the Bolsheviks, and also, following the Great Council of Moscow of 1917-1918, to condemn socialism and communism.”

142 Kostriukov, op. cit., pp. 9-10.
143 Monk Benjamin, op. cit., pp. 60-61.
144 Archbishop Nikon (Rklitsky), Zhizneopisanie Blazhennejshago Antonia, Mitropolita Kievskago i Galitskago (A Life of his Beatitude Anthony, Metropolitan of Kiev and Galich), New York, 1960, vol. VI, p. 36.
The position of the Karlovtsy Council was supported by the Zemsky Sobor which took place in Vladivostok from July 23 to August 10, 1922. “It recognized the cause of the revolution to be the sins of the Russian people and called for repentance, proclaiming the only path of salvation for Russia to be the restoration of a lawful Orthodox monarchy. The Council resolve that ‘the right to establish Supreme power in Russia belong to the dynasty of the House of Romanov’. That is, the Council recognized the Romanov Dynasty to be still reigning in spite of the troubles, and for a short time re-established the Fundamental laws of the Russian empire in the Amur district (until the final conquest of the region by the Reds).

“Accordingly it was decided that the Amur State formation free from the Bolsheviks should be headed by a representative of the Dynasty. For the transitional period General Michael Constantinovich Diterichs was elected as Ruler. Patriarch Tikhon, who was in Moscow, was unanimously elected as the honourable president of the Council. The widowed Empress Maria Fyodorovna wrote a welcoming telegram to the Sobor in reply.

“In order no. 1 dated August 8, 1922 Lieutenant-General Diterichs wrote: ‘For our sins against the Anointed of God, Emperor Nicholas II, who was martyred with the whole of his Family by Soviet power, a terrible time of troubles has struck the Russian people and Holy Rus’ has been subjected to the greatest destruction, pillaging, torment and slavery by atheist Russians and thieves and robbers of other races, led by infidels of Jewish race who have even renounced their own Jewish faith... Here, at the edge of the Russian land, in the Amur region, the Lord has placed a single thought and faith into the hearts and minds of everyone gathered at the Zemsky Sobor: there can be no Great Russia without a Sovereign, without an Anointed of God of inherited succession. And here in the Amur region, before those gathered in a small body, but one strong in faith and national spirit, the last people of the Russian land, there stands the task and the duty and the good cross to direct all their service to preparing the way for Him – our future God-seer.’

“And here are the words of the last order of General Diterichs of October 17, 1922 before his departure from Russia under the pressure of the reds: ‘I believe that Russia will return to the Russia of Christ, the Russia of the Anointed of God, but I believe that we were unworthy of this mercy from the Supreme Creator.’”

From War Communism to NEP

The Whites had effectively lost the Civil War by the winter of 1919-20, and in November, 1920, the last White forces under General Wrangel were

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evacuated from the Crimea to Constantinople. The Reds were now free to redirect their forces to the goal of world revolution, and invaded Poland. However, things did not go all their way, and they were forced: (1) to abandon the goal of world revolution in view of the Red Army’s defeat on the Vistula in Poland; (2) to abandon grain requisitioning and the militarization of labour in view of the continuation of major peasant rebellions in Western Siberia and Tambovschina, and a major rebellion of the sailors in Kronstadt; and (3) to clamp down hard on dissent within the Communist Party itself.

1. The Polish War. At a critical point in the Civil War in 1919, the Poles under General Pilsudski decided to enter into negotiations with the Reds. This, according to General Denikin, was the decisive event that guaranteed the defeat of the Whites. Be that as it may, the Poles made up for this in the next year by decisively defeating the Red Army on the banks of the Vistula.

The Bolsheviks’ defeat suggested to them, as Adam Zamoyski writes, “that the whole world was ranged against them, and that the masses in other countries could not be relied on to support them. This gave rise to a siege mentality, isolationism and the doctrine of ‘communism in one country’, expressed to the outside world in a sulky, defensive aggressiveness. Hurt pride is in evidence in the attitude of most of Russia’s leaders to the rest of the world, beginning with Lenin.

“The isolation in which Russia spent the 1920s and 1930s undoubtedly assisted Stalin in his seizure of power and his reign of terror, and it ultimately pushed her into the arms of the other regime born of humiliation and fired by a determination to overthrow the Versailles settlement – Nazi Germany. And when his troops marched into Poland in support of the Germans in 1939, Stalin showed that he had learned the lessons of 1919-20 [he served as political commissar in the Russo-Polish war]. There would be no attempt to win the Poles over to communism; his previous experience had taught him that they were not amenable. So he set about extirpating not only nobles, priests and landowners, but also doctors, nurses and veterinary surgeons, and in general anyone who might show the slightest sign of independent thought or even curiosity – the scores of charges which entailed immediate arrest and deportation included possessing a stamp collection. Over 1,500,000 people were caught up in this fine net. Army officers, for whom Stalin felt a particular hatred, were murdered in the forest of Katyn and elsewhere, other ranks and civilians were despatched to the Gulag, where a majority died. After 1945 he would do his best to extend the same principles to the rest of Poland.

“How differently things might have turned out in Russia had some kind of peace been negotiated back at the beginning of 1919, and the whole war avoided, it would be idle to speculate. It would be equally pointless, if fascinating, to try to extrapolate the consequences of a Russian victory at
Warsaw in 1920: Poland and the Baltic states would have been turned into Soviet republics, followed almost certainly by Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Romania, and very probably Germany, and the rest of Europe would have been profoundly affected; whether this would have led to world revolution or an international crusade leading to the destruction of Soviet Russia is anybody’s guess…”

Abandoning world revolution went right against one of the central tenets of Leninism. On arriving in Petrograd in April, 1917, Lenin had declared: “I am happy to greet in your persons the victorious Russian revolution, and greet you as the vanguard of the world-wide proletarian army”. The two went together: in fact, Lenin thought that revolution in Russia would fail if it was not transformed into world-wide revolution. Nor was it an impossible prospect in the early years after the Great War, when disillusion with western civilization was at its height. For here, as Brendon writes, “was the promise of an end to the capitalist system, which institutionalised greed and exploitation, whose by-products were unjust empires and cruel wars. Instead each would give according to his ability and receive according to his need. The Communist creed tapped the idealism of the generation which mourned the lost generation. Old Socialists like George Lansbury said that the Bolsheviks were ‘doing what Christians call the Lord’s work’ and that Lenin’s devotion to the cause of humanity made his whole life like ‘that of one of the saints of old’ [!]. Communism also appealed to those who craved power. Soon Communist parties were springing up everywhere, encouraged by money and propaganda from Russia (in Britain, for example, the Soviet trade delegation sold tsarist diamonds to subsidise the Daily Herald). In 1919 Red revolution broke out in Germany and Hungary. In 1920 some 35 countries sent delegates to the second Congress of the Communist International (Comintern) at Petrograd. It predictably resolved that ‘The International Proletariat will not sheathe its sword until Soviet Russia become a link in the federation of Soviet republics of the whole world.”

But the Soviet defeat on the Vistula put an end to those hopes – for the present. And with that defeat the mood of the masses changed, aided not a little by the foolish tactics of the Comintern in refusing to allow alliances with any more moderate socialist party. “The world rejected the revolutionary gospel of the Bolsheviks just as it had rejected that of the Jacobins and for much the same reasons... The German and Hungarian uprisings were suppressed. In America, where Secretary of State Lansing warned that Bolshevik forces ‘are menacing the present social order in nearly every European country and... may have to be reckoned with even in this country’, there was a Red Scare. In England the Labour party repudiated Communism, which was not surprising in view of Lenin’s offer to support their leaders as a rope supports a hanged man. In Japan the authorities passed a law against

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147 Brendon, op. cit., pp. 11-12.
‘thought crime’ and the ‘thought police’ (by no means a figment of George Orwell’s imagination) devised new methods of reminding offenders of their loyalty to the Emperor. In France the Right branded Communism as a German aberration and the Left split over whether to embrace it. In Italy fear of Communism helped to bring Mussolini’s Fascists to power…”

2. The Peasant Rebellions. The peasants had never served the Bolsheviks with enthusiasm, and now, after the defeat of the Whites, they rose up against them. “Until March 1921,” writes Richard Pipes, “the Communists tried and in some measure succeeded in placing the national economy under state control. Later this policy came to be known as ‘War Communism’ – Lenin himself first used this term in April 1921 as he was abandoning it. It was a misnomer coined to justify the disastrous consequences of economic experimentation by the alleged exigencies of the Civil War and foreign intervention. Scrutiny of contemporary records, however, leaves no doubt that these policies were, in fact, not so much emergency responses to war conditions as an attempt as rapidly as possible to construct a Communist society. War Communism involved the nationalization of the means of production and most other economic assets, the abolition of private trade, the elimination of money, the subjection of the national economy to a comprehensive plan, and the introduction of forced labor.

“These experiments left Russia’s economy in shambles. In 1920-21, compared to 1913, large-scale industrial production fell by 82 percent, worker productivity by 74 percent, and the production of cereals by 40 percent. The cities emptied as their inhabitants fled to the countryside in search of food: Petrograd lost 70 percent of its population, Moscow over 50 percent; the other urban and industrial centers also suffered depletions. The non-agricultural labor force dropped to less than a half of what it had been when the Bolsheviks took power: from 3.6 to 1.5 million. Workers’ real wages declined to one-third of the level of 1913-14. A hydralike black market, ineradicable because indispensable, supplied the population with the bulk of consumer goods. Communist policies had succeeded in ruining the world’s fifth-largest economy and depleting the wealth accumulated over centuries of ‘feudalism’ and ‘capitalism’. A contemporary Communist economist called the economic collapse a calamity ‘unparalleled in the history of mankind’.

“The Civil War ended, for all practical purposes, in the winter of 1919-20, and if war needs had been the driving force behind these policies, now would have been the time to give them up. Instead, the year that followed the crushing of the White armies saw the wildest economic experiments, such as the ‘militarization’ of labor and the elimination of money. The government persevered with forcible confiscations of peasant food ‘surplus’. The peasants responded by hoarding, reducing the sown acreage, and selling produce on the black market in defiance of government prohibitions. Since the weather in

148 Brendon, op. cit., p. 12.
1920 happened to be unfavourable, the meagre supply of bread dwindled still further. It was now that the Russian countryside, until then relatively well off compared to the cities in terms of food supplies, began to experience the first symptoms of famine.

“The repercussions of such mismanagement were not only economic but also social: they eroded still further the thin base of Bolshevik support, turning followers into enemies and enemies into rebels. The ‘masses’, whom Bolshevik propaganda had been telling that the hardships they had endured in 1918-19 were the fault of the ‘White Guards’ and their foreign backers, expected the end of hostilities to bring back normal conditions. The Civil War had to some extent shielded the Communists from the unpopularity of their policies by making it possible to justify them as militarily necessary. This explanation could no longer be invoked once the Civil War was over…

“It now began to dawn even on those willing to give the Bolsheviks the benefit of the doubt, that they had been had, that the true objective of the new regime was not improving their lot but holding on to power, and that to this end it was prepared to sacrifice their well-being and even their very lives. This realization produced a national rebellion unprecedented in its dimensions and ferocity. The end of one Civil War led immediately to the outbreak of another: having defeated the White armies, the Red Army now had to battle partisan bands, popularly known as ‘Greens’ but labelled by the authorities ‘bandits’, made up of peasants, deserters, and demobilized soldiers.

“In 1920 and 1921, the Russian countryside from the Black Sea to the Pacific was the scene of uprisings that in numbers involved and territory affected greatly eclipsed the famous peasant rebellions of Stenka Razin and Pugachev under tsarism. Its true dimensions cannot even now be established, because the relevant materials have not yet been properly studied. The Communist authorities have assiduously minimized its scope: thus, according to the Cheka, in February, 1921, there occurred 118 peasant risings. In fact, there were hundreds of such uprisings, involving hundreds of thousands of partisans. Lenin was in receipt of regular reports from this front of the Civil War, which included detailed maps covering the entire country, indicating that vast territories were in rebellion. Occasionally, Communist historians give us a glimpse of the dimensions of this other Civil War, conceding that some ‘bands’ of ‘kulaks’ numbered 50,000 and more rebels. An idea of the extent and savagery of the fighting can be obtained from official figures of the losses suffered by the Red Army units engaged against the rebels. According to recent information, the number of Red Army casualties in the campaign of

\[\text{One indication of the scale of the suffering is the fact that in Western Siberia, the scene of one of the largest peasant rebellions, more priests were killed in 1921 than in any other year – a pattern not found in any other region. Nearly one hundred priests were shot in the Tobolsk area alone. (V.M.)}\]
1921-22, which were waged almost exclusively against peasants and other domestic rebels, came to 237,908. The losses among the rebels were almost certainly as high and probably much higher.”

The Peasant Civil War finally failed because the rebels were scattered and disunited, and the Reds were able to destroy each rising separately. Moreover, with the exception of the rebellion led in the Tambov region by Antonov, they “aimed not to march on Moscow so much as to cut themselves off from its influence”. So those who wanted power most clung onto it...

But terrible as the peasant rebellions were, they were not such a direct threat to the regime as the strikes of workers in Petrograd and the mutiny of the sailors in Kronstadt. For these constituted the primary support of the Bolsheviks, whose interests they were supposed to defend above all others. And so on March 7, Trotsky ordered Tukhachevsky, who had commanded the defeated Red Army in Poland, to attack the sailors across the ice.

The next day the Provisional Revolutionary Committee of Kronstadt published a statement that condemned the revolution in no uncertain terms: “In carrying out the October Revolution, the working class hoped to achieve its liberation. The outcome has been even greater enslavement of human beings. Power has passed from a monarchy based on the police and gendarmerie into the hands of usurpers – Communists – who have given the toilers not freedom but the daily dread of ending up in the torture chambers of the Cheka, the horrors of which exceed many times the rule of tsarism’s gendarmerie. The bayonets, the bullets, the coarse shouts of the oprichniki from the Cheka – this is the fruit of the long struggles and sufferings of Soviet Russia’s toilers. The glorious emblem of the toilers’ state – the hammer and sickle – Communist authority has in truth replaced with the bayonet and the iron bar, created to protect the tranquil and careless life of the new bureaucracy, the Communist commissars and functionaries. But basest and most criminal of all is the moral slavery introduced by the Communists: they have also laid their hands on the inner world of the working people, compelling them to think only as they do. By means of state-run trade unions, the workers have been chained to their machines, so that labor is not a source of joy but a new serfdom. To the protests of peasants, expressed in spontaneous uprisings, and those of the workers, whom the very conditions of life compel to strike, they have responded with mass executions and an appetite for blood that by far exceeds that of tsarist generals. Toiling Russia, the first to raise the red banner of the liberation of labor, is thoroughly drenched with the blood of the victims of Communist rule. In this sea of blood, the Communists drown all the great and bright pledges and slogans of the toilers’ revolution. It has become ever more clear, and by now is self-

evident, that the Russian Communist Party is not the protector of the working people that it claims to be, that the interests of the working people are foreign to it, and that, having gained power, its only fear is of losing it, and hence that all means [to that end] are permissible: slander, violence, deception, murder, revenge on the families of those who have revolted... The current revolt finally offers the toilers a chance to have their freely elected, functioning soviets, free of violent party pressures, to refashion the state-run trade unions into free associations of workers, peasants, and the working intelligentsia. At last, the police baton of Communist autocracy is smashed…”

Sadly, it was the Kronstadt sailors, not the “Communist autocracy”, that were smashed; but their smashing, coinciding with the crushing of a peasant rebellion in Western Siberia that interrupted vital food shipments for two weeks, marked a critical turning-point. “On March 15, as the Red Army stood poised to launch the final assault on the naval base, Lenin announced what was to become the linchpin of the New Economic Policy, the abandonment of arbitrary food confiscation known as prorazverstka in favor of a tax in kind. Prorazverstka had been the most universally despised feature of ‘War Communism’ – despised by peasants, whom it robbed of their produce, but also by the urban population, whom in deprived of food.

“Requisitioning had been enforced in an appallingly arbitrary manner. The Commissariat of Supply determined the quantity of foodstuffs it required – a quantity determined by what was needed to feed the consumers in the cities and the armed forces, without regard to what the producers could provide. This figure it broke down, on the basis of inadequate and often outdated information, into quotas for each province, district, and village. The system was as inefficient as it was brutal: in 1920, for example, Moscow set the prorazverska at 583 million puds (9.5 million tons) but managed to collect only half that amount.

“Collectors acted on the premise that peasants lied when they claimed that the grain they were forced to surrender was not surplus but essential to provide food for their families and seed, and that they could compensate for the loss by digging up their hoard. This the peasants may have been able to do in 1918 and 1919. But by 1920 they had little if anything left to hoard: as a result,... in the case of Tambov province, prorazverstka, even if incompletely realized, left them with next to nothing. Nor was this all. Zealous collectors impounded not only ‘surplus’ and food needed for sustenance, but grain set aside for the next season’s sowing: one high Communist official admitted that in many areas the authorities appropriated one hundred percent of the harvest. Refusal to pay resulted in the confiscation of livestock and beatings. In addition, collecting agents and local officials, empowered to label resistance to their demands as ‘kulak’-inspired, or ‘counterrevolutionary’, felt at liberty to appropriate food, cattle, even clothing for their personal use. The

peasants resisted fiercely: in the Ukraine alone, they were reported to have killed 1,700 requisition officials.

“A more self-defeating policy would be hard to conceived. The system operated on the absurd principle that the more the peasant produced the more would be taken from him; from which it followed with inexorable logic that he would produce little if anything beyond his own needs. The richer a region, the more it was subjected to government plunder, and the more prone it was to curtail production: between 1916-17 and 1920-21, the decline in the sown acreage in the center of the country, an area of grain deficits, was 18 percent, whereas in the main region of grain surpluses it was 33 percent. And since yields per acre declined from shortage of fertilizer and draft animals as well, grain production, which in 1913 had been 80.1 million tons, dropped in 1920 to 46.1 million tons. If in 1918 and 1919 it has still been possible to extract a ‘surplus’, by 1920 the peasant had learned his lesson and made sure there was nothing to surrender. It apparently never occurred to him that the regime would take what it wanted even if it meant that he went breadless and seedless.

“Prodrazverstka had to be abandoned for both economic and political reasons. There was nothing left to take from the peasant, who faced starvation; and it fuelled nationwide rebellions. The Politburo finally decided to drop prodrazverstka on March 15. The new policy was made public on March 23. Henceforth, the peasants were required to turn over to government agencies a fixed amount of grain; arbitrary confiscations of ‘surplus’ were terminated...

“While the economic benefits of the new agrarian policy were not immediately apparent, the political rewards were reaped at once. The abandonment of food requisitioning took the wind out of the sails of rebellion. The following year, Lenin could boast that peasant uprisings, which previously had ‘determined the general picture of Russia’, had virtually ceased...”

At the same time, Moscow introduced “The New Economic Policy” (NEP), a humiliating retreat from Communist ideals allowing the return of some small-scale private trade. It worked. “The benefits appeared first and foremost in agriculture. In 1922, thanks to donations and purchases of seed grain abroad as well as favourable weather, Russia enjoyed a bumper crop. Encouraged by the new tax policy to increase the cultivated acreage, peasants expanded production: the acreage sown in 1925 equalled that of 1913. Yields, however, remained lower than before the Revolution, and the harvest proportionately smaller: as late as 1928, on the eve of collectivization, it was 10 percent below the 1913 figure...”

154 Pipes, op. cit., p. 395.
3. The Tenth Party Congress. The year that climaxed in the crushing of the peasants’ and Kronstadt sailors’ rebellions had revealed that the popularity of the Communist Party was at an all-time low. So Lenin acted to crush dissent within the party; in the same fateful month of March, 1921, the Tenth Party Congress tightened the screws on political dissent at just the moment when a degree of economic liberalization was being introduced through NEP. It did so by crushing a movement called “the Workers’ Opposition” that was led by Alexander Shliapnikov and his mistress, Alexandra Kollontai.

“The emergence of the Workers’ Opposition,” writes Pipes, “brought into the open a smoldering antagonism that went back to the late nineteenth century, between a minority of politically active workers and the intellectuals who claimed to represent them and speak in their behalf. Radical workers, usually more inclined to syndicalism that Marxism, cooperated with the socialist intelligentsia and allowed themselves to be guided by them because they knew they were short of political experience. But they never ceased to be aware of a gulf between themselves and their partners: and once a ‘worker’s state’ had come into being, they saw no reason for submitting to the authority of the ‘white hands’.

“The concerns expressed by the Workers’ Opposition stood at the center of the deliberations of the Tenth Party Congress in March 1921. Shortly before it convened, Kollontai released for internal party use a brochure in which she assailed the regime’s bureaucratization. (Party rules prohibited venting party disputes in public.) The Workers’ Opposition, she argued, made up exclusively of labouring men and women, felt that the Party’s leadership had lost touch with labor: the higher up the ladder of authority one ascended, the less support there was for the Workers’ Opposition. This happened because the Soviet apparatus had been taken over by class enemies who despised Communism: the petty bourgeoisie had seized control of the bureaucracy, while the ‘grand bourgeoisie’, in the guise of ‘specialists’, had taken over industrial management and the military command.

“The Workers’ Opposition submitted to the Tenth Congress two resolutions, one dealing with party organization, the other with the role of trade unions. It was the last time that independent resolutions – that is, resolutions not originating with the Central Committee – would be discussed at a party congress. The first document spoke of a crisis in the party caused by the perpetuation of habits of military command acquired during the Civil War, and the alienation of the leadership from the labouring masses. Party affairs were conducted without either glasnost’ or democracy, in a bureaucratic style, by elements mistrustful of workers, causing them to lose confidence in the party and to leave it in droves. To remedy this situation, the party should carry out a thorough purge to rid itself of opportunistic elements and increase worker involvement. Every Communist should be required to
spend at least three months a year doing physical labor. All functionaries should be elected by and accountable to their members: appointments from the Center should be made only in exceptional cases. The personnel of the central organs should be regularly turned over: the majority of the posts should be reserved for workers. The focus of party work should shift from the Center to the cells.

“The resolution on trade unions was no less radical. It protested the degradation of unions, to the point where their status was reduced to ‘virtual zero’. The rehabilitation of the country’s economy required the maximum involvement of the masses: ‘The systems and methods of construction based on a cumbersome bureaucratic machine stifle all creative initiative and independence’ of the producers. The party must demonstrate trust in the workers and their organizations. The national economy ought to be reorganized from the bottom up by the producers themselves. In time, transferred to a new body, an All-Russian Congress of Producers, not appointed by the Communist Party, but elected by the trade unions and ‘productive’ associations. (In the discussion of this resolution, Shliapnikov denied that the terms ‘producers’ included peasants.) Under this arrangement, the Party would confine itself to politics, leaving the direction of the economy to labor.

“These proposals by veteran Communists from labor ranks revealed a remarkable ignorance of Bolshevik theory and practice. Lenin, in his opening address, minced no words in denouncing them as representing a ‘clear syndicalist deviation’. Such a deviation, he went on, would not be dangerous were it not for the economic crisis and the prevalence in the country of armed banditry (by which he meant peasant rebellions). The perils of ‘petty bourgeois spontaneity’ exceeded even those posed by the Whites: they required greater party unity than ever. As for Kollontai, he dismissed her personal relations with the leader of the Workers’ Opposition (‘Thank God, we know well that Comrade Kollontai and Comrade Shliapnikov are “bound by class ties [and] class consciousness”’).

“Worker defections confronted Lenin and his associates with a problem: how to govern in the name of the ‘proletariat’ when the ‘proletariat’ turned its back on them. One solution was to denigrate Russia’s working class. It was now often heard that the ‘true’ workers had given their lives in the Civil War and that their place had been taken by social dregs. Bukharin claimed that Soviet Russia’s working class had been ‘peasantified’ and that, ‘objectively speaking’, the Workers’ Opposition was a Peasant Opposition, while a Chekist told the Menshevik Dan that the Petrograd workers were ‘scum’ (svoloch) left over after all the true proletarians had gone to the front. Lenin, at the Eleventh Party Congress, denied that Soviet Russia even had a ‘proletariat’ in Marx’s sense, since the ranks of industrial labor had been filled with malingerers and ‘all kinds of casual elements’. Rebutting such charges,
Shliapnikov noted that 16 of the 41 delegates of the Tenth Congress supportive of the Workers’ Opposition had joined the Bolshevik party before 1905 and all had done so before 1914…

“… Trotsky criticized Shliapnikov for making a ‘fetish of democracy’: ‘The principle of elections within the labor movement is, as it were, placed above the Party, as if the Party did not have the right to assert its dictatorship even in the event that this dictatorship temporarily clashed with the transient mood within the worker democracy.’ It was not possible to entrust the management of the economy to workers, if only because there were hardly any Communists among them: in this connection, Trotsky cited Zinoviev to the effect that in Petrograd, the country’s largest industrial center, 99 percent of the workers either had no party preference, or, to the extent that they did, sympathized with the Mensheviks or even the Black Hundreds. In other words, one could have either Communism (‘the dictatorship of the proletariat’) or worker rule, but not both: democracy spelled the doom of Communism…

“The Workers’ Opposition suffered a decisive defeat and was ordered to dissolve. It was doomed from the outset not only because it challenged powerful vested interests of the central apparatus, but because it accepted the undemocratic premises of Communism, including the idea of a one-party state. It championed democratic procedures in a party that was by its ideology and, increasingly, by its structure committed to ignoring the popular will…

“To make impossible further dissent in the party, Lenin had the Tenth Congress adopt a new and fateful rule that outlawed the formation of ‘factions’: these were defined as organized groupings with their own platforms. The key, concluding article of the resolution ‘On the unity of the party’, kept secret at the time, provided severe penalties for violators: ‘In order to maintain strict discipline within the party and in all soviet activities, [in order] to attain the greatest unity by eliminating all factionalism, the Congress authorizes the Central Committee in instances of violations of discipline, or the revival or tolerance of factionalism, to apply all measures of party accounting up to exclusion from the party.’

“Although Lenin and the majority that voted for his resolution seem to have been unaware of its potential implications, it was destined to have the gravest consequences: Leonard Schapiro regards it as the decisive event in the history of the Communist Party. Simply put, in Trotsky’s words, the ruling transferred ‘the political regime prevailing in the state to the inner life of the ruling party’. Henceforth, the party, too, was to be run as a dictatorship…”

**Communism and the Jews**

The unprecedented catastrophe of the Russian revolution required an explanation. For very many this lay in the coming to power of the Jews, and their hatred for the Russian people. For after the February revolution the Jews acquired full rights with the rest of the population, and the (already very porous) barriers set up by the Pale of Settlement were destroyed. Jews poured from the western regions into the major cities of European Russia and soon acquired prominent executive positions in all major sectors of government and the economy.

As Alexander Solzhenitsyn has written, February brought only harm and destruction to the Russian population. However, “Jewish society in Russia received in full from the February revolution everything that it had fought for, and the October coup was really not needed by it, except that cutthroat part of the Jewish secular youth that with its Russian brother-internationalists had stacked up a charge of hatred for the Russian state structure and was rearing to ‘deepen’ the revolution.” It was they who through their control of the Executive Committee of the Soviet – over half of its members were Jewish socialists – assumed the real power after February, and propelled it on – contrary to the interests, not only of the Russian, but also of the majority Jewish population, to the October revolution. 156

Nevertheless, at the time of the October revolution only a minority of the Jews were Bolsheviks (in the early 1900s they constituted 19% of the party). “At the elections to the Constituent Assembly ‘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 [in Moscow, Petrograd, Odessa, Kiev and many other cities there were festive manifestations, meetings and religious services’].” 157

The simultaneous triumph of the Jews in Russia and Palestine was indeed an extraordinary “coincidence”: Divine Providence drew the attention of all those with eyes to see this sign of the times when, in one column of newsprint in the London Times for November 9, 1917, there appeared two articles, the one announcing the outbreak of revolution in Petrograd, and the other – the promise of a homeland for the Jews in Palestine (the Balfour declaration).

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157 Solzhenitsyn, op. cit., p. 73.
This coincidence was reinforced by the fact that the theist Jews who triumphed in Israel in 1917, and especially in 1948 after the foundation of the State of Israel, came from the same region and social background – the Pale of Settlement in Western Russia – as the Jews who triumphed in Moscow in 1917, and sometimes even from the same families. Thus Chaim Weitzmann, the first president of Israel, points out in his *Autobiography* that his brothers and sisters were all either Zionists or Bolsheviks. M. Heifetz also points to the coincidence in time between the October revolution and the Balfour declaration. “A part of the Jewish generation goes along the path of Herzl and Zhabotinsky. The other part, unable to withstand the temptation, fills up the band of Lenin and Trotsky and Stalin.” “The path of Herzl and Bagritsky allowed the Jews to stand tall and immediately become not simply an equal nation with Russia, but a privileged one.”158

Indeed, the Russian revolution may be regarded as one branch of that general triumph of Jewish power which we observe in the twentieth century in both East and West, in both Russia and America and Israel. The mainly Jewish nature of the Bolshevik leadership – and of the world revolution in general – cannot be doubted. Such a view was not confined to “anti-Semites”. Thus Winston Churchill wrote: “It would almost seem as if the Gospel of Christ and the gospel of anti-Christ were designed to originate among the same people; and that this mystic and mysterious race had been chosen for the supreme manifestations, both of the Divine and the diabolical... From the days of ‘Spartacus’ Weishaupt to those of Karl Marx, and down to Trotsky (Russia), Bela Kun (Hungary), Rosa Luxembourg (Germany) and Emma Goldman (United States), this worldwide conspiracy for the overthrow of civilization and for the reconstitution of society on the basis of arrested development, of envious malevolence and impossible equality, has been steadily growing. It played, as a modern writer, Mrs. Nesta Webster, has so ably shown, a definitely recognizable part in the tragedy of the French Revolution. It has been the mainspring of every subversive movement during the nineteenth century; and now at last this band of extraordinary personalities from the underworld of the great cities of Europe and America have gripped the Russian people by the hair of their heads and have become practically the undisputed masters of that enormous empire. There is no need to exaggerate the part played in the creation of Bolshevism and in the bringing about of the Russian Revolution by these international and for the most part atheistical Jews. It is certainly a very great one; it probably outweighs all others.”159

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Douglas Reed writes: “The Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party, which wielded the supreme power, contained 3 Russians (including Lenin) and 9 Jews. The next body in importance, the Central Committee of the Executive Commission (or secret police) comprised 42 Jews and 19 Russians, Letts, Georgians and others. The Council of People’s Commissars consisted of 17 Jews and five others. The Moscow Che-ka (secret police) was formed of 23 Jews and 13 others. Among the names of 556 high officials of the Bolshevik state officially published in 1918-1919 were 458 Jews and 108 others. Among the central committees of small, supposedly ‘Socialist’ or other non-Communist parties... were 55 Jews and 6 others.”

Pipes admits: “Jews undeniably played in the Bolshevik Party and the early Soviet apparatus a role disproportionate to their share of the population. The number of Jews active in Communism in Russia and abroad was striking: in Hungary, for example, they furnished 95 percent of the leading figures in Bela Kun’s dictatorship. They also were disproportionately represented among Communists in Germany and Austria during the revolutionary upheavals there in 1918-23, and in the apparatus of the Communist International.”

The London Times correspondent in Russia, Robert Wilton, reported: “Taken according to numbers of population, the Jews represented one in ten; among the commissars that rule Bolshevik Russia they are nine in ten; if anything the proportion of Jews is still greater.”

On June 9, 1919 Captain Montgomery Shuyler of the American Expeditionary Forces telegraphed from Vladivostok on the makeup of the presiding Soviet government: “... (T)here were 384 ‘commissars’ including 2 negroes, 13 Russians, 15 Chinamen, 22 Armenians, and more than 300 Jews. Of the latter number, 264 had come to Russia from the United States since the downfall of the Imperial Government.”

The Jews were especially dominant in the most feared and blood-thirsty part of the Bolshevik State apparatus, the Cheka, which, writes Brendon, “consisted of 250,000 officers (including 100,000 border guards), a remarkable adjunct to a State which was supposed to be withering away. In the first 6

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160 However, Lenin was partly Jewish. His grandfather was called Israel before his baptism by an Orthodox priest, and his father’s name was Moishe Blank. See Lina Averina, “Evrejskij koren’” (The Jewish Root), Nasha Strana (Our Country), January 22, 1997 ®.
161 Reed, op. cit., p. 274. According to Donald Rayfield (Stalin and his Hangmen, London: Viking, 2004, p. 74), in 1922, the Jews “reached their maximum representation in the party (not that they formed a coherent group) when, at 15 per cent, they were second only to ethnic Russians with 65 per cent.”
163 Reed, op. cit., p. 276.
years of Bolshevik rule it had executed at least 200,000. Moreover, the Cheka was empowered to act as ‘policeman, gaoler, investigator, prosecutor, judge and executioner’. It also employed barbaric forms of torture.”

So complete was the Jewish domination of Russia as a result of the revolution that it is a misnomer to speak about the “Russian” revolution; it should more accurately be called the Russian-Jewish revolution.  

But why were the Jews the most active revolutionaries? What was it in their upbringing and history that led them to adopt the atheist revolutionary teachings and actions of Russia’s “superfluous young men” more ardently than the Russians themselves? Hatred of Christ and the Christians was, of course, deeply imbedded in the Talmud and Jewish ritual – but the angry young men that began killing thousands of the Tsar’s servants even before the revolution of 1905 had rejected the Talmud as well as the Gospel, and even all religion in general.

Donald Rayfield writes: “The motivation of those Jews who worked for the Cheka was not Zionist or ethnic. The war between the Cheka and the Russian bourgeoisie was not even purely a war of classes or political factions. It can be seen as being between Jewish internationalism and the remnants of a Russian national culture…

“…What was Jewish except lineage about Bolsheviks like Zinoviev, Trotsky, Kamenev or Sverdlov? Some were second- or even third-generation renegades; few even spoke Yiddish, let alone knew Hebrew. They were by upbringing Russians accustomed to a European way of life and values, Jewish only in the superficial sense that, say, Karl Marx was. Jews in anti-Semitic Tsarist Russia had few ways out of the ghetto except emigration, education or revolution, and the latter two courses meant denying their Judaism by joining often anti-Jewish institutions and groups.”

This can be illustrated from the deathbed confession of Yurovsky, the murderer of the Tsar: “Our family suffered less from the constant hunger than from my father’s religious fanaticism… On holidays and regular days the

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166 That the Russian revolution was actually a Jewish revolution, but at the same time part of an international revolution of Jewry against the Christian and Muslim worlds, is indicated by an article by Jacob de Haas entitled “The Jewish Revolution” and published in the London Zionist journal *Maccabee* in November, 1905: “The Revolution in Russia is a Jewish revolution, for it is a turning point in Jewish history. This situation flows from the fact that Russia is the fatherland of approximately half of the general number of Jews inhabiting the world… The overthrow of the despotic government must exert a huge influence on the destinies of millions of Jews (both in Russia and abroad). Besides, the revolution in Russia is a Jewish revolution also because the Jews are the most active revolutionaries in the tsarist Empire.” (Reverse translation from the Russian text in Archpriest Lev Lebedev, *Velikorossia* (Great Russia), St. Petersburg, 1999, p. 421).

children were forced to pray, and it is not surprising that my first active protest was against religious and nationalistic traditions. I came to hate God and prayer as I hated poverty and the bosses.”\textsuperscript{168}

At the same time, the Bolshevik Jews did appear to sympathize with Talmudism more than with any other religion. Thus in 1905, as we have seen, the Jewish revolutionaries in Kiev boasted that they would turn St. Sophia cathedral into a synagogue. Again, in 1918 they erected a monument to Judas Iscariot in Sviazhsk\textsuperscript{169}, and in 1919 - in Tambov!\textsuperscript{170} And when the Whites reconquered Perm in 1918 they found many Jewish religious inscriptions in the former Bolshevik headquarters – as well as on the walls of the basement of the Ipatiev House in Yekaterinburg where the Tsar and his family were shot.

Moreover, while officially rejecting the Talmud and all religion in general, the revolutionaries did not reject the unconscious emotional energy of Talmudic Judaism. This energy was concentrated in a fiercely proud nationalism, a nationalism older and more passionately felt by virtue of the fact that the Jews had once truly been the chosen people of God. Having fallen away from that chosen status, and been scattered all over the world by the wrath of God, they resented their replacement by the Christian peoples with an especially intense resentment. \textit{Roma delenda est} – Christian Rome had to be destroyed, and Russia as “The Third Rome”, the Rome that now reigned, had to be destroyed first of all. The atheist revolutionaries of the younger generation took over this resentment and hatred even while rejecting its religious-nationalist-historical basis.

L.A. Tikhomirov wrote: “It is now already for nineteen centuries that we have been hearing from Jewish thinkers that the religious essence of Israel consists not in a concept about God, but in the fulfilment of the Law. Above were cited such witnesses from Judas Galevy. The very authoritative Ilya del Medigo (15\textsuperscript{th} century) in his notable \textit{Test of Faith} says that ‘Judaism is founded not on religious dogma, but on religious acts’.

“But religious acts are, in essence, those that are prescribed by the Law. That means: if you want to be moral, carry out the Law. M. Mendelsohn formulates the idea of Jewry in the same way: ‘Judaism is not a revealed religion, but a revealed Law. It does not say ‘you must believe’, but ‘you must

\textsuperscript{169} The Danish writer Halling Keller was present at the unveiling of the monument to Judas in Sviazhsk. He wrote: “The local Soviet discussed to whom to raise a statue for a long time. It was thought that Lucifer did not completely share the idea of communism. Cain was too much of a legendary personality, so they decided on Judas Iscariot since he was a completely historical personality. They represented him at full height with his fist raised to heaven.” (M. Nazarov, “Presledovania Tserkvi i dukhovnaia sut’ bol’shevizma” (The Persecutions of the Church and the spiritual essence of Bolshevism), in \textit{Vozhdii Tret’ego Rima} (To the Leader of the Third Rome), chapter 3) ®
\textsuperscript{170} See \textit{Leningradskaia Panorama} (Leningrad Panorama), № 10, 1990, p. 35 ®.
act’. In this constitution given by God the State and religion are one. The relationships of man to God and society are merged. It is not lack of faith or heresy that attracts punishment, but the violation of the civil order. Judaism gives no obligatory dogmas and recognizes the freedom of inner conviction.’

“Christianity says: you must believe in such-and-such a truth and on the basis of that you must do such-and-such. New Judaism says: you can believe as you like, but you have to do such-and-such. But this is a point of view that annihilates man as a moral personality…”

Thus Talmudism creates a personality that moulds faith to the imperative of action. That is, it is the action that is first proclaimed as necessary – the reasons for doing it can be thought up later. And this corresponds exactly both to the philosophy of Marx, for whom “the truth, i.e. the reality and power, of thought must be demonstrated in action” , and to the psychological type of the Marxist revolutionary, who first proclaims that Rome (or Russia) must be destroyed, and then looks for an ideology that will justify destruction. Talmudic Law is useful, indeed necessary, not because it proclaims God’s truth, but in order to secure the solidarity of the Jewish people and their subjection to their rabbinic leaders. In the same way, Marxist theory is necessary in order to unite adherents, expel dissidents and in general justify the violent overthrow of the old system.

This point has been well developed by Pipes: “Important as ideology was,… its role in the shaping of Communist Russia must not be exaggerated. If any individual or a group profess certain beliefs and refer to them to guide their conduct, they may be said to act under the influence of ideas. When, however, ideas are used not so much to direct one’s personal conduct as to justify one’s domination over others, whether by persuasion or force, the issue becomes confused, because it is not possible to determine whether such persuasion or force serves ideas or, on the contrary, ideas serve to secure or legitimize such domination. In the case of the Bolsheviks, there are strong grounds for maintaining the latter to be the case, because they distorted Marxism in every conceivable way, first to gain political power and then to hold on to it. If Marxism means anything it means two propositions: that as capitalist society matures it is doomed to collapse from inner contradictions, and that this collapse (‘revolution’) is effected by industrial labor (‘the proletariat’). A regime motivated by Marxist theory would at a minimum adhere to these two principles. What do we see in Soviet Russia? A ‘socialist revolution’ carried out in an economically underdeveloped country in which capitalism was still in its infancy, and power taken by a party committed to the view that the working class left to its own devices is unrevolutionary. Subsequently, at every stage of its history, the Communist regime in Russia

172 Marx, Eleven Theses on Feuerbach, 1845.
did whatever it had to do to beat off challengers, without regard to Marxist doctrine, even as it cloaked its actions with Marxist slogans. Lenin succeeded precisely because he was free of the Marxist scruples that inhibited the Mensheviks. In view of these facts, ideology has to be treated as a subsidiary factor: an inspiration and a mode of thinking of the new ruling class, perhaps, but not a set of principles that either determined its actions or explains them to posterity. As a rule, the less one knows about the actual course of the Russian Revolution the more inclined one is to attribute a dominant influence to Marxism…”

The Church in the Borderlands

The fall of the Russian Autocracy, and the principle of national self-determination proclaimed at the Versailles peace conference in 1919, encouraged several nationalities of the former Russian empire to declare their independence. At the same time, these nations wanted their own independent Orthodox Churches, so several schisms from the Russian Orthodox Church took place. However, in the East as in the West, the attainment of sovereignty by several smaller nations exacerbated rather than resolved the national question in several regions.

The problem was that each newly formed nation-state contained within itself still smaller nationalities; and these felt less secure under their new rulers than they had under the larger empires that had now passed away – the Russian, the Ottoman, the Habsburg and the Hohenzollern. In the East, the Pandora’s box effect created by this process greatly facilitated the ultimate triumph of Soviet power, which first encouraged nationalist separatism, and then, when each newly formed nation was particularly small and vulnerable, pounced like an eagle on its prey to include all in the new empire...

1. Ukraine. After leading the rite of the enthronement of Patriarch Tikhon, Metropolitan Vladimir of Kiev returned to his flock, his heart heavy with forebodings about the future. Already in March, on his first return to Kiev after the February revolution, he had had to hold back the waves of incipient revolution there. For an "Executive Committee of clergy and laymen" was organized in Kiev at this time, and a "Commissar for ecclesiastical affairs" was appointed. The longsuffering Orthodox city of Kiev, which had witnessed in the many centuries of its history all manner of hideous events and changes, was shocked at the spectacle of an Orthodox parish priest in the role of a revolutionary commissar, "a policeman in a riassa" as he was called.

In a dialogue with representatives of the executive committee, Metropolitan Vladimir stated candidly that "the Executive Committee of clergy and laymen is an illegitimate institution which is trying gradually to expand its power and to usurp prerogatives which do not belong to it."

However, in spite of this his opinion of the new organ of the Kievan Church which had been formed as a result of the revolution, Metropolitan Vladimir did not refuse in principle to work with its members to lead the Church in a new direction. He gave his blessing for "the Executive Committee of clergy and laymen" to convene, in Kiev on April 12, 1917, a "Congress of the clergy and laymen of the Kievan diocese", which was for reasons that remain unclear transformed into "the Ukrainian congress of the clergy and laymen of the Kievan diocese".

Metropolitan Vladimir had a negative opinion of this congress. During it bishops were publicly insulted in a manner unheard of in the Orthodox Christian world; clerics in attendance branded them as "parasites". Metropolitan Vladimir likewise had a negative opinion of the resolutions which this congress passed, among which was the declaration that "the autonomous Ukraine must have a Ukrainian church which is independent of the Synod." He also opposed the formation by this congress of a so-called advisory committee to the Metropolitan of Kiev.

This is how the members of this committee characterized the metropolitan's attitude towards them in their account of a meeting which took place on July 1, 1917: "At this meeting, in the presence of three vicar bishops, the metropolitan expressed what can only be called a hostile attitude toward the Church Committee in such clear and candid terms that all of its members wished to leave the metropolitan's inhospitable chambers. One of the committee members (Archpriest E.A. Kapralov) suggested that they do so and that it be recorded in the minutes that the metropolitan's attitude precluded any possibility of cooperative and fruitful labour."

The metropolitan's feelings were best expressed in an "archpastoral address" which he published in early August, 1917, on the eve of the convocation of an extraordinary congress of the Kievan diocese: "The great misfortune of our times is that people consider it to be a virtue to have a liberal attitude toward matters of faith and morality. Many consider it their duty to implant such a liberal attitude toward faith and morality in the souls of the Russian people... To justify themselves, they present arguments that seem to merit our attention. They say: every man can judge religious matters from his own point of view and freely express his convictions, whatever they may be, according to his conscience, and he must respect the religious convictions of others. No one will object to freedom of religion and of the conscience. One must not, however, forget that Christian faith is not a human invention, but rather the word of God, and it cannot be changed to suit people's concepts. If people's convictions stand in opposition to the Divine truth, is it reasonable to recognize these convictions, to consider them correct and to guide one's life by them? We must, of course, be tolerant of those who do not agree with us, and bear with even those who have clearly gone astray, but we must turn away from their errors, and prove that they are unfounded."
The pastors of the Christian Church and all sincere followers of Christ's teachings should consider this their duty...

"Our local and rapidly growing sorrows add to the misfortune experienced by the whole of the Russian land. I am speaking about a tendency which has surfaced in southern Russia and which threatens to destroy the peace and unity of the Church. It is terrible for us even to hear people talk about separating the churches of southern Russia from the one Orthodox Church of Russia. After their long cooperation, can there be any grounds for such aims? What is their origin? Did not the preachers who spread Orthodoxy throughout Russia come from Kiev? Among the God-pleasing brethren of the Kiev-Caves Lavra do we not see men who came from all corners of Holy Russia? Is it not true that the Orthodox of southern Russia have laboured in all parts of Russia, serving the Church and as scholars in various fields? And conversely, is it not true that the Orthodox of northern Russia have laboured for salvation in various professions in southern Russia? Did they not erect the one great Russian Orthodox Church together? Could the Orthodox of southern Russia possibly reproach the Orthodox of northern Russia for falling away from the faith in some way or for distorting the teachings of faith and morality? Certainly not. Based on my personal experience I can testify that in all the dioceses where God has allowed me to serve, the Orthodox teachings of faith and morality are kept pure and unchanged, and there is everywhere unity in the Church's teachings and liturgical practices. Why should there be any separation? Where will it lead? Indeed, only the enemies both without and within will have cause to rejoice. Our love for our native soil should not suppress and stifle our love for the whole of Russia and for the one Russian Orthodox Church."

The metropolitan concluded by appealing to the clergy and laymen to "take every possible measure to promote unity among themselves and with the whole of the Russian Orthodox Church," and to "devote serious thought and proper preparation to the upcoming congress, thoroughly to discuss the issues presented there, and pass resolutions which are correct, legal, beneficial and which merit implementation."

However, the congress, which took place on August 8 and 9, 1917, took an entirely different direction. On August 9, the metropolitan was so offended by the proceedings of the congress that he fell seriously ill and had to leave the meeting immediately. In a defiant public statement, the delegates interpreted the metropolitan's departure as escapism and an expression of his lack of respect for the meeting.

In October, 1917, the Provisional Government fell. The Ukrainian government wished to use the change to turn their autonomous status into one of full independence. And the same tendencies were strongly present in the Church. A special committee in charge of convening a Council of the
Orthodox clergy and lay people of the Ukraine was organized in Kiev in mid-November of 1917 according to a resolution passed at the third Cossack military assembly. Archbishop Alexis Dorodnitsyn (formerly of Vladimir), who was in retirement in the Kiev Caves Lavra, stood at the head of this committee. This committee was joined by representatives from among the clergy of Kiev (Fathers Lipkovsky, Tarnavsky, Filipenko and others), who played active roles in the above-mentioned organizations, such as the Executive Committee, Church Advisory Council to the Metropolitan of Kiev, etc.

At a meeting on November 23, this committee "discussed the present position of the Orthodox Church in the Ukraine now that the Ukrainian government is being separated from the government of Russia, and took into account the pronouncement of the Russian Patriarch, who might extend his authority to include the Ukrainian Church as well". They passed a whole series of resolutions, which amounted to sweeping changes in the status and administration of the Church in the Ukraine. The organizational committee was renamed "the provisional Ukrainian Orthodox Church Council", and an executive committee established to convene a provisional Ukrainian Orthodox Church Council was proclaimed "the provisional government of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church". It was also decided that this new ecclesiastical government should appoint commissars to all the dioceses of the Ukraine. The priest Fr. Pashchevsky was appointed commissar of the Kievan diocese. And the chairman of the Council, Archbishop Alexis, was forbidden to go to Moscow, where he had been summoned to become the abbot of a monastery by Patriarch Tikhon.

On November 24, a general meeting of the Orthodox parish councils of Kiev was convened at which these moves towards Ukrainian ecclesiastical autocephaly were condemned and the fear was expressed that an autocephalous Church might join the uniates and come under the Pope.

A few days later the metropolitan arrived in Kiev. On December 4 a meeting convened by the Union of Orthodox Parish Councils was held under the presidency of the metropolitan and attended by Metropolitan Platon of Georgia. In the days that followed several attempts were made by the autocephalists to remove Metropolitan Vladimir and his vicar bishops from Kiev. At the end of the month another delegation came to the metropolitan and demanded that he leave Kiev. He replied with emotion: "I am not afraid of anyone or anything. I am at all times prepared to give my life for Christ's Church and for the Orthodox faith, to prevent its enemies from mocking it. I will suffer to the very end in order to preserve Orthodoxy in the very place where it first took root in Russia." And then, going up to one member of the delegation and pointing at his heart, he said: "Do you know that the first revolutionary was the devil, and you are making a revolution in the Church of Christ?" Then he wept bitterly.
The metropolitan considered the convening of an All-Ukrainian Council untimely in view of the Bolshevik seizure of power. Nevertheless, he was forced to prepare for the opening of a new Council, and opened its first session on January 7, 1918 with a moleben on Sophia square and a welcoming speech to the delegates. He was unanimously elected to the chairmanship of the Council, and attended every meeting until the civil war broke out in Kiev.

Artillery shells began to fall on the Lavra on January 15. However, the metropolitan continued with his religious duties, displaying great calm. On January 23, he celebrated his last Divine Liturgy with the brotherhood of the Lavra. That evening, after occupying Kiev, the Bolsheviks took control of the Lavra, and violence began. Armed people burst into the churches with hats on their heads and cigarettes between their teeth. With shouting and swearing they conducted searches even during Divine services, and mocked the holy things. They stripped old monks and took off their shoes outside. Then they mocked them and cut them with whips. Officers who were found in the Lavra were killed. In spite of all the commotion, the metropolitan served an akathist to the Dormition of the Mother of God in the great church of the Lavra, which proved to be his last service on earth. Then he and Bishop Theodore of Priluki moved to the altar of the lower church, which was dedicated to St. Michael, first metropolitan of Kiev. He was then martyred by the Bolsheviks, the first bishop-martyr of the revolution...

On hearing this news, the Moscow Council then in session appointed the day of Metropolitan Vladimir’s martyrdom, January 25 / February 7, as the day of the commemoration of all the New Martyrs of Russia.

In March, 1918, after the signing of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, Kiev was surrendered to the Germans. But after the defeat of Germany in the world war Petlyura captured Kiev, after which Metropolitan Anthony (Khropovitsky) of Kiev, Archbishop Eulogius of Volhynia, Bishop Nicodemus of Chigirinsk, Archimandrite Vitaly (Maximenko) and others were arrested and handed over to the Poles. In August, 1919, Kiev was liberated by the Whites, and with the help of pressure from the Western powers, the prisoners were released by the Poles. As the Red Army regained the upper hand, Metropolitan Anthony set off for the Kuban, where he became honorary president of the Higher Church Authority that had been formed there. Later he emigrated and became first-hierarch of the Russian Church in Exile.

In 1920 an “Independent Union of Ukrainian Orthodox Parishes” was formed, which convoked the first council of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Church in October, 1921. Metropolitan Michael (Ermakov) appeared at the Sophia cathedral and called on those present not to introduce a scandal into Church life, and pointed out that Patriarch Tikhon had “blessed Divine services in the Ukrainian language when that was desired by a majority of
parishioners, including women, whom the Patriarch blessed to take part in Church work with full rights”. The metropolitan hoped that the delegates “will not transgress the Church canons or the will of his Holiness the Patriarch”. He did not give his blessing to the assembly, pointing out its anticanonicity, and suggested the participants to disperse to their homes.

When the metropolitan had departed, on October 23 the participants proceeded to a so-called “conciliar consecration”. That is, since no bishops had joined them, they were forced to create bishops for themselves in a manner that no other Orthodox Church recognized as canonical, earning for themselves the title of the “Lypkovsky samosvyaty” after the first “bishop” to be thus consecrated, Basil Lypkovsky. As Lypkovsky himself wrote: “30 priests and all the laymen – as many as could fit into the walls of the Sophia cathedral - took part in the consecration. At the moment of consecration a wave of enthusiasm ran through the crowd. The members of the council and all those present put their hands on each other’s shoulders until a chain of hands went up to the priests who surrounded me.” Then they took Lipkovsky to the relics of Great Martyr Mercurius and placed on his head the dead head of the saint. That is how Lypkovsky became a “bishop”. On October 24 and 30 several other bishops were consecrated. The Council also introduced a married episcopate and second marriages for priests.174

Later in the 1920s a second autocephalist movement was initiated by Bishop Theophilus (Buldovsky) of Lubensk, who received consecration in the Patriarchal Church at a time when the Lypkovsky schism was declining, but who later separated from the Church on the same basis of Ukrainian nationalism and united the remnants of the Lypkovsky schism to his own.

One of the most popular patriarchal priests in the Ukraine at this time was Fr. Basil (Zelentsov), a disciple of Archbishop Theophanes of Poltava. It was largely through his influence that Buldovsky’s schism was rejected by the mass of the people. In 1922 Fr. Basil was put on trial on a political charge. In his speech at the end of the trial he said that he was loyal to Soviet power insofar as “it, like everything else, is sent to us from above... But where the matter touches the Faith of Christ, the churches of God and human souls, there I have fought, do now fight, and will continue to fight to my last breath with the representatives of this power. It would be shamefully sinful for me, as a warrior of Christ, who bear this cross on my breast, to defend myself

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104
personally at a time when the enemies have taken up arms and declared war against Christ Himself.”

After his consecration to the episcopate in 1925, Bishop Basil continued to wage a spiritual war against the Bolsheviks, publicly calling them “apostates from God, violators, blasphemers of the Faith of Christ, murderers, a satanic power, blood-suckers, destroyers of freedom and justice, fiends from hell”. He constantly called on the people “to make them no allowances, to make no compromises with them, to fight and fight with the enemies of Christ, and not to fear tortures and death, for sufferings from Him are the highest happiness and joy”. In 1930 he suffered martyrdom in Moscow for his rejection of sergianist neo-renovationism.175

Although the Ukrainian autocephalists were a clearly schismatic movement, they did not share the modernist ideology of the Muscovite renovationists, and entered into union with them only in the autumn of 1924, evidently with the aim of securing the recognition of their own autocephaly from Constantinople, with whom the renovationists were in communion. That is why it was not until January 5, 1924 that the patriarch extended his anti-renovationist anathema of 1923 to the autocephalists. Even then, the autocephalists showed little animosity towards the patriarch, and in the Second All-Ukrainian Council of 1925 the Synod issued an epistle calling for the review of Patriarch Tikhon’s defrocking by the renovationists.176 Although the Ukrainian autocephalists were now largely controlled by Soviet agents, in January, 1930 the authorities convened a council which dissolved the whole of their Church organisation...177

2. Bessarabia. One of the consequences of the Russian revolution was that Russian Moldavia (Bessarabia), 60% of whose population was Romanian, was united to the Romanian State. Before the revolution, writes Jelavich, “Romanians as such did not face prejudice, and there were Romanian as well as Russian large landowners. The widespread discontent was economic and social more than national. The position of the peasants was regulated by the Russian emancipation laws of the 1860s and subsequent reform measures, but, as in other parts of Russia, these had not solved the basic agrarian problems. Since conditions were roughly the same in the Regat, independent Romania did not hold a great attraction for the peasant majority. The main

176 “Spravka o Priniatii v Obschenie Episkopa Seraphima (Lyade)” (Document on the Reception of Bishop Seraphim (Lyade) into Communion), Tserkovnaia Zhizn’ (Church Life), № 12, 1937 ®.
demand of all peasants was a breakup of the large estates and a distribution of their lands...

"Because of these conditions, the Russian revolutions in March and November 1917 were bound to have a great effect. They influenced not only the disaffected peasants, but also the many soldiers in the province who had deserted the rapidly disintegrating Russian army... As early as July 1917 the peasants began to seize the land; by the end of the year they had appropriated about two-thirds.

"In October 1917 a provisional government for Bessarabia was organized, with its center at Kishinev... This government remained in control of the province from November 1917 to November 1918. In December 1917 it declared itself the Democratic Moldavian Republic and expressed the desire to join a Soviet federative republic..."\(^{178}\)

However, in view of the discussions that had begun between the Soviet and German governments, this decision disturbed the Allied Powers, and with the approval of France the Romanian army invaded the province. On March 27, the Moldavian parliament, surrounded by Romanian soldiers, voted for the union of Bessarabia with Romania, and the Kishinev diocese was handed over to the Romanian Church. It was suggested to Archbishop Anastasy (Gribanovsky) of Kishinev that he join the Romanian Church; but he refused. In May he left the province, and the Kishinev archiepiscopate fell under the jurisdiction of the Romanian Church.\(^{179}\)

On June 14, the Holy Synod of the Romanian Church appointed Bishop Nicodemus (Muntianu) of Khush as deputy locum tenens of the see of Kishinev (he later became Patriarch of Romania). He began to “Romanize” the Bessarabian Church, introduced the Romanian language into the Kishinev seminary and in some monasteries replaced Russian and Ukrainian superiors with Romanian ones.

In October, 1918 Patriarch Tikhon wrote to Metropolitan Pimen of Moldavia and Suceava, the president of the Synod of the Romanian Church, protesting strongly at the anticanonical seizure of the Kishinev diocese by the Romanian Church, “which by her unilateral decision taken without the agreement of the Russian Church did not have the right to determine the destiny of the Kishinev diocese by submitting it to her power after Orthodox Bessarabia had constituted an indivisible part of the Russian ecclesiastical body for the last one hundred years. This way of acting on the part of the Romanian Holy Synod contradicts at the same time the spirit of Christian love, the age-old canonical decrees and the sacred customs of the Orthodox Church. Pointing to the supposed fact that political union always brings with


\(^{179}\) Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.* pp. 17, 18.
it a union of the Churches cannot in the given case serve as a justification for
the Romanian ecclesiastical authority, first, because it is not itself justified by
history, and secondly, because such a point of view rests on a confusion of the
nature of ecclesiastical and political life, which are different by their very
essence… Moreover, the act of joining Bessarabia to the Romanian kingdom,
as we said before, is far from generally recognised from the international
point of view and can be subject to review at the final tally of the results of the
world war… If the Romanian Church, in spite of the objections we have
raised, tries by force to strengthen the position in its favour, we will be forced
to break all fraternal and canonical communion with the Romanian Synod
and bring the present matter before the judgement of the other Orthodox
Churches.”

The Romanians paid no attention to this admonition, and in 1919 placed in
the see of Kishinev Archimandrite Gurias (Grossu), a Russian priest of
Moldavian extraction, and a graduate of the Kiev Academy… And so, as
K.V. Glazkov writes, “while with one hand the Romanian authorities
mercilessly destroyed the communist opposition (for example, mass punitive
operation were undertaken against Bolsheviks in the army, and Romanian
units took part in the suppression of the red revolution in 1918 in Hungary),
with the other hand they suppressed every kind of dissidence. A number of
deputies of the Popular Assembly who were opponents of the union of
Bessarabia and Romania were shot, after which the National Assembly itself
was dissolved, while on the same day the pro-Romanian deputies triumphantely overthrew the monuments to Tsars Alexander I and Alexander
II in the capital. In January, 1920, the White armies of General Bredov…, in
whose carts were fugitives, women and children, were shot from Romanian
machine-guns as they approached the Dniester. In this way the new
authorities in Bessarabia spoiled for good their relations with the Russians.

“We should note that from the very beginning the Russian hierarchy and
clergy, as if foreseeing the possibility of church-political disturbances,
adopted quite a cold attitude to the inclusion of Bessarabia into Romania. This
act was even condemned by Archbishop Anastasy (Gribanovsky) of Kishinev
and Khotyn (latter first-hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad).
Hoping for the speedy victory of the White movement, the representatives of
the Bessarabian Church together with the zemstvo took part in the creation of
a Committee for the liberation of Bessarabia. Therefore the Romanian Synod
began the canonical submission of the Bessarabian diocese by demanding that
Vladykas Anastasy, Gabriel and Dionysius separate from the Russian
Orthodox Church in spite of the protests of Patriarch Tikhon. When the
hierarchs refused to do this, the Romanian military units arrested them and
exiled them from the country. But the believers were told that the hierarchs
had left their diocese voluntarily. In the place of Metropolitan Anastasy there

180 Gubonin, op. cit., p. 155; Monk Benjamin, op. cit., pp. 24-25.
181 Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 41.
arrived from Bucharest the Romanian Archbishop Nicodemus; he was met by the clergy and laity by no means in a friendly manner. The ecclesiastical authorities [of the Russian Church] Abroad did not recognise the lawfulness of the union of the Kishinev diocese to the Romanian Church. It was violence, deceit and transgression of the Church canons, and not at all the commandments of God, that were laid at the foundation of their actions on the territory of Bessarabia by the Romanian civil and ecclesiastical authorities. How could the coming events unfold except in conditions of further imposition of terror?

“In the Kishinev spiritual seminary and spiritual schools the Romanian authorities removed the teaching of Russian and Church Slavonic languages, clearly intending to create a situation in which in Bessarabia as a whole there would remain no priests able to serve in Church Slavonic. Also, Church Slavonic service books were removed from the churches, and the priests were banned from delivering sermons in Russian. Direct physical persecution began against the zealots for the language of Saints Cyril and Methodius. In the village of Rechul the nuns of the local monastery were beaten with birch-rods by Romanian gendarmes for taking part in services in Church Slavonic, while an old priest of the village of Goreshte who was suspected of sympathising with the opposition was tortured with wet lashes until he lost consciousness, after which he went mad. It may be that the whole guilt of the priest consisted in the fact that he, like many true patriots, did not want to commemorate the Romanian king, his family and the Synod at the liturgy.

“The majority of the zealots for Church Slavonic as the liturgical language were Russians, but many Moldavian priests and laypeople fought steadfastly against forcible Romanianization. ‘The Moldavians,’ reported the Romanian counter-intelligence of Beltsky uyezd, ‘are hostile to the Romanian administration, they avoid the Romanian clergy..., they threaten the priests when they commemorate the name of the king in church.’...

“In July, 1922 there was formed in Kishinev a multi-national ‘Union of Orthodox Christians’. Soon Bessarabian patriots came to lead the Union. They were closely linked with the Russian communion in Kishinev. According to certain information, Russian monarchists led by General E. Leontovich took part in the organisation of the Union. In 1924 the re-registration of another organisation took place – the Orthodox Brotherhood of Alexander Nevsky, which was led by activists of Moldavian, Gagauz and Russian nationalities – Protopriest Michael Chakir, Priest Nicholas Lashku and K.K. Malanetsky, etc. All these were branded by the secret police as ‘ardent pan-Russists’, while the brotherhood was called the centre for the preservation and propaganda of Russian monarchist ideas…”

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182 Glazkov, “Istoricheskie prichiny nekotorykh sobitij v istorii Rumynskoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi do II Mirovoj vojny” (The Historical Reasons for some Events in the History of the
3. Transcaucasia. In Transcaucasia, writes Dov Kontorer, “everything was at first festal: in November, 1917 in Tbilisi a Transcaucasian commissariat was established representing a combined government of Georgian socialists, Armenian Dashnaks and Azerbaidzhani Musavatists. The power of this organ extended – theoretically, at least – over the whole territory of Transcaucasia, except for the region of Baku, where the Bolsheviks were in power. The Transcaucasian commissariat refused to recognize the results of the Brest peace, according to which Soviet Russia conceded to Turkey not only the territories conquered in the First World War, but also the districts of Kars, Ardagan and Batum. This led to the destruction of peaceful negotiations at a conference in Trabzon in March-April, 1918. Meanwhile the continuing collapse of State in Transcaucasia was combined with an excessively bold external politics. In the spring of 1918 the Turks were in quite a difficult situation. Nevertheless, at the cost of some short military actions, they succeeded in seizing Batumi, Ozurgeti, Akhaltsikhe and a series of other territories.

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

Georgian ecclesiastical independence had been proclaimed even earlier than Georgian political independence. On March 12, 1917, an Assembly of the bishops, clergy and laity of Georgia proclaimed the re-establishment of the autocephaly of the Georgian Church, which led to a break in communion with the Russian Church. In the summer, however, “the Georgian Church sent a special deputation to the Most Holy Russian Synod to inform the Most Holy Synod about the re-establishment of the autocephaly of the Georgian Church and greet it. The Russian Synod through the mouth of Archbishop Sergius of Finland confirmed ‘that Russian Church consciousness has never been foreign to the thought of the necessity of returning to the Georgian Church her former constitution... If this thought has not been realised up to now, for this there were special reasons’ not depending on Church actors, but ‘now, in the days of the general liberating spring, Russian Church consciousness is ready to welcome the fulfilment ... of the long-time dream’ of the Orthodox Georgians,

Romanian Orthodox Church before the Second World War, Tserkovnaia Zhizn’ (Church Life), №№ 3-4, May-August, 2000, pp. 46-48 ©. 
and the Russian hierarchs hope ‘that God will order all for the good, and that certain roughnesses in this matter will be smoothed over’ and that at the forthcoming Local Council of the Russian Orthodox Church a fraternal meeting of representatives of the two Churches is bound to take place in order to find a path to mutual understanding’.

In September, while the Local Council of the Russian Church was just getting under way, a General Council of the Georgian Church confirmed the Acts of the March Council, and on October 1 Bishop Kirion Sadzaguelachvili was enthroned as Catholicos-Patriarch in Tbilisi by three vicar bishops over the protests of three Georgian hierarchs: Demetrius (Abashidze) of Simferopol, Antony of Gori and Nazarius (Lezhavy). On December 29 / January 11, 1918, Patriarch Tikhon also protested against the re-establishment of Georgian autocephaly, pointedly addressing Kirion as only a bishop. However, the Provisional Government in Russia confirmed this election, as did the Georgian government. Kirion immediately seized the exarchal house (the exarch was away) and ordered the portraits of the Tsar and the previous exarchs to be removed. After his first and last liturgy as Catholicos, he fell ill – he had been poisoned (according to one source, he poisoned himself). He recovered, but not completely, and went for complete recovery to the monastery of St. Anthony, near Martkopi. There, in June, 1918, he committed suicide.

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184 Catholicos Leonid to Patriarch Tikhon, August 5, 1919; Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 9.
185 Georgia, he wrote, had united with Russia more than a century before, and from that time the highest ecclesiastical authority in Georgia had belonged to the Holy Synod. However, when, in 1905, an attempt was made to restore the autocephaly of the Georgian Church, the Holy Synod in 1906 decreed that this question should be handed over for discussion at the All-Russian Council, the decisions of which the Georgian hierarchs were obliged to wait for. “According to canon law, the agreement and permission of the Mother [kiriarkhal’nok] Church to the autocephaly of the other Local Church which before was subject to her jurisdiction is required. Usually the Church which is seeking independence addresses the Mother Church with her request, and, on the basis of data of a political and ecclesiastical character, seeks her agreement to the reception of autocephaly. The request is directed in the name of both the ecclesiastical and civil authorities of the country, and also of the people; it must be a clearly expressed declaration concerning the general and unanimous desire to receive ecclesiastical independence. That is how it was in Greece, in Serbia and in Romania, but it was not like that in Bulgaria, where the well-known schism arose. And it was also not like that, unfortunately, in the Transcaucasus in 1917... In pointing out your errors and mistakes, we suggest to you, Most Reverend Bishops, that you submit to the demand of the ecclesiastical canons and, following the canonical order, appear at the All-Russian Sacred Council, and, recognising your errors, convey your desire concerning the autocephaly of the Georgian Church to the court of the whole All-Russian Council, so that you may not be subjected to the judgement of the canons and not fall into the great and terrible sin of alienation from the Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church...” (Gubonin, op. cit., pp. 71-75; Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 14)
187 However, this fact was covered up, and on July 7 he was given a triumphant burial in the Zion cathedral (http://www.pstbi.ru/bin/code.exe/frames/m/ind_oem.html/?ans/;
“In December, 1918,” continues Kontorer, “with the defeat of Germany in the First World War, the German soldiers in Transcaucasia were replaced by a British expeditionary force. They saw their task in guaranteeing the uninterrupted work of the oil industry and the Batumi-Baku railway, while keeping internal peace in the region interested them very little. As a lawful result of this, there began a series of embittered ethnic wars that accompanied a ‘parade of sovereignties’ in Transcaucasia.

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

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

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

“On February 7, 1922,” writes Fr. Elijah Melia, “Catholicos Ambrose sent to the Interallied Conference at Genoa (the highest degree of international jurisdiction at that time) a letter of protest in which, recalling the moral obligations towards the nation of his charge, he protested in the name of the people of Georgia, deprived of their rights, against the foreign occupation and demanded the intervention of civilized humanity to oppose the iniquity committed against Georgia. He was arrested in February 1923 with...


188 Kontorer, op. cit.
Archbishop Nasaire and all the members of his Council. Their trial, which took place under conditions of semi-liberty, greatly stirred up the country.

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

“In August 1924, a general insurrection broke out, organized by all the active forces of the nation – the higher ranks of the army, the political parties, the university, the ecclesiastics, the population as a whole. But the uprising was doomed to fail, for the plot had been betrayed. The repression created thousands of victims. Groups of partisans still operated for some time…”

This marked the effective end of Georgian freedom not only in a political but also in an ecclesiastical sense...

Secret Agents in Cassocks

By 1922, the Bolsheviks had pacified the country and effectively tamed all opposition to their regime, with the exception of three groups: the left-wing parties of the Mensheviks and SRs, the artists and writers, and the Orthodox Church. Of these, only the Orthodox Church constituted a real threat.

The Mensheviks and SRs had always been hampered by their inability to choose whether to support the Bolsheviks in the role of a “loyal opposition”, or to fight openly against them. Now, from 1922 onwards, they were effectively eliminated in a series of show trials that prefigured the famous show trials of the 1930s. As for the artists, thanks to the liberal regime of Lunacharsky, the Commissar of Enlightenment, and his brother-in-law Alexander Bogdanov, who was in charge of the “Proletkult” movement, they had been able to develop modernist trends such as Futurism for a few years...
with a freedom that rivalled that to be found in western countries. But from 1920 Lenin, who disliked modernism in art, began to close down the Proletkult organizations, and gradually the art of the country began to acquire the stultifyingly conservative style known later as “socialist realism”.

The Bolsheviks were far less permissive with regard to writers, and from the earliest days of the regime developed a crushing censorship system, especially in relation to newspapers. Writers could survive only by censoring themselves - in 1922 a large group of religious philosophers who refused to do that, including Bulgakov, Berdiaev and Frank, was expelled. In spite of that, writers such as Zamyatin, Ivanov and Babel were still published in the 1920s - alongside anti-religious hacks such as Mayakovsky and Bedny.

However, as Pipes writes, “the creations of writers and artists subsidized by Lenin’s government had next to nothing in common with the tastes of the masses for whom they were intended. The culture of the masses was rooted in religion. Statistics on Russian reading habits indicate that both before and after the revolution, peasants and workers read mainly religious books; their tastes in secular reading ran to cheap escapist literature.”

That left the Church... As we have seen, the Church had suffered terribly during the Civil War, but had survived. In spite of that, some, like the anti-religious organizer S. Krasikov, felt that she had been let off lightly. The problem was: the Church under persecution grew stronger rather than weaker. Physical force had failed: 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 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

190 Pipes, op. cit., p. 313.
191 He wrote: “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 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, tened of thousands of priests, as well as monks, metropolitans and bishops still exist. Why has Soviet power acted with such undeserved caution to this chunk of the old machine?” Tserkov’ i Revoliutsii (The Church and Revolution), 1919, N 1, p. 3; in Rusak, op. cit., pp. 20-21).
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.193

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 direct physical assault alone, and that 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 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.”194

“According to archival data,” writes Fr. Victor Potapov, “the politics of enrolling the clergy began de facto already in the first years of Soviet power. This is what one of these Cheka documents, dated 1921, says about this:

“The question of having agents and informers among the clergy is the most difficult one in the Cheka both because of the difficulty of carrying out the work and because for the most part the Cheka has paid little attention to it up to now...”

192 Roslof, Red Priests, op. cit., p. 28.
193 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 ®.
“There is no doubt that we have to stir them up and shift them from their places. And to realise this aim more quickly and efficiently it is necessary at the beginning to take the following measures:

“1. Use the clergy themselves for our own ends, especially those who have an important position in Church life – hierarchs, metropolitans, etc., forcing them under threat of severe punishment to distribute among their clergy this or that instruction that could be useful to us, for example: the cessation of forbidden agitation with regard to [Soviet anti-ecclesiastical] decrees, the closure of monasteries, etc.

“2. Clarify the character of individual bishops and vicars, encouraging their desires and plans.

“3. It is proposed that informers be recruited among the clergy after some acquaintance has been gained with the clerical world and the character traits of each individual servant of the cult has been clarified. This material can be gained in various ways, but mainly through removing correspondence at searches and through personal acquaintance with the clerical environment.

“It is necessary to interest this or that informer among the clergy with material rewards, since only on this soil is it possible to come to an agreement with the popes. It is impossible to hope for their benevolent attitude to Soviet power, while subsidies in money and in kind will undoubtedly also bind them to us more in another respect – namely, in that he will an eternal slave of the Cheka, fearing that his activity will be unmasked.

“The recruitment of informers is carried out, and must be carried out, by frightening them with the threat of prison and the camps for insignificant reasons, for speculation, the violation of the rules and orders of the authorities, etc.

“True, a fairly unreliable method can be useful only if the object of recruitment is weak and spineless in character. Above all attention must be paid to the quality, and not to the quantity, of the informers. For only when those recruited are good informers and the recruitment has been carried out with care can we hope to draw from this or that environment the material that we need’.”

The movement for a “Soviet Orthodox Church” was supported by Trotsky, who in a protocol of the secret section of the Cheka discussed recruiting clergy with money to report on themselves and others in the Church and to prevent anti-Bolshevik agitation.

195 Potapov, “…Molchaniem predaetsa Bog’” (God is Betrayed by Silence), Posev (Sowing), № 166, 1992, pp. 209-210 ®.
196 Grabbe, op. cit., p. 42.
Throughout the Civil War and the years of the Bolsheviks’ first savage onslaught against the Church, the Church had remained united against the external foe while her internal enemies fell silent. However, the crisis elicited by the requisitioning of church valuables gave a golden opportunity to the internal enemies of the Church – the renovationist heretics.

The roots of renovationism are to be found in the liberal ideas that came to prominence in Church circles at the beginning of the century. Philip Walters writes: “During the early 20th Century, 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 become 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’. 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 Renovationism: 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.”

The idea of splitting the official Church hierarchy by promoting the renovationists appears to have originated in 1921 with Lunacharsky, who since the early 1900s had been instrumental in developing a more subtle, less physically confrontational approach to the problem of eradicating religion. 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”.

And yet 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.”

That the Bolsheviks planned on using the **internal** enemies of the Church at the same time that they exerted **external** pressure through the confiscation of her valuables is clear from a project outlined by Trotsky to a session of the Politburo attended by Kamenev, Stalin and Molotov on April 2: “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);

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“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.200

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.201

But the plotters had to wait until the spring of 1922, when both Patriarch Tikhon and Metropolitan Benjamin were in prison in connection with the confiscation of church valuables, before they could seize power in the Church.

The spiritual calibre of the renovationists, or the “Living Church”, as their main faction was called, can be gauged from the career of perhaps their most moderate leader, Bishop Antonin Granovsky. In 1905 he had been such a thorn in the side of the Church that the Holy Synod retired him. Thereafter he refused to mention the Tsar’s name in Divine services, and in 1907 he even declared that the Tsarist regime was satanic. In 1921 he was again retired by Patriarch Tikhon for introducing innovations on his own authority into the Divine services. In 1922 he accepted a Soviet invitation to be a member of Pomgol, and in the same year he appeared as a witness for the government in the trial of 54 Shuya Christians who had resisted the confiscation of church valuables. And yet Granovsky himself characterized his fellow-plotters as “the sewer of the Orthodox Church”, the rebellion of power-hungry priests pursuing their class interests against the bishops and monks.202

And indeed, this anti-monasticism was, with their socialism, one of the main characteristics of the renovationists – Fr. George Florovsky called it “Protestantism of the Eastern Rite”.203 Thus Titlinov wrote that the major task of the “Living Church” was “to free church life from the influence of the monastic episcopate and transfer the administration of church affairs into the hands of the white [married] clergy.”204

200 N.A., op. cit., p. 17.
201 Grabbe, op. cit., p. 32.
203 Cited in Pospelovsky, The Russian Church, op. cit., p. 45.
204 Cited in Grabbe, op. cit., p. 5.
And so Soviet power may have been justified – in this respect, if in no other – in counting, in E. Lopeshanskaya’s words, “on the classically Marxist ‘inner contradictions’ and ‘class struggle’, which by its ideology was necessarily bound to arise everywhere – including the Church – between the black [monastic] and white [married] clergy, between the hierarchs and the priests, for the income of the Church.”

The Requisitioning of Church Valuables

It was the Volga famine of 1921-22, in which about 25 million people were starving, 15 million more were under threat, and more than one million actually died, that provided the Bolsheviks with their first opportunity to create a major schism in the Church through the renovationists.

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. Yes, and someday someone will also count up those many carloads of food supplies rolling on and on for many, many months to Imperial Germany, under the terms of the peace treaty of Brest-Litovsk – from a Russia which had been deprived of a protesting voice, from the very provinces where famine would strike - so that Germany could fight to the end in the West.

“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.

205 E.L., Episkopy-Ispovedniki (Bishop-Confessors), San Francisco, 1971, p. 68 ®. On October 8, 1922 Tuchkov reported to the Politburo: “On the Tikhon question. A group has been formed of the so-called ‘living church’, consisting chiefly of ‘white clergy’, and this has given us the chance to cause a quarrel between the priests and the bishops, like soldiers against generals, for there was hostility between the white and black clergy. We are working to push the Tikhonites out of the patriarchate and the parishes.” (Quoted in Volkogonov, op. cit., p. 382).

“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 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!”

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).”

This compromise decree represents the first major concession made by the
Church to Soviet power. Thus no less an authority than the holy Elder
Nectarius 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!”

At the beginning of March, with the approval of the whole Politburo
(Lenin, Molotov, Kamenev and Stalin), Trotsky formed a “completely secret”
commission to mastermind the requisitioning. On March 11 he wrote to the
Politburo: “This commission must secretly prepare the political,
organizational and technical aspects of the matter at the same time. The actual
removal of the valuables must begin already in March and then be completed
in the shortest possible time... I repeat: this commission is a complete secret.
Formally, the requisitioning in Moscow will take place under the direct orders
of the Central Committee of Pomgol... Our whole strategy at this time must
be aimed at a schism in the clergy over the concrete question of the
requisitioning of valuables from the churches. Since the question is a burning
one, the schism on this basis can and must acquire a very burning character,
and that part of the clergy which will support the requisitioning and aid it
will no longer be able to return to Patriarch Tikhon’s clique. Therefore I

208 Gubonin, op. cit., p. 190.
209 Matushka Evgenia Grigorievna Rymarenko, "Remembrances of Optina Staretz
concession to the Antichrist invariably leads to others. Thus on February 24, 1923 the GPU
agent Jacob Savlovich Agranov forced the Patriarch to make further concessions on this issue.
"From the point of view of the Bolsheviks," writes N. Krivova, “Tikhon’s epistle of February
28, 1922 was incorrect juridically speaking, for according to the decree of 1918 on the
separation of the Church from the State Church property passed to the State and was
declared the heritage of the State. Tikhon testified that in the Church canons there are no
indications to the effect that State power in the event of the confiscation of Church valuables
during popular disturbances should turn to the Church authorities for agreement. Although
of course the Patriarch very well understood that the valuables taken from the Church would
not be used for aid to the starving. And nevertheless he declared that the Soviet government
need not turn to the Patriarch for agreement to the requisitioning. They managed to get an
analogous testimony from the Patriarch’s closest colleague, Archbishop Nicander
(Fenomenov).

“Thus the GPU obtained a most important testimony from the Patriarch to the effect that
he was guilty in issuing an appeal with regard to the requisitioning of Church valuables, that
the use of the Church valuables for the needs of the starving was not sacrilege and did not
contradict the Church canons” (Vlast’ i Tserkov’ v 1922-1925gg., op. cit.; S. Golubtsov, op. cit.,
pp. 151-152).
suggest that a block consisting of this section of the priesthood should be temporarily admitted into Pomgol, especially since it is necessary to avert any suspicion and doubts with regard to whether the requisitioning of valuables from the churches will be spent on the needs of the starving.”

On March 13, the Politburo accepted Trotsky’s suggestion. “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’ 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.”

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.

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

211 Ravich, “Ograblennij Khristos, ili brilliantly dlya diktatury proletariata” (Christ Robbed, or Diamonds for the Dictatorship of the Proletariat), Chas-Pik (Rush Hour), № 18, pp. 24-25 ®.
212 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, № 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).
shoot the better.” 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 for the 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,” because Trotsky was a Jew, and the high proportion of Jews in the Bolshevik party had aroused the people’s wrath against them.

On March 20 there was a session of the Politburo “consisting of L.B. Kamenev, I.V. Stalin, L.D. Trotsky and V.M. Molotov. The Directive [on the requisitioning of church valuables] was sent to all the provincial committees. In accordance with it the requisitioning had to begin with the church at whose head was the clergy loyal to the authorities. The times of the requisitioning were determined and the composition of the commission. Great attention was paid to agitation and creating a schism in the ranks of the clergy. The requisitioning of valuables was carried out as a large-scale military operation with the participation of GPU workers, the People’s Commissariat of Justice, the Revolutionary Tribunals and military subunits. In general the huge role played by Trotsky should be noted; although remaining in the shadows, he was the de facto director of the whole operation…”

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…” 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.

215 D. Anashkin, “Khod iziatia tserkovnykh tsennostej” (The Process of the Requisitioning of Church Valuables”, Tserkovnaia Zhizn’ (Church Life), N 9 (677), September, 2008, p. 27 ®.
217 Pipes, op. cit., p. 355. According to Rayfield, “barely four million gold roubles was 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 (№ 34, November 4, 1996) reports that the Bolsheviks
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 Renovationist Coup

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 with the metropolitan.218

Then, on March 24, a letter signed by twelve people, including the future renovationist leaders Krasnitsky, Vvedensky, Belkov, Boyarsky and others, appeared in Petrogradskaia Pravda (it was reprinted five days later in Izvestia). The letter 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...

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218 Grabbe, op. cit., pp. 31, 32.
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 adopted a frenzied tone, giving [evidence of] a heap of priestly attempts in Smolensk, Petrograd, etc. After this arrest the Synod...”

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?”

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.”

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... This critical question has remained of fundamental importance in the Russian Church to this day, under the neo-Soviet regime of Putin.

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

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219 Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 67.
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. 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 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..."\(^{221}\)

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.

On May 3, at a secret midnight meeting of the presidium of the GPU – Ushinsky, Menzhinsky, Yagoda, Samsonov and Krasikov – it was decided “to summon Tikhon and demand of him that he publish within 24 hours the expulsion from the Church, defrocking and removal from their posts of the above-mentioned clergy [the leaders of the Russian Church in Exile]. If Tikhon refuses to carry out the above-mentioned demands, he is to be immediately arrested and accused of all the crimes he has committed against Soviet power.”\(^{222}\) “This proposal,” writes Rayfield, “went to Trotsky and Stalin, who had the Politburo resolve [on May 4] ‘1) to bring Tikhon to trial; 2) to apply the death penalty to the priests’."\(^{223}\)

On May 5, the following dialogue took place when he appeared for the last time as a witness in the case of the 54 Moscow clergymen:

President: “You ordered that your appeal calling on the people to disobey the authorities [this was the statement on church valuables] should be read out to the whole people.

Patriarch: “The authorities well know that in my appeal there was no call [to the people] to resist the authorities, but only to preserve their holy things, and in the name of their preservation to ask the authorities to allow their

\(^{221}\) Russkaia Mysl' (Russian Thought), № 3143, March 17, 1977 ®.
\(^{223}\) Rayfield, op. cit., p. 123.
value to be paid in money, and, by helping their starving brothers in this way, to preserve their holy things.”

President: “Well, this call will cost the lives of your faithful servants.”

At this point the patriarch pointed to those on trial and said: ‘I always said and continue to say... that I alone am guilty of everything, and this is only my Christian army, obediently following the commands of the head sent to her by God. But if a redemptive sacrifice is necessary, if the death of innocent sheep of the flock of Christ is necessary’ – at this point the voice of the Patriarch was raised and it became audible in all the corners of the huge hall, and he himself as it were grew tall as, addressing the accused, he raised his hands and blessed them, loudly and distinctly pronouncing the words – ‘I bless the faithful servants of the Lord Jesus Christ to go to torment and death for Him’. The accused fell on their knees. Both the judges and the prosecutors fell silent... The session did not continue that evening. In the morning the verdict was pronounced: 18 priests were to be shot. When they were being led out of the hall, they began to chant: “Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and to those in the tombs bestowing life”. 224 The prosecutor also declared that the tribunal “establishes the illegality of the existence of the organization called the Orthodox hierarchy”. And so the whole of the Russian Orthodox Church was placed beyond the law!225

That evening, at GPU headquarters, T.P. Samsonov and V.R. Menzhinsky asked the patriarch to say what punitive measures he was taking in relation to the clergy abroad, and in particular Metropolitan Anthony and Eulogius. Menzhinsky even suggested that the Patriarch invite the metropolitans to Moscow to demand “a personal explanation”, to which the Patriarch replied: “They will hardly come here.” At the same interrogation it was demanded of the Patriarch that he issue a directive to the clergy abroad that they hand over all the Church Abroad’s property to representatives of Soviet power.226 It was therefore under extreme pressure that on the same day of May 5, Patriarch Tikhon convened a meeting of the Holy Synod and the Higher Church Council, at which he declared (decree № 347) that “neither the epistle, nor the address of the Karlovtsy Synod [to the Genoa conference] express the voice of the Russian Church”. And he ordered the dissolution of the Church in Exile’s Higher Church Administration and the transfer of all power over the Russian refugees in Europe to Metropolitan Eulogius of Paris.227

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224 Protopriest Lev Lebedev, Velikorossia (Great Russia), St. Petersburg, 1999, p. 573 ©.
225 Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 69.
226 Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 71.
Decree № 347 has been used by the Sovietized Moscow Patriarchate and its satellites to cast doubts on the canonicity of the Russian Church Abroad. However, the ukaz that ROCOR received did not have the Patriarch’s signature and was signed only by Archbishop Thaddeus of Astrakhan. As Igumen Luke points out: “If one reads the decree one will see that it contains nothing concerning violation of canons by the Higher Church Administration and nowhere declares it to be uncanonical. No one, not even Metropolitan Eulogius accepted the authority of the document. The Patriarch in assigning Metropolitan Eulogius to head the parishes in Western Europe ‘overlooked’ the fact that there were eight other dioceses in the Church Abroad and said nothing about their leadership. This and other confused aspects of the decree only support the universal opinion that it was issued under pressure from the Bolsheviks who desired by all means to weaken the anti-Communist voice from abroad. Upon receiving notification of his appointment as ruling bishop in Europe Metropolitan Eulogius wrote to Metropolitan Anthony: ‘This decree amazed me by its suddenness and simply shocks one by the possible confusion it could bring into church life’ (exactly what the communists wanted and continue to desire in order to eliminate any opposition to their control of the Church). ‘There is no doubt that the decree was issued under pressure by the Bolsheviks.’ Metropolitan Eulogius continues, ‘I do not recognize this document as having any authority even though it might have been written and signed by the Patriarch. This document is political and not ecclesiological…”"  

In any case, the Patriarch did not actually anathematise the émigré bishops, and so the action which was designed to placate the Bolsheviks only served to anger them. The leaders of the Russian Church in Exile took the view – and in this they were at first supported, as we have seen, by Metropolitan Eulogius – that the patriarch had been acting under duress at the time. So they acted in order formally to obey the Patriarch’s decree, while in effect ignoring it. They dissolved the Higher Church Administration and created a Synod of Bishops presided over by Metropolitan Eulogius in its place. The Patriarch, as if in  

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228 Protopriest Alexander Lebedev, “‘Ja napisal eto dlja vlastej, a ty sidi i rabotaj’” (I wrote this for the authorities, you sit and work), Vozvraschenie (Return), № 2 (6), 1994, p. 29 ®.  
During his interrogation by the GPU on May 9, the Patriarch, according to Sergius Golubtsov (op. cit., p. 115), “was forced to recognise Metropolitan Anthony Khrapovitsky as ‘an accursed enemy of the workers’ and peasants’ toiling masses of Russia’. But the patriarch made the substantial qualification that he had not up to that moment considered Metropolitan Anthony an enemy of Soviet power, while his ‘antisoviet and interventionist speeches’ became known to him only from February-March, 1922, having in mind, evidently, his address in the name of the Karlovtsy Council to the Genoa conference. By this recognition, in our view, the Patriarch underlined his walling off from the Church Abroad only with regard to the latter’s political declarations, which he did not support. At the same time he strove by all means to avoid evaluations of Metropolitan Anthony both as a whole and during his time in the camp of Denikin, Wrangel and Skoropadsky.”
tacit acknowledgement of this, issued no further condemnation of the Synod Abroad and acted in future as if he fully recognised its authority.\textsuperscript{230}

On the evening of May 6 the Patriarch came back from an interrogation, exhausted. Fr. Michael Polsky writes that the Patriarch said:

“‘This time they interrogated me really strictly…’

“’What will happen to you?’ asked one anxiously.

“They promised to cut off my head,’ replied the Patriarch with his usual geniality.”

The next day he served the liturgy in the village of Bogorodsk with Fr. Michael concelebrating.

“He served the liturgy – as always, with not the slightest trace of nervousness or even tension in prayer. Looking at him, who was preparing himself for prison, and perhaps also for execution (that was a serious threat at the time), I involuntarily remembered the words of Christ: ‘The prince of this world come, and will find nothing of his own in Me’. Let them accuse, they will find nothing, he will be innocent…”\textsuperscript{231}

The same day, 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 Agathangelus of Yaroslavl, should have taken over.

On May 9 the Patriarch was again called to interrogation. He was told the verdict of the court on the Muscovite clergy (11 condemned to be shot) and then told that he himself was to be brought to trial. The interrogation again revolved around the Church Abroad. The Patriarch gave in and wrote: “I did not consider Anthony Khrapovitsky, Metropolitan of Kiev, to be an enemy of the workers-and-peasants’ power. But now, judging from his speeches in the foreign press – Novoe Vremia and others – I find that he, Anthony Khrapovitsky is an accursed enemy of the worker-peasant toiling masses of Russia. The anti-Soviet and interventionist speeches of Anthony Khrapovitsky became known to me only from March, 1922, perhaps from February.”\textsuperscript{232}

\textsuperscript{230} Grabbe, op. cit., p. 32. For example, he accepted the authority of the Synod Abroad to appoint Metropolitan Platon to head the American dioceses in 1922. See Igumen Luke, op. cit., p. 14; Monk Benjamin, op. cit., pp. 69-70.

\textsuperscript{231} Polsky, Polozhenie Tserkvi v Sovietskoj Rossii (The Situation of the Church in Soviet Russia), Jerusalem, 1931 ®.

\textsuperscript{232} Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 73. Metropolitan Michael (Yermakov) of Kiev witnessed in 1925: “In 1922 there was a meeting of churchmen in Ukraine. Among them were 7 bishops, including myself – 70 people in all. At this convention the desire was expressed that
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 renounced the administration of the Church.” The Patriarch rejected the candidacies of some modernist bishops and appointed Metropolitan Agathangelus as his deputy.\(^{233}\)

“However,” writes Krivova, “the authorities did not allow Metropolitan Agathangelus 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 Agathangelus 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 Agathangelus’ 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 Agathangelus’ 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.’”\(^{234}\)

Metropolitan Anthony Khrapovitsky, the metropolitan of Kiev, should be considered removed from the administration and calling of the metropolitan of Kiev. However, Patriarch Tikhon in the same year, or perhaps in 1923 or 1924, annulled this resolution, and sent a corresponding act to Bishop Gregory of Poltava in reply. That the Kiev metropolia should remain with Anthony was evident from the fact that in the document the Patriarch declared his non-acceptance of all the desires expressed at this convention. Thus I could not be the metropolitan of Kiev, or, more exactly, bear the title ‘metropolitan of Kiev and Galicia’, a title which, consequently remains with Anthony Khrapovitsky” (Archimandrite Damascene (Orlov), “Patriarshij mestobliustitel’ sviaschennomuchenik Petr (Patriarchal locum tenes Hieromartyr Peter), Mucheniki, ispovedniki i podvizhniki blagochestia Russkoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi XX stoletia (Martyrs, Confessors and Ascetics of Piety of the Russian Orthodox Church in the 20th Century), book 2; in Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 89).

\(^{233}\) Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 74.

\(^{234}\) N.A. Krivova, op. cit. in Golubtsov, op. cit., p. 116.
On May 17 the Pope proposed that he buy back all the requisitioned Church valuables, and that they then be handed over to the leader of the Catholics in Russia, Archbishop Ya. Tseplyak. Chicherin considered the proposal tempting, but noted that “the transfer of Church objects to the Catholics will elicit a storm in Russia”. The Pope’s proposal was rejected.235

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 Agathangelus’ 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 Agathangelus, upon his arrival in Moscow, all the Synodical business with the assistance of secretary Numerov.”236

The next day, the Patriarch was transferred to the Donskoj monastery, and the renovationists took over his residence in the Troitsky podvorye.

On May 27, Trotsky wrote to Lenin: “The separation of the Church from the State, which we have established once and for all, by no means signifies that the state is indifferent to what is happening in the Church”. He spoke about “loyal and progressive elements in the clergy” and set the task of “raising the spirit of the loyal clergy” in indirect ways – through the press. He complained that “the editors of Pravda and Izvestia are not taking sufficient account of the huge historical importance of what is happening in the Church and around her”. Trotsky fully understood the importance of this, “the most profound spiritual revolution in the Russian people”. Lenin commented: “True! A thousand times true!”237

However, the renovationists and communists still had to neutralize the threat posed by Metropolitan Agathangelus. 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.

“Metropolitan Agathangelus’ behaviour,” write Levitin and Shavrov, “would indeed have appeared quite incomprehensible if it had not been for one detail: for a month now E.A. Tuchkov and Metropolitan Agathangelus

235 Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 74.
had been conducting secret negotiations. E.A. Tuchkov, whom the Higher Church Administration considered their main support in negotiations with the metropolitan, expressed the desire to separate as quickly as possible from this unsolid institution [the HCA] and support Agathangelus. However, a series of concessions was expected from Agathangelus; he had to declare that he was renouncing Patriarch Tikhon’s political line. After a month’s negotiations, seeing that no progress was being made, Metropolitan Agathangelus unexpectedly addressed the Russian Church with an appeal [dated June 5/18, 1922, № 214], 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 Agathangelus 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…”

Agathangelus wrote 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.

He was immediately arrested. Now both the patriarch and his only lawful deputy were in prison...

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 one of the subsections of the programme bore the title: “The terrible judgement, paradise and hell as moral concepts.”

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

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239 Gubonin, op. cit., pp. 219-221.
240 Zhivaia Tserkov’, 10, October 1, 1922; Zhukov, op. cit., p. 30.
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.”

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 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.

On May 29, the administration of the diocese passed to his vicar, Bishop Alexis (Simansky) of Yamburg, the future false-patriarch.

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241 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 ®.
242 Protopriest Vladislav Tsypin, Istoria Russkoj Tserkvi, 1917-1918, chapter 2; Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 76.
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.)

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, Metropolitan Benjamin 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...”

The renovationist schisms 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

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243 Levitin and Shavrov, op. cit.; Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 77.
244 Polsky, op. cit., part 2, p. 294.
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.”

Sergius’ vicar, Bishop Barnabas (Belyaev) turned for advice to the Diveyevo eldress Maria Dmitrievna. “Hold on to the Holy Church,” she said. Vladyka did, and remained faithful to the True Church until his death in 1963.

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.’”

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. D. Volkogonov writes: “Tikhon, imprisoned in Donskoi monastery, was being subjected to the standard treatment: interrogation, threats, pressure and bribes. The interrogations went on even after Lenin had lost his faculties, as his instructions on Church affairs continued to be carried out to the letter.”

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. On April 21, Dzerzhinsky proposed to the Politburo that the Tikhon’s trial be postponed. The Politburo agreed and

246 Snychev, “Mitropolit Sergii i Obnovlencheskij Raskol” (Metropolitan Sergius and the Renovationist Schism), in Danilushkin, op. cit., p. 182 ®.
247 Quoted in Volkogonov, op. cit., p. 383.
248 “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 ®).
backed down. 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 and American press. The conflict was resolved by the end of June, when the Soviets agreed to pay compensation for the shooting of two English citizens and the Patriarch was released from prison.

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 the cathedral of Christ the Saviour 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.”

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.” Forty-six “bishops” (out of the seventy-three who attended the

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249 Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 94.
250 Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 96.
251 Zhukov, op. cit., p. 34.
252 Gubonin, op. cit., p. 224.
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, 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.”

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.

The Patriarch and the Commissars

On June 11, 1923 Yaroslavsky, president of the Antireligious Commission, wrote to the Politburo and Stalin: “It is necessary immediately to pass the following resolution on the case of Tikhon: 1) the investigation of Tikhon’s case must be continued without a time limit; 2) Tikhon must be informed that the penalty meted out to him may be commuted if: (a) he makes a special declaration that he repents of the crimes he has committed against Soviet power and the working and peasant masses and that he now has a loyal attitude to Soviet power; (b) he admits the justice of his being made to answer in court for these crimes; (c) he walls himself openly and firmly from all counter-revolutionary organisations, especially White Guard and Monarchist organisations, both civil and religious; (d) he expresses his sharply negative attitude to the new Karlovtsy Synod and its participants; (e) he expresses his negative attitude to the attacks by Catholic clergy (in the person of the Pope, also the Bishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of Constantinople Meletius); (f)

253 Cited in Archbishop Nikon (Rklitsky), Zhizneopisanie, op. cit., 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).

254 Savelev, op. cit., p. 195.
he expresses his agreement with some reforms in the ecclesiastical sphere (for example, the new style). If he agrees, we should release him and transfer him to the Valaam podvorye, without forbidding him ecclesiastical activity.”

On the same day, Yaroslavsky wrote: “A short motivation for the proposal regarding Tikhon. 1) It is necessary that there should be some sort of step that would justify our putting of Tikhon’s case, otherwise the impression will be created that we were have been frightened by the threats of Whiteguardism. 2) From conversations with Tikhon it has become clear that with some pressure and some promises he will go along with these proposals. 3) If he agrees, these statements of his will have enormous political significance: they will completely confuse the plans of all the émigré gangs; they will strike a blow against all those organisations that were oriented on Tikhon; Tikhon will become a guarantee against an increase in the influence of the HCA [the renovationists]; his personal influence will be compromised by his ties with the GPU and his admissions; his statements against the Bishop of Canterbury, Meletius, Anthony and the Pope will be a slap in the face first of all to the English government and will deprive England’s declarations in defence of Tikhon of all significance in European circles; and finally, his agreement with even one of these reforms (he has agreed to recognise the new, Gregorian calendar) will make him a ‘heretic’ – an innovator in the eyes of the True Orthodox. The HCA will thereby preserve its former position together with a significant diminution in its influence.”

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 renovationists 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

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256 Polsky, Polozhenie, op. cit.
Bolsheviks), and “finally and decisively” set himself apart “from both the foreign and the internal monarchist White-guard counter-revolutionaries”.257

While we can make excuses for the Patriarch, whose position was extraordinarily difficult, there is no doubt that his “repentance” was a blow to the Church. Thus in a report dated December 12, 1923 to his superior, T.D. Deribas, Tuchkov wrote: “The second 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.”258

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…

257 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.

258 Archpriest Alexander Lebedev, “[paradosis] Who is Really Behind the Schisms?”, orthodox-tradition@yahoogroups.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 Section. The Orthodox Church as a single apparatus does not exist any more at the present time; it has been broken into 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 churchnits [tserkovniki] in 1923.”
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 “wallowing himself off” from the “counter-revolution” of the Church Abroad: “I wrote this for the authorities, but you sit and work”.259 In other words, the Church was not to take his words seriously…260

Tikhon was released on June 27, 1923, and his appearance in public – he had aged terribly in prison – was enough to send the Living Church into a sharp and irreversible decline.261 “They remained dangerous as long as they retained the favour of the authorities; but by 1926 the authorities were already turning to others (the Gregorians, then Metropolitan Sergius) as better suited for the task of destroying the Church. And by the end of the Second World War the last remaining renovationists had been absorbed into the neo-renovationist Soviet Moscow Patriarchate.

On the next day the Patriarch wrote: “I am, of course, not such a venerator of Soviet power as the Church renovationists, headed by the Higher Church Council, declare themselves to be, but on the other hand I am not such an enemy of it as people present me to be. If in the first year of the existence of Soviet power I sometimes permitted sharp attacks against it, I did this in consequence of my education and the orientation that prevailed in the

259 Izvestia, June 12, 1924; Lebedev, Velikorossia, op. cit, p. 577.
260 Cf. also the words of Archbishop Nicon (Rklitsky), who points 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.” (op. cit., pp. 151-152).
261 Pospielovsky writes: “If by the end of 1922 the patriarchal Church in Moscow had only 4 churches against the 400 or so of the renovationists, in Petrograd after the exile of Bishop Nicholas almost all the churches had been seized by the renovationists, and throughout the country about 66% of the functioning churches were in the hands of the renovationists, then by November, 1924 the renovationists had about 14,000 churches, not more than 30%” (“Obnovlenchestvo: Pereosmyslenie techenia v svete arkhivnykh dokumentov” (Renovationism: A Rethinking of the Tendency in the Light of Archival Documents), Vestnik Russkogo Khristianskogo Dvizhenia (Herald of the Russian Christian Movement), № 168, II-III, 1993, p. 217) ®.
Council at that time. But with time much began to change and become clear, and now, for example, it is necessary to ask Soviet power to intercede in the defence of the offended Russian Orthodox in Poland and in Grodno region, where the Poles have closed Orthodox churches. However, already at the beginning of 1919 I tried to wall the Church off from Tsarism and intervention, and in September of the same year I appealed to the archpastors and pastors not to intervene in politics…”

In spite of the Patriarch’s “repentance”, the Bolsheviks continued to back the renovationists, and on December 8, 1923 forbade the commemoration of the “former” Patriarch in that such an act would be seen “as having the character of a clearly political demonstration against the Worker-Peasants’ authorities.” Moreover, the Patriarch was still seen, as Protopriest Lev Lebedev writes, “as a criminal whose accusation had not been removed… For violating this ban, according to the circular of Narkomiust № 254 of December 8, 1923, those guilty (that is, those who would continue to consider the Patriarch the head of the Church and commemorate him during the Divine services) were subjected to the punishment appointed for criminals – three years in the camps! But in spite of everything the people, the priests and deacons continued to commemorate him!”

On July 15, the Patriarch anathematised the Living Church, declaring: “They have separated themselves from the body of the Ecumenical Church and deprived themselves of God’s favour, which resides only in the Church of Christ. Consequently, all arrangements made during our absence by those ruling the Church, since they had neither legal right nor canonical authority, are non-valid and void, and all actions and sacraments performed by bishops and clergymen who have forsaken the Church are devoid of God’s grace and power; the faithful taking part in such prayers and sacraments shall receive no sanctification thereby, and are subject to condemnation for participating in their sin…”

This was the signal for a decline in the strength of the renovationists. Large numbers of parishes, especially in such important urban centres as Petrograd and Voronezh, now renounced renovationism, and influential renovationist hierarchs such as Metropolitan Sergius hastened (and yet not very quickly, as Hieromartyr Bishop Damascene of Glukhov pointed out) to make public confession to the Patriarch. Renovationism never fully recovered...

262 Monk Benjamin, op. cit., pp. 103-104.
263 Danilushkin, op. cit., p. 192.
264 Lebedev, Velikorossia, op. cit., p. 577.
266 E.L. Episkopy-Ispovedniki, op. cit., p. 68, note.
The Patriarch received Sergius in the following way. He explained that it was his Christian duty to forgive him, but that since his guilt was great before the people also, he had to repent before them, too. Then he would receive him with joy and love. And so he stood throughout the liturgy in simple monastic garments without his Episcopal mantia, klobuk, panagia, and cross. At the end of the liturgy he was led by the Patriarch out onto the amvon where he bowed to the people three times, after which the Patriarch restored to him his panagia with cross, white klobuk, mantia, and staff.267

Some sergianists have tried to show that Sergius did not really share the renovationist position.268 However, Sergius’ published statements, especially his epistle of June 16, 1922, contradict this view. Moreover, the renowned Elder Nectarius of Optina prophetically said that, even after his repentance, the poison of renovationism was in him still.269

“Honour and glory to the late patriarch,” wrote Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky) in 1925, “that, with all his good-natured condescension towards people, with all his yearning for peace, he never gave an inch of ground to this barren ‘living church’, but received penitents from her according to the rite for the reception of heretics and schismatics, and reconsecrated churches which were returned from them to their lawful pastors as churches ‘defiled by heretics’.”270

The decline of the renovationists after the Patriarch’s coming out of prison have led some to suppose that the price of that release, his “repentance” for his anti-Sovietism, was a price worth paying. However, the Patriarch bitterly repented of his “repentance”; he said that if he had known how weak the Living Church really was, he would not have signed the “confession” and would have stayed in prison.271 And when he was asked why he had said that he was no longer an enemy of the Soviet government, he replied: “But I did not say that I was its friend...”272

269 I.M. Kontsevich, Optina pustyn’ i ee vremia (Optina Desert and its Time), Jordanville, N.Y.: Holy Trinity Monastery Press, 1971, p. 546 . The elder also said of the renovationist “church”: “There is no Grace there. By rebelling against the lawful Patriarch, Tikhon, the bishops and priests of the Living Church have deprived themselves of Grace and have lost, according to canonical ruling, their hierarchical office. Because of this, the liturgy performed by them is a blasphemy…” (Kontsevich, Elder Nektary of Optina, 1998, p. 209)
271 Swan, op. cit., p. 83.
On June 11, 1923, Yaroslavsky wrote to the Politburo and Stalin: “Tikhon must be informed that the penalty meted out to him may be commuted if... he expresses his agreement with some reforms in the ecclesiastical sphere (for example, the new style [i.e. the introduction of the Gregorian, civil calendar instead of the Julian, ecclesiastical calendar]).” On September 18 the Antireligious Commission decreed: “To recognize as appropriate that Tikhon and co. should in the first instance bring forward the new style into the church, disband the parish councils and introduce the second marriages of the clergy...”

Why were the new calendar and the other reforms important to the Bolsheviks? Because, as Yaroslavsky explained: “his agreement with even one of these reforms (he has agreed to recognise the new, Gregorian calendar) will make him a ‘heretic’ – an innovator in the eyes of the True Orthodox.” But in 1918 the Local Council rejected the innovation.

However, the pressure from the Bolsheviks continued, and as early as January 21, 1919 the patriarch wrote to the patriarch of Constantinople suggesting various options with regard to the calendar.

On September 24 Patriarch Tikhon convened a Council of bishops which took the decision to introduce the new calendar on October 2/15. The Patriarch explained his decision to adopt the new calendar as follows: “This demand was repeated many times, and was reinforced by the promise of a more benevolent attitude on the part of the Government towards the Orthodox Church and Her institutions in the case of our agreement and the threat of a deterioration in these relations in the case of our refusal”. He also pointed to considerations of unity with the other Orthodox Churches; for he had been falsely informed by Tuchkov that all the other Churches had adopted the new style, whereas in fact all the Churches except Constantinople, Greece and Romania had objected to the change. Also, in a letter to Abbot Paulinus of Valaam dated October 6 he justified the introduction of the new style on the grounds that it introduced no innovation in faith, and the Orthodox Paschalion remained in force.

The Patriarch’s epistle explaining the change was read out in the Moscow Pokrov monastery on October 14. However, the decree on the introduction of the new style was sent out only to the deans of Moscow, while the diocesan bishops did not receive it, since Archbishop Hilarion had obtained permission from Tuchkov not to send it to the provinces as long as the patriarchal epistle...

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275 Gubonin, op. cit., pp. 332-338.
276 Gubonin, op. cit., pp. 299-300, 335.
277 Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 114.
explaining the change had not been printed. So the new style was only introduced in Moscow and, as we shall see, in Valaam.

However, on November 8, when the Patriarch learned from Archbishop Anastasy in Constantinople that the patriarchates of Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem and Serbia, as well as ROCOR, were against the change, and when he saw that the Russian people were also strongly opposed to his decree, he reversed his decision “temporarily”, making use of the fact that his epistle on the calendar change had not been published. In spite of this, agents of the government posted up notices of the now annulled decree on the introduction of the new calendar. But the people saw in this the clear interference of the State, and so no attention was paid to the decree.

After the Patriarch recovered from his mistake, he and the Russian Church as a whole set themselves firmly against the new calendar... And so in 1924 Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky) of Kiev, the second hierarch in rank after the Patriarch and President of the Synod of Bishops of ROCOR, set off on a seven-month trip to the East to muster support against the renovationist reforms among his friends from before the revolution – Patriarchs Photius of Alexandria, Gregory of Antioch and Damian of Jerusalem. He also visited Mount Athos. The three Eastern patriarchs, together with Patriarch Demetrius of Serbia, spoke out strongly against the new calendar and the other reforms introduced by their colleague in Constantinople. In view of this, Metropolitan Anthony entertained hopes that even the patriarch of Constantinople would reverse course. Thus in a “sorrowful message” to Gregory VII’s successor, Constantine VI, dated February 4/17, 1925, he both defended Patriarch Tikhon and compared Meletius and Gregory to the heretical patriarchs of Constantinople condemned by the Seven Ecumenical Councils: “The history of the Church in general and of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in particular has hardly ever before known such crude violations by the patriarchs of the universal canons and rules of general human justice... It is on this same path of disobedience to the Holy Church and the canons that the two last predecessors of your Holiness descended.”

However, Metropolitan Anthony did not take the decisive and canonically correct course adopted by the Greek and Romanian Old Calendarists of breaking communion with the renovationists. In 1925 he even took part in the enthronement of the new calendarist Freemason Miron as patriarch of Romania. So his actions were ultimately unsuccessful: the patriarch of Constantinople never abandoned the new calendar, and the Churches of Alexandria and Antioch both, in time, accepted it.

278 Gubonin, op. cit., pp. 300, 335; Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 118.
The Fall of Renovationism

During this period, the Patriarch was in essence not in control of the Church. On September 30, 1924 he wrote to the government: “Orthodox bishops appointed by me either are not allowed into their dioceses, or are thrown out from them at their first appearance there, or are subjected to arrest and even their chancellery and archive is sealed and made inaccessible.”

And yet the Church, while lacking a central rudder on earth, remained governed by her Head in heaven, the Lord Jesus Christ. Moreover, even if the Patriarch could not effectively administer the Church, the very fact of his existence at the head of her administrative structure was of great importance in holding the Church together. For the commemoration of the Patriarch in the Divine Liturgy was the outward and visible sign of faithfulness to Orthodoxy and freedom from the dark forces of the revolution.

In addition to the introduction of the new calendar, the GPU agent Tuchkov placed several demands before the Patriarch after his release from prison. The first was that he should commemorate the Soviet authorities during the Divine services. The following form of commemoration was established in January, 1924: “For the Russian land and its authorities.” Fr. Basil Vinogradov, who was entrusted with the distribution of the order round the parishes, said that Tikhon issued it under pressure from Bishop Hilarion (Troitsky). However, in the parishes, instead of the word “authorities” (vlastyekh) the similar-sounding word “regions” (oblastyekh) was substituted. Soon the whole phrase was dropped. Although the Patriarch had yielded on the question of commemoration, he adamantly refused, according to Rusak, “to recognize the principle which was imposed on him of registering clergy and church communities and of agreeing with the authorities about appointing bishops, and in general he rejected any measures which meant the interference of the State in the inner affairs of the Church,” in which refusal he was strongly supported by Bishop Hilarion.

Tuchkov also demanded that the Patriarch enter into communion with the renovationists - a difficult demand to resist because, apart from external pressures, some of the Patriarch’s closest assistants, such as Bishop Hilarion (Troitsky), were in favour of concessions for the sake of church unity. But at this point the former rector of the Moscow Theological Academy and superior of the Danilov monastery in Moscow, Archbishop Theodore (Pozdeyevsky) of Volokolamsk, came to the rescue of the beleaguered Patriarch.

281 Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 131; Gubonin, op. cit., p. 348.
282 Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 118.
283 Pospielovsky, D. "Mitropolit Sergij i raskoly sprava" (Metropolitan Sergius and the Schisms on the Right), op. cit., p. 63.
284 Archbishop Nikon (Rklitsky), op. cit., pp. 181-183.
285 Rusak, op. cit., p. 173.
Archbishop Leontius of Chile writes: “The whole Orthodox episcopate and people venerated him [Vladyka Theodore] for his principled, uncompromising and straight position in relation to Soviet power. He considered that until the Orthodox Church received the right to a truly free existence, there could be no negotiations with the Bolsheviks. The authorities were only deceiving them, they would fulfil none of their promises, but would, on the contrary, turn everything to the harm of the Church. Therefore it would be better for his Holiness Patriarch Tikhon to sit in prison and die there, than to conduct negotiations with the Bolsheviks, because concessions could lead, eventually, to the gradual liquidation of the Orthodox Church and would disturb everyone, both in Russia and, especially, abroad. [He said this] at a time when his Holiness the Patriarch had been released from prison. Archbishop Theodore honoured and pitied his Holiness, but was in opposition to him. In spite of the persistent request of his Holiness that he take part in the administration of the patriarchate, he refused.

“He did not receive those bishops who had discredited themselves in relation to the ‘Living Church’. He had little faith in their repentance. Only firm bishops were received in the Danilov monastery, and lived there often. Sometimes there were as many as ten or more. All those who had been released from prison or were returning from exile found refuge there. The brotherhood consisted of principled and highly cultured people. Not a few of them became confessor-bishops. The strict spiritual school of Vladyka Theodore left a special imprint on the monastery. With the exception of two novices the whole brotherhood of the Danilov monastery carried their confessing cross in a staunch and worthy manner. In those years the monastery churches of the Danilov, Donskoy and Simonov monasteries were always full of people. As were the parish churches. But one could already feel that this situation was coming to an end... And when his Holiness came out of prison the arrests of bishops did not cease.”

On being released from prison, in the summer of 1923, the Patriarch convened a Council of Bishops in the St. Michael’s church of the Donskoy monastery. Gubonin writes: “The Little Council’ took place in connection with some bishops’ raising the question of the expediency of the patriarch’s administering the Church after his release from prison, since he was due to appear as a defendant in the civil courts. Reasons were produced in favour of his being kept away from the administration until the trial.” Moreover, one of the bishops claimed that his Holiness had compromised himself as head of the Church by showing himself incapable of averting in a timely manner the appearance of the renovationist rebellion and by allowing the catastrophic disintegration of the Russian Church. However, several of the “Danilovite”

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286 Archbishop Leontius, Vospominaniia (Reminiscences) (MS), quoted in Matushka Joanna (Pomazanskaia) "Ispovednicheskij Put' Vladyki Fiodora" (The Confessing Path of Vladyka Theodore), Pravoslavnaia Zhizn' (Orthodox Life), vol. 47, № 549 (9), September, 1995, p. 24 ®.
287 Gubonin, op. cit., p. 737.
hierarchs at the Council expressed themselves clearly and forcefully in defence of the patriarch, declaring that his activity had been blameless. As a result, the rebellion against the patriarch was suppressed, and the Council officially declared its filial obedience and gratitude to his Holiness for the burdens he had undertaken for the Church. Moreover, he was asked not to abandon his post, but to continue bearing the cross of leadership. Later the patriarch sent a letter to Archbishop Theodore thanking him for the line the "Danilovite" bishops had taken at the Council.

Another confrontation between the “left wing” of the Patriarchal Church, represented by Bishop Hilarion and Archbishop Seraphim (Alexandrov), and the “right wing” represented by Archbishop Theodore, took place when the patriarch convened a meeting to discuss a renovationist proposal for the re-establishment of unity. The price the heretics were demanding was the patriarch’s voluntary abdication from his patriarchal rank...

“In spite of the insulting tone of the [renovationists’] epistle,” writes Protopriest Vladislav Tsypkin, “the patriarch was ready to enter into negotiations with the renovationists for the sake of the salvation of those who had gone astray and church peace. In this he was supported by the Temporary Patriarchal Synod. Archbishops Seraphim (Alexandrov), Tikhon (Obolensky) and Hilarion (Troitsky) opened negotiations with the pseudo-metropolitan Eudocimus concerning conditions for the restoration of church unity. [But] the former rector of the Moscow Theological Academy and superior of the Danilov monastery, Archbishop Theodore of Volokolamsk, was decisively opposed to such negotiations...

“At the end of September, 1923, 27 Orthodox bishops met in the Donskoy monastery to discuss the results of the negotiations with the pseudo-metropolitan Eudocimus concerning the dissolution of the schism. Archbishop Theodore did not appear at the meeting, but many of his supporters who believed as he did participated in it...”

Bishop Gervasius of Kursk wrote about this Council: “At the end of his short report, Archbishop Seraphim (Alexandrov) remarked that it would be very desirable to have the presence of Archbishop Theodore (Pozdeyevsky) at the meeting, since he was a learned bishop who was popular in Moscow. An official invitation was given to the archbishop, but he did not reply and did not appear himself at the assembly. But if Archbishop Theodore was not there, his fervent supporters and admirers were. Thus Bishop Ambrose, formerly of Vinnitsa, a vicariate of Podolsk [and in 1923 bishop of Podolsk and Bratslav], who admired and held the same views as Archbishop Theodore, gave a speech which touched on the essence of Archbishop Seraphim’s report. He began his speech approximately as follows: ‘I am...

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288 Tsypkin, Istoria Russkoj Prawoslavnoj Tserkvi (A History of the Russian Orthodox Church), Moscow, 1994, quoted by Pomazanskaia, op. cit., p. 18.
surprised why you, your Eminence, should call Eudocimus a metropolitan. Do you recognize him to be a lawful hierarch?’ A secret ballot was taken on the project for reconciliation and union with the renovationists, and by a majority of votes the project was defeated and the assembly was dissolved.

“Archbishop Theodore lived at that time, as was well known, in the Danilov monastery, which was the residence of several extremely conservative and staunch bishops... Archbishop Theodore severely criticized Bishop Hilarion and told me that he would destroy Patriarch Tikhon and the Church, and that in the patriarch was all salvation. If there were no Patriarch Tikhon, then the authorities would abolish the patriarchate completely, and without the patriarchate there would be disaster for the Church...”

Although the Patriarch jokingly called the “Danilovites” “the clandestine Synod”, he continued to express his warm appreciation for their stand. Thus in October, 1923, he offered Vladyka Theodore the see of Petrograd with promotion to the rank of archbishop. Vladyka Theodore declined the offer.

“In November, 1923,” writes Vladimir Rusak, “[Tuchkov] summoned Patriarch Tikhon (until then all negotiations had been conducted through Bishop Hilarion) and in a peremptory manner suggested that he accept the head of the renovationist-synodalists’, Metropolitan Eudocimus (Meschersky) and work out with him a joint declaration on reconciliation (of the Orthodox and the renovationists). The Patriarch’s refusal, declared Tuchkov, would be seen as a counter-revolutionary assault, and he would again be arrested...’

“Patriarch Tikhon, of course, categorically rejected this demand and declared that nobody in the world would force him to acts which his conscience rejected...”

But in February, 1924 the antireligious commission resumed the offensive by declaring that the Patriarchal Synod could be legalized on condition that it allowed into its ranks persons “well known to the OGPU”. In March, the commission entrusted Tuchkov with the task of persuading Tikhon to allow the president of the “Central Committee” of the “Living Church”, Krasnitsky, into the Synod. Tuchkov promised the Patriarch that if he agreed to this, the

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289 Quoted by Pomazanskaia, op. cit., pp. 19-20.
290 Rusak, Svietet’stvo Obvienienia (Witness for the Prosecution), Jordanville, N.Y.: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1988, Part III, pp. 9-10. As well as showing firmness, the Patriarch showed that he had not lost his ability to evaluate events accurately. Fr. Michael Ardov writes: “While the holy hierarch was still alive, the first mausoleum, at that time still wooden, was built on Red square. Evidently they built it hastily, and soon after the work was finished an annoying event took place in the new building – the water-closet broke down and a pipe began to gush water. Rumours about this event began to spread through Moscow. They told Patriarch Tikhon also, and he responded to the information shortly and expressively: ‘From relics myrrh flows.’” (Posev (Sowing), 167, 1992, p. 251).
Synod would be registered. We now know from recently published archival data that Krasnitsky was indeed “well known to the OGPU”, and even suggested to it a whole programme for the annihilation of Patriarch Tikhon and his supporters.\textsuperscript{291} The aim of the OGPU was to create a union between the two Churches that would allow the communists to have ultimate control. On April 9, the Patriarch succeeded in obtaining an audience with Kalinin and Rykov, who had taken Lenin’s place as President of the Sovnarkom. Rykov promised to lessen the pressure on religious organizations, reduce the taxes on churches and the clergy and even free some hierarchs from prison. It looked for a short time as if the new head of the Soviet government might be introducing a “thaw” in Church-State relations.\textsuperscript{292}

However, on May 19, the Patriarch, “for the sake of peace and the good of the Church, as an expression of patriarchal mercy”, agreed to admit Krasnitsky into communion, and on May 21, he was officially included, together with several other renovationists, in the Higher Church Council.\textsuperscript{293} Also appointed to the Synod on this day, immediately after the Patriarch himself, was Metropolitan Sergius (Stragorodsky)... But Krasnitsky soon showed his true face by moving into the Patriarch’s residence in the Donskoy monastery without asking him, and by demanding that he retain the title “Protopresbyter of All Russia“ accorded him by the renovationist council of 1923.\textsuperscript{294} Then Metropolitan Cyril of Kazan, on returning from exile, persuaded the Patriarch to exclude Krasnitsky from the Higher Church Council, after which Tuchkov dropped his demand.\textsuperscript{295}

Meanwhile, on April 18 the renovationists tried a new tack: they voted to ease the difficult situation of the Ecumenical Patriarch in Ataturk’s Turkey by offering him to settle freely in one of the cities of Russia in exchange for his accepting all the decrees of their 1923 council. On May 6, Patriarch Gregory duly obliged, “removed” Patriarch Tikhon from administering the Russian Church, called on him to retire, and decided to send a delegation to Moscow to investigate and “to bring peace and end the present anomaly”. He also demanded “that the Russian Metropolitan Anthony and Archbishop Anastasius, who were residing Constantinople at the time, cease their activities against the Soviet regime and stop commemorating Patriarch Tikhon. Receiving no compliance from them, Patriarch Gregory organized an investigation and suspended the two bishops from serving. He asked Patriarch Demetrius [of Serbia] to close down the Russian Council of Bishops in Sremsky-Karlovtsy, but Demetrius refused...”\textsuperscript{296}

\textsuperscript{291} Monk Benjamin, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 118-119.
\textsuperscript{292} Monk Benjamin, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 121.
\textsuperscript{293} Gubonin, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 317, 319, 745-746; Monk Benjamin, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 125.
\textsuperscript{294} Even the Bolsheviks had felt obliged to check Krasnitsky’s overweening ambitions. See Savelev, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 190, 195.
\textsuperscript{295} See the patriarch's resolution, addressed to the Yelisavetgrad clergy of 26 June / 9 July; Gubonin, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 325, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 124.
\textsuperscript{296} Monk Gorazd, \textit{op. cit.}; Monk Benjamin, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 122.
“The initiative of Constantinople with regard to this question,” writes Gubonin, “had been elicited by the provocative and lying ‘information’ from the renovationist Synod concerning a supposed ‘Tikhonite schism’ in the Russian Orthodox Church (that is, among them – the renovationists) and the supposedly universal desire among the clerical leaders (that is, of the renovationist-synodalists) to bring peace into the difficult situation that had been created with the cooperation of the lofty authority of the Ecumenical Vladyka (since, they said, all means had already been exhausted and they had no other hope!).

“Taking into account the complete isolation of the Russian Church from communion with the external world at that time, the falsely informed Patriarch Gregory VII fell into this renovationist trap, but was stopped in time by the sobering epistle of his Holiness Patriarch Tikhon.”

Gregory abandoned his plans to send a mission to Russia, but relations between the two Churches continued to be frosty. When Metropolitan Peter came to power in Russia in April, 1925, he was presented with a letter from Patriarch Basil III which called on the “Old Churchmen” to unite with the renovationists. His comment was: “We still have to check whether this Patriarch is Orthodox…” Metropolitan Sergius (Stragorodsky) was also sceptical; he reacted to Constantinople’s recognition of the renovationists as follows: “Let them recognize them; the renovationists have not become Orthodox from this, only the Patriarchs have become renovationists!”

The Greeks continued to hedge their bets between the Russian Churches. Thus on July 10, 1927, Patriarch Damian of Jerusalem wrote to the renovationist synod recognizing it as “the only lawful bearer of Higher Ecclesiastical Authority on the territory of the USSR”. However, his successor, Patriarch Basil III broke communion with the Living Church in 1929 – only to enter into communion with the by now neo-renovationist Metropolitan Sergius! Nor did the reception into the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Metropolitan Eulogius of Paris, a rebel from ROCOR and a supporter of the heresy of sophianism, improve matters…

If the Moscow Council of 1917-18 established the basic position of the Church vis-à-vis the State, the renovationist council of 1923 revealed the basic modes of attack employed by the State against the Church, and thus provided the Church with valuable experience for the still fiercer struggles ahead. These basic modes of attack were:-

299 Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 155.
1. Control of the Central Church Administration. Like the State, the Church in Her post-revolutionary structure was a highly centralized organism. The astonishing success of the Living Church in its early stages was partly the result of its usurpation of the central administration and the confusion this engendered in the faithful. The Patriarch was in prison, and some reports said that he had resigned, others – that he had been killed. Although Metropolitan Agathangelus, circulated a secret order directing the bishops to rule their dioceses independently in accordance with the Patriarch’s ukaz no. 362 of November 7/20, 1920, the habit of looking to the centre for all major directives was difficult to break. This habit was broken, for some, only after the still greater shock of the events of 1927, when another unscrupulous hierarch, Metropolitan Sergius (Stragorodsky), took control of the central administration of the Church.

2. The Façade of Canonical Orthodoxy. At first the renovationists put on a mask of canonical Orthodoxy, claiming to have received power by legal transfer from the Patriarch. But soon they – mistakenly - threw off this mask; and, as we have seen, the crudity of their attacks on the Faith and monasticism repelled the people. In future, the GPU would take care that their candidate for the leadership of the Russian Church would have at least the appearance of canonical and dogmatic Orthodoxy.

3. The Lure of State Legalization. In spite of the Patriarch’s “confession”, the Patriarchal Church never received legalization by the State during his lifetime. This meant that the Church was always as it were in the wilderness, without the favour and security enjoyed by the renovationists.

The depths to which the renovationists were prepared to go in order to win this security is illustrated by the pannikhida they celebrated for Lenin after his death, in which they described his soul as “essentially Christian”! In the same vein was Vvedensky’s speech to the 1923 council, in which he said: “We must turn to the government with words of deeply felt gratitude. The Church is not persecuted, whatever the calumnies of the foreign propagandists may say. Everyone in Russia can voice his conviction. We must direct this message of thanks to the only Government in the world, which, though it does not believe in God, yet acts in accordance with love, which is more than we, who believe, can claim for ourselves.”

Ironically, therefore, as Fr. Aidan Nichols writes, the renovationists came “to resemble the pre-revolutionary establishment in their spirit of subordination to the State.” The Patriarchal Church, however, gained in spiritual authority. For, already in the early 1920s, the view was current that the faithful were living, in the Patriarch’s words, “in the years of the triumph of Satan and of the power of the Antichrist”. So the “Living Church”, in

300 Cited in Gustavson, op. cit.
coming to terms with Soviet power, was, as the Patriarch said, “an institution of the Antichrist”.\textsuperscript{302} The Patriarchal Church, on the other hand, was like the woman fleeing into the wilderness from the red dragon (Revelation 12). And it was still to her that the faithful children of the Church clung…

However, in absolute terms the number of Russian Orthodox Christians was still falling, especially in the countryside. “When the Bolsheviks had fulfilled their promise about land after the revolution, most of the peasants in Central Russia were completely satisfied, and were ready to acknowledge their ideology, becoming cooler and cooler towards the Church. Although in the 1920s the Bolsheviks were still afraid to persecute the Church in the villages, the number of those who attended Church services was reduced to one third of that before the revolution.”\textsuperscript{303}

Moreover, while the renovationist church organization was on the retreat, renovationism as such was by no means dead. As one Catacomb bishop wrote: “In the 1920s the renovationists, while promoting their reformist teaching, were only carrying out an experiment… These open demands and programmes proclaimed by renovationism were in the simple form too sharp for the majority of simple believers to accept. And so the mass of the Orthodox people moved away from them… Through these ‘experimenters’ [the atheists] were able to convince themselves that this method was bad. What the renovationists were not able to do immediately, the Moscow Patriarchate was able to do at the beginning of the 1930s - gradually, beginning with the actions of Metropolitan Sergius (Stragorodsky). That which the renovationists and living churchmen tried to do openly, the Moscow Patriarchate was able to accomplish secretly, quietly and at first glance without being noticed. In this way they introduced a complete renovation into the life of the Church…”\textsuperscript{304}

\textit{The Rise of Stalin}

Like Roman Catholicism, the religion of Leninism logically leads to the worship of one man as the infallible incarnation of the one truth. The truth is History, and the vanguard of History is the Party, and the leader of the Party is the one true interpreter of the will of the Party. He is the incarnation of History, its infallible vector or arrow, while all those who oppose him are deviants who miss the mark, being consigned, in Trotsky’s phrase, “to the dustbin of History”.

Although this teaching had always been implicit in Leninism, and although the Tenth Congress in 1921 had gone a long way, through its banning of all factionalism, to prepare the way for its universal acceptance, it

\textsuperscript{302} Regelson, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 313.
\textsuperscript{303} Benevich, \textit{op. cit.}
\textsuperscript{304} Redechkin, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 42.
required the five-year period following the departure of Lenin from centre stage in 1922-23 to the rise of Stalin as dictator in 1927-28 to impress it upon the hearts as well as the minds of the Bolshevik faithful. For before that time Lenin was the undisputed _vozh’d_, but it was not clear whether there could be Leninism without Lenin. After it, the answer was clear: just as there can be no Catholicism without the Pope, so there can be no Leninism without Lenin. And the new Lenin is – Stalin. For, as _Pravda_ wrote in January, 1934: *Now when we speak of Lenin, / It means we are speaking of Stalin._

The rise to power of Stalin over the whole of Russia and over all his fellow-Bolsheviks is one of the mysteries of Soviet history. In particular, historians have been surprised why it should have been Stalin, and not the more striking Trotsky, who conquered in their famous struggle for power in the 1920s. The question could be put – misleadingly, as we shall see – as follows: how did Stalin, the most undistinguished of the leading Bolsheviks from an intellectual point of view, the uncharismatic bureaucratic plodder (an early nickname was “Comrade Filing-Cabinet”) with little hold (in a personal sense) over his fellow Bolsheviks, the non-Russian, non-Slav, non-European ex-seminarian and bank robber, acquire, within ten years of the revolution, such ascendancy within the party and the nation that he could expel from both the party and the nation – Trotsky, the hero of 1905 and October and the Civil War, the brilliant writer and demagogue and courageous man of action, the dynamic, cultivated and popular European internationalist?

As a provisional hypothesis to explain this fact we may apply to the Soviet situation the words of the ancient Greek historian Thucydides in his *History of the Peloponnesian War*: “Inferior minds were as a rule more successful; aware of their own defects and of the intelligence of their opponents, to whom they felt themselves inferior in debate, and by whose versatility of intrigue they were afraid of being surprised, they struck boldly and at once. Their enemies despised them, were confident of detecting their plots, and thought it needless to effect by violence what they could achieve by their brains, and so were taken off their guard and destroyed.”

In agreement with this hypothesis, there is plenty of evidence that Trotsky grossly underestimated Stalin, “the outstanding mediocrity of our Party”, as he said to Sklyansky. Boris Bazhanov, Stalin’s secretary during the mid-twenties, confirms Isaac Deutscher’s opinion that “Trotsky felt it beneath his dignity to cross swords with a man as intellectually undistinguished and personally contemptible as Stalin”._307_ Trotsky also felt it beneath his dignity to indulge in the kind of political skulduggery that Stalin excelled in, especially the tactic of “divide and conquer”. Stalin’s very obscurity, the stealthy but

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305 Bullock, _op. cit._, p. 413.
steady way in which he acquired power, lulled his opponents into inactivity. Trotsky was like a hare, opening up a large lead very quickly but then sitting back and preening his whiskers, while Stalin the tortoise crept past him to the finishing-line. And indeed, we know that he was vain and arrogant, “treasuring his historic role”, in Lunacharsky’s words, in the looking-glass of his imagination. Stalin, too, was vain, but he hid this fault more carefully…

In any case, Stalin was far more talented than Trotsky supposed. He was a skilled and tenacious guerilla fighter, bank-robber and organizer in the pre-revolutionary period; and during his numerous exiles and escapes from exile he acquired endurance, prudence and ingenuity. The Western leaders and diplomats who met him in the Second World War admired his toughness, realism and cleverness – sometimes even his supposed moral qualities. And he outmanoeuvred them time and again… He was a good judge of character, and could be attractive, strange as it may seem, to women, without ever being controlled by them. He knew several languages, had a fine voice, was thought to be a considerable poet, liked to instruct people in Shakespeare and art and music, and read voraciously in many subjects.

He could not match Trotsky in oratory, and yet this, too, he turned to his advantage, since it marked him out as a genuine proletarian, which Trotsky certainly was not: in the eyes of rough Bolsheviks from the provinces, writes Sebag Montefiore, “his flat quiet public speaking was an asset, a great improvement on Trotsky’s oratorial wizardry. His very faults, the chip on the shoulder, the brutality and fits of irrational temper, were the Party’s faults. ‘He was not trusted but he was the man the Party trusted,’ admitted Bukharin. ‘He’s like the symbol of the Party, the lower strata trust him.’ But above all, reflected the future secret police chief, Beria, he was ‘supremely intelligent’, a political ‘genius’. However rude or charming he was, ‘he dominated his entourage with his intelligence’.”

In fact, Trotsky was more impressed by Stalin than he liked to admit. Montefiore writes: “Stalin impressed Trotsky, whose description reveals why he lost their struggle for power. ‘Stalin was very valuable behind the scenes,’ he wrote. ‘He did have the knack of convincing the average run of leaders, especially the provincials.’ He ‘wasn’t regarded as the official leader of the Party,’ says Sagirashvili, another Georgian Menshevik in Petrograd throughout 1917, but ‘everyone listened to what he had to say, including Lenin – he was a representative of the rank and file, one who expressed its real views and moods’, which were unknown to émigrés like Trotsky. Soso [Stalin] was the ‘unquestioned leader’ of the Caucasians. Lenin, says

309 According to Overy, “in the 1930s his library counted 40,000 volumes. He wrote extensively both before 1917 and in the 1920s, works and speeches that ran to thirteen volumes when they were published” (op. cit., p. 9).
Sagirashvili, ‘felt that behind him stood countless leaders from the provinces’. 
While Trotsky was prancing on the stage at the Circus, Stalin was finding new 
allies such as the young man he had unceremoniously kicked off the Bureau, 
Molotov.”

There was another aspect to Trotsky’s vanity that placed him at a 
disadvantage in relation to Stalin. As Edmund Wilson has shown, he was a 
deeply committed believer in History, and in the ultimate triumph of 
international Socialism under History’s aegis. But it was self-evident to him 
that such a great movement must have great leaders – educated, 
internationally minded men who had absorbed all the riches of bourgeois 
culture, decisive men of action who would jump to the forefront of the masses 
and be immediately accepted them. Lenin fitted this role, which is why 
Trotsky, from 1917 onward, accepted his leadership unquestioningly. But 
Stalin, the uncouth Asiatic, did not fit this role. Trotsky could not see how 
History could anoint him, of all people, to be the leader of the revolutionary 
movement. Perhaps this betrayed a certain lack of culture and historical 
knowledge on Trotsky’s part. After all, the ultimate victor in the great French 
revolution was the provincial, boorish Napoleon. Stalin, too, was a provincial – and he had studied Napoleon...

Trotsky’s fanatical faith in History was indeed a major bonus at those 
moments when History seemed to be most active – in 1905 and 1917-21. At 
such times fiery ardour, disregard of obstacles and the infirmities of men, firm 
faith in the goal and hope in its attainment, are at a premium. And these were 
the times when the plodding, cautious Stalin did not shine – although he did not lose ground, either.

But in the ebb of revolutionary fervour, when History seemed to have 
hidden her face from her devotees, different qualities were required – 
patience above all. This was a quality possessed by Stalin, and these were the 
years – 1906-16 and 1921-27 – when he advanced most rapidly up the ladder 
of power. Moreover, he continued to show faith in his goddess even in the 
most difficult times, as during his Siberian exile during the First World War. 
“Even this fanatical Marxist,” writes Montefiore, “convinced that the progress 
of history would bring about revolution and dictatorship of the proletariat, 
must have sometimes doubted if he would ever return. Even Lenin doubted 
the Revolution, asking Krupskaya, ‘Will we ever live to see it?’ Yet Stalin 
never seems to have lost faith. ‘The Russian Revolution is as inevitable as the 
rising of the sun,’ he had written back in 1905 and he had not changed his 
view. ‘Can you prevent the sun from rising?’”

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312 Wilson, To the Finland Station, London: Fontana, 1940.
313 Bertram Wolff, Three Who Made a Revolution.
314 Montefiore, Young Stalin, p. 305.
From 1922 onwards Trotsky frittered away the enormous advantage given him by his reputation as a war-leader by refusing to build up a political power-base, or appeal to the mass of the party against the growing centralization of power in the Politburo, or in any way to pander to the vanities and jealous susceptibilities of his colleagues. Thus he elicited their contempt by pointedly reading French novels while the Politburo was in session. Through his arrogance and lack of political circumspection, Trotsky made enemies easily – and one of the first was Stalin. Thus when, at the London Congress of 1907, Trotsky attacked the bank robberies that Stalin had organized on Lenin’s behalf, Stalin was hurt, later talking about Trotsky’s “beautiful uselessness”. Trotsky again embittered Stalin by attacking his conduct at Tsaritsyn (later Stalingrad) during the Civil War.

Unfortunately for Trotsky, Stalin’s nature was not such as could shrug off personal insults. He was a bully; but, as Robert Service puts it, “he was an extremely sensitive bully”. And that gave him the defining trait of his nature: vengefulness. Thus “at a boozy dinner, Kamenev asked everyone round the table to declare their greatest pleasure in life. Some cited women, others earnestly replied that it was the progress of dialectical materialism towards the workers’ paradise. Then Stalin answered: ‘My greatest pleasure is to choose one’s victim, prepared one’s plans minutely, slake an implacable vengeance, and then go to bed. There’s nothing sweeter in the world.’…”

This vengefulness is the critical element in Stalin’s character, the element that truly distinguishes him from his colleagues. Not that vengefulness was not characteristic of the whole revolutionary movement. But Stalin possessed it to a quite exceptional degree.

It appeared early in his life. Thus Vershak writes: “Stalin’s comrades in the seminary circle say that soon after his expulsion [from Tiflis seminary], they were in turn expelled as the result of a denunciation by Stalin to the rector. He did not deny the accusation, but justified the deed by saying that the expelled students, having lost their right to become priests, would become good revolutionaries.”

Again, in 1930 the Georgian Menshevik newspaper, Brdzolis Kkhma, made an accusation that was first levelled against him by Martov in 1918: “From the earliest days of his activity among the workers, Djugashvili [Stalin] attracted attention by his intrigues against the outstanding Social Democratic leader, Sylvester Jibladze. He was warned but took no notice, continuing to spread slanders with the intention of discrediting the recognized representative of the local organization. Brought before a party tribunal, he was found guilty of unjust slander, and was unanimously excluded from the Tiflis organization.”

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316 Montefiore, Young Stalin, p. 309.
Again, Iremashvili relates what Stalin said to him on the death of his first wife, Ekaterina: “This creature softened my stony heart. She is dead, and with her have died my last warm feelings for all human beings.”

Iremashvili comments: “From the day he buried his wife, he indeed lost the last vestige of human feelings. His heart filled with the unutterably malicious hatred which his cruel father had already begun to engender in him while he was still a child. Ruthless with himself, he became ruthless with all people.”

It would be unwise to discount the important attached here to the death of Stalin’s first wife. Russian history provides us with a striking parallel: it was after the death of Tsar Ivan IV’s first wife, Anastasia Romanova, that he became “the Terrible”, cruel and rapacious to a paranoiac degree. Ivan’s decimation of the Russian boyars through his oprichnina in the 16th century bears a striking resemblance to Stalin’s of the Communist Party through the NKVD in the 1930s; and Stalin showed great interest in the Terrible Ivan.

While no purely psychological hypothesis can fully explain the extremes of evil that the Russian revolution threw up, it is legitimate to seek a partial explanation of the actions of a man like Stalin in his early childhood. Alan Bullock is sympathetic to the thesis, put forward by Erich Fromm, that Stalin, like Hitler, was a narcissist: “‘Narcissism’ is a concept originally formulated by Freud in relation to early infancy, but one which is now accepted more broadly to describe a personality disorder in which the natural development of relationships to the external world has failed to take place. In such a state only the person himself, his needs, feelings and thoughts, everything and everybody pertaining to him are experienced as fully real, while everybody and everything else lacks reality or interest.

“Fromm argues that some degree of narcissism can be considered an occupational illness among political leaders in proportion to their conviction of a providential mission and their claim to infallibility of judgement and a monopoly of power. When such claims are raised to the level demanded by a Hitler or a Stalin at the height of their power, any challenge will be perceived as a threat to their private image of themselves as much as to their public image, and they will react by going to any lengths to suppress it.

“So far psychiatrists have paid much less attention to Stalin than to Hitler. Lack of evidence is part of the reason. There has been no parallel in the case of the Soviet Union to the capture of documents and interrogation of witnesses that followed the defeat of Germany. But more important is the striking contrast in temperament and style between the two men: the flamboyant Hitler, displaying a lack of restraint and extravagance of speech which for long made it difficult for many to take him seriously, in contrast to the reserved Stalin, who owed his rise to power to his success, not in exploiting, but in concealing his personality, and was underestimated for the opposite
reason – because many failed to recognize his ambition and ruthlessness. Nor surprisingly, it is the first rather than the second who has caught the psychiatrists’ attention. All the more interesting then is the suggestion that underlying the contrast there was a common narcissistic obsession with themselves.

“There is one other insight, which Stalin’s American biographer, Robert Tucker, has adopted from Karen Horney’s work on neurosis. He suggests that his father’s brutal treatment of Stalin, particularly the beatings which he inflicted on the boy, and on the boy’s mother in his presence, produced the basic anxiety, the sense of being isolated in a hostile world, which can lead a child to develop a neurotic personality. Searching for firm ground on which to build an inner security, someone who in his childhood had experienced such anxiety might naturally search for inner security by forming an idealistic image of himself and then adopting this as his true identity. ‘From then on his energies are invested in the increasing effort to prove the ideal self in action and gain others’ affirmation of it.’ In Stalin’s case, this fits his identification with the Caucasian outlaw-hero, whose name he assumed, and later with Lenin, the revolutionary hero, on whom he fashioned his own ‘revolutionary persona’, with the name of Stalin, ‘man of steel’, which echoed Lenin’s own pseudonym...

“The earliest recorded diagnosis of Stalin as paranoid appears to have been made in December 1927, when an international scientific conference met in Moscow. A leading Russian neuropsychologist, Professor Vladimir Bekhterev from Leningrad, made a great impression on the foreign delegates and attracted the attention of Stalin, who asked Bekhterev to pay him a visit. After the interview (22 December 1927) Bekhterev told his assistant Mnukhin that Stalin was a typical case of severe paranoia and that a dangerous man was now at the head of the Soviet Union. The fact that Bekhterev was suddenly taken ill and died while still in his hotel has inevitably led to the suspicion that Stalin had him poisoned. Whether this is true or not, when the report of Bekhterev’s diagnosis was repeated in Liternaturnaya Gazeta in September 1988, it was accepted as correct by a leading Soviet psychiatrist, Professor E.A. Lichko.”

Stalin’s paranoid cruelty first manifested itself on a large scale in his suppression of his native Georgia’s independence in 1921. The fact that this was his native land did not inhibit him from calling for “the smashing of the hydra of nationalism” there, and burning out “the nationalist survivals with hot iron”. And in 1924 Stalin said of Jordania’s uprising: “All Georgia must be ploughed under.” Now the cruelty and desire to dominate that had been evident in him even as a child began to manifest itself more and more. Not for nothing did he say that the death of one man was a tragedy, but the death of a million – only a statistic.

317 Bullock, op. cit., pp. 10-12, 401.
In the period 1923-26 the rivalry between Stalin and Trotsky became more intense, and for these years we have the invaluable testimony of Bazhanov. He says that Stalin’s sole concern during this period “was to outwit his colleagues and lay his hands on the reins of unrestricted power”. He accused Stalin of murdering Frunze and Sklyansky. And he says: “It was clear to me already in those early years that Stalin was a vindictive Asiatic, with fear, suspicion and revenge deeply embedded in his soul. I could tell from everything he said and left unsaid, his tastes, preferences and demeanour, that he would recoil from nothing, drive every issue to its absurd extreme and send me to their deaths without hesitation if they stood in his way.”

Bazhanov considers Trotsky to have been potentially as ruthless as Stalin. But there was an important difference between the two kinds of ruthlessness. Trotsky’s was not a personally directed emotion but a kind of impersonal passion stemming directly from his faith in the revolution and in essence an extension of it. As Deutscher said (perhaps over-generously): “His judgement remained unclouded by any personal emotion against Stalin, and severely objective.” Stalin, on the other hand, had the great advantage of really hating his opponent. Deutscher suggests that Stalin must have had “better qualities and emotions, such as intellectual ambition and a degree of sympathy with the oppressed, without which no young man would ever join a persecuted revolutionary party”\(^{318}\). But he produces no evidence in support of this dubious statement. And even he had to admit that Stalin’s betrayal of the Warsaw rising in 1944 could have been motivated, not by political expediency, but by nothing else than “that unscrupulous rancour and insensible spite of which he had given so much proof in the great purges”\(^{319}\).

But hatred and ambition, without intelligence, accomplishes little. And here we must revise the simplistic notion that Trotsky was intelligent and Stalin stupid. Lenin, for one, did not share this opinion, considering Stalin to be second only to Trotsky in ability among the members of the Politburo. Trotsky was a brilliant intellectual, one of the most acute judges of the national and international scene. Not for nothing did Deutscher call him a “prophet”. But he had his weaknesses apart from the vanity that we have already mentioned. Bazhanov says that he was naïve with the naïveté that comes from fanaticism. Lunacharsky said that he was a bad organizer. These two faults were linked to a third which may be called a kind of stupidity: his blindly optimistic faith in the infallibility of the party. As he wrote to Zinoviev: “The party in the last analysis is always right, because the party is the single historic instrument given to the proletariat for the solution of its fundamental problems... I know that one must not be right against the party.”

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\(^{318}\) Deutscher, The Prophet Outcast, p. 455.

\(^{319}\) Deutscher, Stalin: A Political Biography, Oxford University Press, 1949, p. 524. This spite may have been linked with the defeat that the Poles inflicted on the Red Army near Warsaw in 1920, for which Stalin bore some responsibility.
It was because of this faith in the party – and in Lenin – that Trotsky accepted the ban on factionalism at the Tenth Party Congress in 1921. And yet he understood better than anybody what this “egocentralist” restriction of free speech within the party would lead to. As he had declared several years earlier: “The organization of the party takes the place of the party itself; the Central Committee takes the place of the organization; and finally the dictator takes the place of the Central Committee.”

Why, then, did he not protest when he saw Stalin attaining supreme power by precisely these means, using his position as General Secretary to fill the party with men loyal to himself alone? Partly because, as we have seen, he underestimated Stalin. And partly because, after Lenin’s death in 1924, he did not want to appear to be stepping too eagerly into Lenin’s shoes. But mainly because he simply trusted in the party to get it right in the long run.

This attitude of Trotsky’s persisted for a long time, even after he had been expelled from the country and the horrors of the First Five-Year-Plan had revealed the extent of Stalin’s “bureaucratic collectivist” heresy. As late as October, 1932, Trotsky refused to support a “Remove Stalin!” slogan because it might encourage counter-revolution. Instead, he proposed the formation of a Fourth International opposed to the Stalin-controlled Comintern – but only after Hitler (aided by the Comintern’s refusal to form a Popular Front with the other left-wing parties) had come to power in Germany. Even then he said that this new International should have jurisdiction only up to, but not beyond, the frontiers of the USSR. And it was only in October, 1933 that he declared that the Opposition should constitute a new party against the Bolshevik party within the country. And it was not until the later 1930s that he began, in a letter to Angelica Balabanov, to rebel both against the Party and History herself: “History has to be taken as she is; but when she allows herself such extraordinary and filthy outrages [Stalin’s show-trials], one must fight back at her with one’s fists…”

Stalin had no such ideological scruples, no agonies of a revolutionary conscience. He had the great good fortune – or good judgement – to become a follower of Lenin as early as 1903 and to stick to him, in spite of some disagreements, right up to the revolution. Not that he loved Lenin – he was delighted at the news of Lenin’s death, according to Bazhanov, whereas Trotsky fainted for two hours, according to Krupskaya. Nor was he a consistent Leninist thereafter, for all his propaganda to the contrary – Stalin’s career covers the most extraordinary range between extreme communism to near-convergence with capitalism, from the most strident Russian nationalism to the purest internationalism. What mattered to him was not ideological purity, but power; and while he did not underestimate the importance of ideology in the attainment and maintenance of power – in this respect Lenin trained him well, - he never mistook the means for the end.
Thus he paid attention to organization – he was an excellent administrator – and to the shifting patterns of alliances within the party. He did not wear his heart on his sleeve, and was capable of the most studied hypocrisy in the manner of Shakespeare’s Richard III. In October, 1917 Trotsky had impetuously condemned Zinoviev and Kamenev “to the dustbin of history” for their refusal to back Lenin’s call for an immediate putsch, but Stalin held his fire. Thus he was able to use Zinoviev and Kamenev against Trotsky, and then, when his own power base had been established, destroy all three of them. This combination of hatred with prudence, cunning with caution, made him a formidable politician.

Other objective aspects of the political situation in the mid-twenties favoured Stalin against Trotsky. As Deutscher points out, Trotsky’ doctrine of permanent revolution, while critical to the success of the October revolution, offended the self-confident complacency of the party. On the other hand, Stalin’s discovery (with Bukharin) of the slogan “Socialism in One Country” answered to the country’s pride in itself, its weariness with the failure of European revolution and its longing for stability. The fact that Stalin later stole so many pages out of Trotsky’s book – his emphasis on rapid industrialization, on militarization of the unions and on discipline within the party – does not contradict this thesis. In the early twenties, when Trotsky proposed these policies, the time was not yet ripe for their implementation; whereas in the late twenties and early thirties, when the New Economic Policy had run into the sands and political power was concentrated exclusively in Stalin’s hands, they could be embarked upon with some prospect of success – according to Stalin’s criteria, that is.

Have we then succeeded in explaining why Stalin triumphed over Trotsky? Can we say that Stalin’s greater hatred, cunning, prudence and organizational ability, on the one hand, and Trotsky’s vanity, naiveté, on the other, were bound to lead to Stalin’s triumph in the conditions of war weariness, ideological cooling-off and party sclerosis that prevailed in the Soviet Union of the mid-1920s? In the present writer’s opinion we cannot say this, because the factors mentioned above do not help us to understand the extraordinary drama that took place over Lenin’s will in the critical years 1922-24, when Stalin was very nearly catapulted from power, and in which it is difficult not to see another, metaphysical factor entering into the situation...

In April, 1922 Stalin became General Secretary, the critical platform for his rise to supreme power. In May, 1922 Lenin suffered his first stroke, thereby removing the main obstacle to Stalin’s exploiting the secretariat in his personal bid for power. Then, during the autumn of that year, while he was slowly recovering from his stroke, Lenin fell out for the first time with the man whom, in 1913, he had called “the wonderful Georgian”. The quarrel seems to have been over Georgia, which the Second Army, on instructions
from Stalin, had invaded the previous year. Dzerzhinsky reported that Stalin’s underling, Ordzhonikidze, had committed brutalities there, and complaints also reached Lenin against Stalin. Lenin wanted Stalin to pay more attention to Georgian national sensitivities. But Stalin, who had been the Party’s expert on Nationalities for years, believed his countrymen should be kept on a close rein.

But then, in December, 1922, came Lenin’s second stroke. Recovering somewhat, Lenin began to draw up a will, in which, while commenting on each member of the Politburo, he wrote: “Comrade Stalin, having become General Secretary, has concentrated enormous power in his hands; and I am not sure that he always knows how to use that power with sufficient caution.” He also hinted at the possibility of a split between Trotsky and Stalin, which the party should act to avoid. Five days later, on December 30, he wrote: “I think that the hastiness and administrative clumsiness of Stalin played a fatal role here [in Georgia], and also his spite against the notorious ‘social chauvinism’. Spite in general plays the worst possible role in politics…”

Fairly mild criticism, perhaps. But a quarrel between Stalin and Krupskaya led to a significant hardening in Lenin’s attitude in the few months remaining to him. Thus on January 4, 1923, in a postscript to his will, he wrote: “Stalin is too rude, and this fault… becomes unbearable in the office of General Secretary. Therefore I propose to the comrades to find a way to remove Stalin from that position and appoint to it another man more patient, more loyal, more polite and more attentive to comrades, less capricious, etc.”

Then, on March 4, there appeared in Pravda a blistering attack by Lenin on Stalin’s work as Commissar of the Workers’ and Peasants’ Inspectorate. Deutscher wrote: “This was Lenin’s first, publicly delivered blow. Behind the scenes he prepared for a final attack at the twelfth party congress, convened for April; and he agreed with Trotsky on joint action. On 5 March, the day after Pravda had at last published his criticisms of Stalin’s Commissariat, he had a sharp exchange with Stalin. He then dictated a brief letter to Stalin, telling him that he ‘broke off’ all personal relations with him. The next day, 6 March, he wired a message to the leaders of the Georgian opposition, promising to take up their case at the congress: ‘I am with you in this matter with all my heart. I am outraged by the arrogance of Ordzhonikidze and the

320 It appears that the Politburo had banned Lenin from working more than ten minutes a day, which led to the quarrel with Krupskaya and then with Lenin himself. “Stalin’s row with Lenin’s wife, Krupskaya, outraged Lenin’s bourgeois sentiments. But Stalin thought it was entirely consistent with Party culture. ‘Why should I stand on my hindlegs for her? To sleep with Lenin does not mean you understand Marxism-Leninism. Just because she used the same toilet as Lenin…’ This led to some classic Stalin jokes, in which he warned Krupskaya that if she did not obey, the Central Committee would appoint someone else as Lenin’s wife. That is a very Bolshevik concept. His disrespect for Krupskaya was probably not helped by her complaints about Lenin’s flirtations with his assistants, including Yelena Stasova, the one whom Stalin threatened to promote to ‘wife’” (Montefiore, Stalin, p. 37).
connivance of Stalin and Dzerzhinsky.’ He again communicated with Trotsky about their joint tactics in the Georgian business; and he briefed Kamenev who was to depart for Tiflis with a special commission of inquiry. Just in the middle of all these moves, on 9 March, he suffered the third attack of his illness, from which he was not to recover…”

There can be little doubt that if Lenin had survived, Stalin would have been sacked, and the whole course of Soviet history would have been different. There can be little doubt, either, that if he had died that March, and not ten months later, Stalin would still have been sacked. For then his will would have been opened at the twelfth congress in April. But Krupskaya scrupulously observed the instructions on Lenin’s will: “Open only after my death”, so the contents of the will were not made known until shortly before the fourteenth congress in May, 1924. By that time, however, Stalin had worked hard to create a bloc with Zinoviev and Kamenev against Trotsky. So when the matter came up before the Central Committee, Zinoviev and Kamenev spoke in favour of Stalin and against the publication of the will. Trotsky was silent, the vote was taken – and Stalin was saved. Three years later, Stalin was stronger than all three. In November, 1927 Trotsky and Zinoviev were expelled from the party, and in December the Fifteenth Party Congress confirmed the decision...

Bazhanov writes: “Trotsky’s position in 1923-4 was strong. If he had used the cards history had dealt him, Stalin could have been stopped. Of course Stalin was an accomplished schemer, but with the support Lenin had given him Trotsky could have lined up the party behind him if his temperament had not stood in the way. But he failed to understand the nature of the Party machine, Stalin’s use of it, and the full significance Stalin’s position as General Secretary had acquired by the time of the 13th Congress.”

And yet there was more to it than that. The vital factor, which depended neither on psychology nor on politics, was the timing of Lenin’s strokes, and above all the fact that the last stroke incapacitated him without immediately killing him. Chance? History’s choice of Stalin? Or God’s judgement on apostate Russia? For a believer in the true God there is only one possible answer. God acted now as He had acted in allowing the cruel tyrant Phocas to murder the good Emperor Maurice and ascend the throne in seventh-century Byzantium. “One contemporary,” writes Alexander Dvorkin, “cites the story of a certain man who cried out to God: ‘Why did You send Your people such a blood-thirsty wolf?’ And the Lord replied to him: ‘I tried to find someone worse than Phocas, so as to punish the people for its self-will, but was unable. But from now on don’t you question the judgements of God…”

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321 Deutscher, Stalin, pp. 252-253.
322 Dvorkin, Ocherki po Istorii Vseleinskoi Pravoslavnoi Tserkvi (Sketches on the History of the Universal Orthodox Church), Nizhni-Novgorod, 2006, p. 439 ®.
Metropolitan Peter of Krutitsa

Shortly before his death, Patriarch Tikhon confided to his personal physician and friend, Michael Zhizhilenko, that he felt that the unceasing pressure of the government would one day force the leadership of the Church to concede more than was right, and that the true Church would then have to descend into the catacombs like the Roman Christians of old. And he counselled his friend, who was a widower, that when that time came, he should seek the monastic tonsure and episcopal consecration. That time came in 1927 with the notorious declaration of Metropolitan Sergius; and Michael Zhizhilenko, following the advice of his mentor, was consecrated as the first bishop of the anti-sergianist Catacomb Church in 1928, for which he paid with his life in Solovki in 1931. Thus was the concept and even the name of the Catacomb Church foreseen by the Martyr-Patriarch himself; it was, and is the “Tikhonite” Church.

On April 7, 1925, his Holiness Patriarch Tikhon reposed in the Lord — it is almost certain that he was poisoned. According to his cell-attendant, Constantine Pashkovich, his next to last words, uttered with an unusual severity, were: “Now I shall go to sleep... deeply and for a long time. The night will be long, and very dark...”

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

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323 I.M. Andreyev, Russia’s Catacomb Saints, Platina, Ca.: St. Herman Brotherhood Press, 1982, p. 56.
324 For evidence that he was in fact poisoned, see Chernov, op. cit., Lebedev, Velikorossia (Great Russia), St. Petersburg, 1997, p. 582; Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 137; D. Volkogonov, Lenin, London: Harper Collins, 1994, p. 384.
326 Another will dated the day of the Patriarch’s death and published in Izvestia was almost certainly a forgery. See Chernov, op. cit., Lebedev, op. cit., p. 582, Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 137, Protopresbyter George (later Bishop Gregory) Grabbe, Pravda o Russkoj Tserkvi na rodine i za rubezhom (The Truth about the Russian Church in the Homeland and Abroad), Jordanville, 1989; Protopriest Alexander Lebedev, Plod lukavij. Praskhoxzdienie i suschnost’ Moskovskoj Patriarkhii (A Bad Fruit The Origin and Essence of the Moscow Patriarchate), Los-Angeles, 1994 ®.
327 Gubonin, op. cit. p. 413.
The first need of the Church at that time was the convocation of a Council to elect a new Patriarch. But, of course, the GPU had no intention of allowing this. Their aim was a tamed Church – that is, a Church that accepted legalization from the government on the government’s terms. Or, failing that, another schism. And that only as a stage towards the Church’s final destruction; for, as the Central Committee member and leading party ideologist, I.I. Skvortsov-Stepanov, had said in 1922, although the schisms in the Church were in the party’s interests, in principle the party remained the enemy of all religion and would eventually struggle against all of them.  

Encouraged by the Patriarch’s death, the renovationists energetically tried to obtain union with the Patriarchal Church in time for their second council, which was due to take place in the autumn of 1925. Their attempts were aided by the Soviet authorities, who put all kinds of pressure on the hierarchs to enter into union with the renovationists. Metropolitan Peter, however, proved to be, in the communists’ phrase, “a tough nut”, a rock against which the gates of hell surged in vain.

In an epistle dated July 28, 1925, after protesting against the propaganda of the uniates and sectarians, which was diverting attention away from the main battle against atheism, he rejected all overtures towards union with the renovationists. And he went on:

“Thus the canonical rules forbid Orthodox Christians to take part in them and still more to elect representatives for such gatherings. In accordance with the 20th rule of the Council of Antioch, ‘no one is permitted to convene a Council alone, without those bishops who are in charge of the metropolitanates.’ In the holy Church of God only that is lawful which is approved by the God-ordained ecclesiastical government, preserved by succession since the time of the Apostles. All arbitrary acts, everything that has been done by the new-church party without the approval of the most holy Patriarch now at rest with God, everything that is now done without our approval – all this has no validity in accordance with the canons of the holy Church (Apostolic canon 34; Council of Antioch, canon 9), for the true Church is one, and the grace of the most Holy Spirit residing in her is one, for there

328 D. Pospielovsky, op. cit., p. 91, note.
can be no two Churches or two graces. ‘There is one Body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all’ (Ephesians 4.4-6).

“The so-called new-churchmen should talk of no reunion with the Orthodox Church until they show a sincere repentance for their errors. The chief of these is that they arbitrarily renounced the lawful hierarchy and its head, the most holy Patriarch, and attempted to reform the Church of Christ by self-invented teaching (The Living Church, № № 1-11); they transgressed the ecclesiastical rules which were established by the Ecumenical Councils (the pronouncements of the pseudo-council of May 4, 1923); they rejected the government of the Patriarch, which was established by the Council and acknowledged by all the Eastern Orthodox Patriarchs, i.e. they rejected that which the whole of Orthodoxy accepted, and besides, they even condemned him at their pseudo-council. Contrary to the rules of the holy Apostles, the Ecumenical Councils and the holy Fathers (Apostolic canons 17, 18; Sixth Ecumenical Council, canons 3, 13, 48; St. Basil the Great, canon 12), they permit bishops to marry and clerics to contract a second marriage, i.e. they transgress that which the entire Ecumenical Church acknowledges to be a law, and which can be changed only by an Ecumenical Council.

“The reunion of the so-called new-churchmen with the holy Orthodox Church is possible only on condition that each of them recants his errors and submits to a public repentance for his apostasy from the Church. We pray the Lord God without ceasing that He may restore the erring into the bosom of the holy Orthodox Church.”329

The epistle had a sobering effect on many wavering clerics. As the renovationist Vestnik Sviashchennago Sinoda (Herald of the Holy Synod) was forced to admit: “Immediately Peter’s appeal came out, the courage of the ‘leftist’ Tikhonites disappeared.” So at their renovationist ‘council’ “Metropolitan-Evangelist” Vvedensky publicly accused Metropolitan Peter of involvement with an émigré monarchist plot, producing a patently forged denunciation by the renovationist “bishop” Nicholas of Latin America.330

The Bolshevists gave ready support to the renovationists in their battle against Peter. Thus Savelev writes: “On November 11, 1925, Yaroslavsky, Skvortsov-Stepanov and Menzhinsky [members of the commission for carrying out the decree on the separation of the Church from the State] were discussing Tuchkov’s report ‘On the future policy in connection with the death of Tikhon’. A general order was given to the OGPU to accelerate the implementation of the schism that had been planned amidst the supporters of Tikhon. Concrete measures were indicated with great frankness: ‘In order to support the group in opposition to Peter (the patriarchal locum tenens…) it is

329 Gubonin, op. cit, pp. 418-421.
330 Gubonin, op. cit, pp. 744-745.
resolved to publish in Izvestia a series of articles compromising Peter, and to use towards this end materials from the recently ended renovationist council.’… The censorship and editing of the articles was entrusted to the party philosopher Skvortsov-Stepanov. He was helped by Krasikov (Narkomyust) and Tuchkov (OGPU). This trio was given the task of censuring the declaration against Peter which was being prepared by the anti-Tikhonite group. Simultaneously with the publication in Izvestia of provocative articles against the patriarchal locum tenens, the Anti-Religious commission ordered the OGPU ‘to initiate an investigation against Peter’.”

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

1) the issuing of a declaration of a pre-determined content;
2) the exclusion from the ranks of the bishops of those who were displeasing to the authorities;
3) the condemnation of the émigré bishops; and
4) the participation of the government, in the person of Tuchkov, in the future activities of the Church.

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

On December 5, 1925 Metropolitan Peter composed a will in the event of his death. And on the next day he wrote another in the event of his arrest, indicating three deputies: Metropolitan Sergius of Nizhni-Novgorod, Metropolitan Michael of the Ukraine, and Archbishop Joseph of Rostov. On December 9, the Anti-Religious Commission (more precisely: “the Central Committee Commission for carrying out the decree on the separation of Church and State”) met and approved of the activities of the OGPU in inciting the Church groupings against each other. They also determined the timing of Metropolitan Peter’s arrest. And the next day, December 10, Metropolitan Peter was placed under house-arrest…

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331 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. 199-200.
332 Gubonin, op. cit., p. 402.
333 According to the anonymous author of V Ob’iatkiakh Semiglavago Zmia (In the Embrace of the Seven-Headed Serpent) (Montreal, 1984, p. 47), Metropolitan Peter made two wills regarding his deputies. In the first were three names, as indicated here. In the second were four: Metropolitan Cyril, Agathangelus, Arsenius and Sergius. Since Sergius was only fourth in order in the second will, he kept quiet about it.
334 Savelev, op. cit., p. 200.
On December 12, Metropolitan Peter was imprisoned in the Lubyanka. The other possible locum tenentes, Metropolitans Cyril and Agathangel, had already been exiled. And nearly a month earlier, on November 19, a group of bishops living in Moscow and of like mind with him were also arrested: Archbishops Nicholas of Vladimir, Pachomius of Chernigov, Procopius of the Chersonese and Gurias of Irkutsk, and Bishops Parthenius of Ananievsk, Damascene of Glukhov, Tikhon of Gomel, Barsanuphius of Kargopol, Ioasaph of Chistopol and others. The communists had removed the last canonical leaders of the Russian Church, and they were ready now to place their own candidate on the throne of all the Russias...

Their first candidate was Archbishop Gregory of Yekaterinburg (Sverdlovsk)... On December 14, although unable to leave Nizhni-Novgorod at the time, Metropolitan Sergius announced that he was taking over the Church’s administration in accordance with Metropolitan Peter’s instruction. However, he was prevented by the OGPU from coming to Moscow, and on December 22, 1925, a group of nine bishops led by Archbishop Gregory gathered at the Donskoy monastery.

The Gregorians, as they came to be called, gave a brief description of the succession of first-hierarchal power since 1917, and then declared concerning Metropolitan Peter: “It was not pleasing to the Lord to bless the labours of this hierarch. During his rule disorders and woes only deepened in the Holy Church... In view of this we... have decided to elect a Higher Temporary Church Council for the carrying out of the everyday affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church and for the preparation of a canonically correct Council... Moreover, we have firmly decided not to enter into any relationship or communion with the renovationists and renovationism in all its forms... Instead, we consider it our duty to witness to our complete legal obedience to the powers that be of the Government of the USSR and our faith in its good will and the purity of its intentions in serving the good of the people. We in turn ask them to believe in our loyalty and readiness to serve the good of the same people...” These words clearly revealed the pro-Soviet inspiration of the group. The next day they sought legalisation from the GPU, and ten days later, on January 2, 1926, they received it. On January 7, Izvestia published an interview with Archbishop Gregory thanking the authorities.

On January 14, Metropolitan Sergius wrote to Archbishop Gregory demanding an explanation for his usurpation of power. Gregory replied on January 22, saying that while they recognized the rights of the three locum tenentes, “we know no conciliar decision concerning you, and we do not consider the transfer of administration and power by personal letter to...

335 Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 145.
correspond to the spirit and letter of the holy canons.” This was a valid point which was later to be made by several catacomb bishops. But Sergius wrote again on January 29, impeaching Gregory and his fellow bishops, banning them from serving and declaring all their ordinations, appointments, awards, etc., since December 22 to be invalid.

It was a moot question whether Sergius had the power to act in this way. On February 26, Archbishop Hilarion of Verey wrote to Sergius from prison: “The temporary ecclesiastical organ must unite, and not divide the episcopate, it is not a judge or punisher of dissidents – that will be the Council.” However, on March 18 Sergius wrote to Metropolitan Peter attempting to justify his “rights” as “first bishop”, able to ban bishops even before the Council. And he gave the similar actions of Patriarch Tikhon and Metropolitan Peter himself as precedents. But here he “forgot”, as he was to “forget” again later, that his own position was much weaker than that of the Patriarch or Metropolitan Peter, each of whom were recognized in their time by the majority of the episcopate as the true head of the Russian Church.

On January 29, three Gregorian bishops wrote to Metropolitan Peter claiming that they had not known, in their December meeting, that he had transferred his rights to Sergius, and asking him to bless their administration. The free access the Gregorians had to Peter during this period, and the fact that Sergius was at first prevented from coming to Moscow, suggests that the GPU, while not opposing Sergius, at first favoured the Gregorians as their best hope for dividing the Church.

On February 1 the Gregorians obtained an interview with Metropolitan Peter in prison, in which they asked him to annul Sergius’ rights as his deputy and, in view of Sergius’ inability to come to Moscow from Nizhny and the refusal of the other deputies, Michael of Kiev and Joseph of Rostov, to accept the deputyship, to hand over the administration of the Church to them. Fearing anarchy in the Church, Metropolitan Peter went part of the way to blessing the Gregorians’ undertaking. However, instead of the Gregorian Synod, he created a temporary “college” to administer the Church’s everyday affairs consisting of Archbishop Gregory, Archbishop Nicholas (Dobronravov) of Vladimir and Archbishop Demetrius (Belikov) of Tomsk, who were well-known for their firmness. The Gregorians and Tuchkov, who was present at the meeting, were silent about the fact that Nicholas was in prison and that Demetrius could not come to Moscow.

Tuchkov proceeded to a further deception: he agreed to summon Demetrius from Tomsk, and even showed Peter the telegram – but never sent

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337 Gubonin, op. cit., p. 429.
338 Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 147.
340 Grabbe, Russkaia Tserkov’ pered litsom gospodstvuushchego zla, pp. 57-58, 61.
it. When Peter, feeling something was wrong, asked for the inclusion of Metropolitan Arsenius (Stadnitsky) in the college of bishops, Tuchkov again agreed and promised to sign Peter’s telegram to him. Again, the telegram was not sent.

It has been argued by Regelson\textsuperscript{341} that Metropolitan Peter’s action in appointing deputies was not canonical, and created misunderstandings that were to be ruthlessly exploited later by Metropolitan Sergius. A chief hierarch does not have the right to transfer the fullness of his power to another hierarch as if it were a personal inheritance: only a Council representing the whole Local Church can elect a leader to replace him. Patriarch Tikhon’s appointment of three locum tenentes was an exceptional measure, but one which was nevertheless entrusted to him by – and therefore could claim the authority of – the Council of 1917-18. However, the Council made no provision for what might happen in the event of the death or removal of these three. In such an event, therefore, patriarchal authority ceased, temporarily, in the Church; and there was no canonical alternative, until the convocation of another Council, but for each bishop to govern his diocese independently while maintaining links with neighbouring dioceses, in accordance with the Patriarch’s \textit{ukaz} no. 362 of November 7/20, 1920.

In defence of Metropolitan Peter it may be said that it is unlikely that he intended to transfer the fullness of his power to Metropolitan Sergius, but only the day-to-day running of the administrative machine. In fact he explicitly said this later, in his letter to Sergius dated January 2, 1930.\textsuperscript{342} Moreover, in his declaration of December 6, 1925, he had given instructions on what should be done in the event of his arrest, saying that “the raising of my name, as patriarchal locum tenens, remains obligatory during Divine services.”\textsuperscript{343} This was something that Patriarch Tikhon had not insisted upon when he transferred the fullness of his power to Metropolitan Agathangelus in 1922. It suggests that Metropolitan Peter did not exclude the possibility that his deputy might attempt to seize power from him just as the renovationists had seized power from the patriarch and his locum tenens in 1922, and was taking precautions against just such a possibility.

The critical distinction here is that whereas the patriarchal \textit{locum tenens} has, \textit{de jure}, all the power of a canonically elected Patriarch and need relinquish his power only to a canonically convoked Council of the whole local Church, the deputy of the \textit{locum tenens} has no such fullness of power and must relinquish such rights as he has at any time that the Council or the \textit{locum tenens} requires it.

\textsuperscript{342} Gubonin, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 677.
\textsuperscript{343} Gubonin, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 422.
Nevertheless, the important question remains: why did Metropolitan Peter not invoke ukaz no. 362 and announce the decentralization of the Church’s administration at the time of his arrest? Probably for two important reasons:

(1) The restoration of the patriarchate was one of the main achievements of the Moscow Council of 1917-18, and had proved enormously popular. Its dissolution might well have dealt a major psychological blow to the masses, who were not always educated enough to understand that the Church could continue to exist either in a centralized (though not papist) form, as it had in the East from 312 to 1917, or in a decentralized form, as in the catacombal period before Constantine the Great and during the iconoclast persecution of the eighth and ninth centuries.

(2) The renovationists – still the major threat to the Church in Metropolitan Peter’s eyes – did not have a patriarch, and their organization was, as we have seen, closer to the synodical, state-dependent structure of the pre-revolutionary Church. The presence or absence of a patriarch or his substitute was therefore a major sign of the difference between the true Church and the false for the uneducated believer.

On February 4, 1926, Metropolitan Peter fell ill and was admitted to the prison hospital. A war for control of the Church now developed between the Gregorians and Sergius. The Gregorians pointed to Sergius’ links with Rasputin and the “Living Church”: “On recognizing the Living Church, Metropolitan Sergius took part in the sessions of the HCA, recognized the lawfulness of married bishops and twice-married priests, and blessed this lawlessness. Besides, Metropolitan Sergius sympathized with the living church council of 1923, did not object against its decisions, and therefore confessed our All-Russian Archpastor and father, his Holiness Patriarch Tikhon, to be an apostate from the true ordinances of Christ and a betrayer of the Church’, depriving him of his patriarchal rank and monastic calling. True, Metropolitan Sergius later repented of these terrible crimes and was forgiven by the Church, but that does not mean that he should stand at the head of the Church’s administration.”

All this was true; but these arguments were not strong enough to maintain the Gregorians’ position, which deteriorated as several bishops declared their support for Sergius. In particular, Archbishop Hilarion of Verey, who had been released from prison for talks with the GPU, refused to recognise the Gregorians – for which he received an extension of his sentence. Another bishop who strongly rejected the Gregorians was Basil of Priluki.

Yaroslavsky, Tuchkov and the OGPU had already succeeded in creating a schism between Metropolitan Sergius and the Gregorians. They now tried to fan the flames of schism still higher by releasing Metropolitan Agathangelus, the second candidate for patriarchal locum tenens, from exile and persuading

344 Grabbe, op. cit., p. 61.
him to take up the locum tenancy, which he did officially from Perm on April 18. They also decided, at a meeting in the Kremlin on April 24, to “strengthen the third Tikhonite hierarchy – the Temporary Higher Ecclesiastical Council headed by Archbishop Gregory, as an independent unit.”

Only two days before this, on April 22, Metropolitan Sergius wrote to Metropolitan Peter at the Moscow GPU, as a result of which Peter withdrew his support from the Gregorians, signing his letter to Sergius: “the penitent Peter”.

It would be interesting to know whether Sergius knew of Metropolitan Agathangelus’ declaration four days earlier when he wrote to Peter. Hieromonk Damascene (Orlovsky) claims that Agathangelus did not tell Sergius until several days later. But the evidence is ambiguous; for Gubonin gives two different dates for the letter from Agathangelus to Sergius telling the latter of his assumption of the rights of the patriarchal locum tenens: April 18 and 25. If the later date is correct, then Sergius cannot be accused of hiding this critical information from Metropolitan Peter. If, however, the earlier date is correct, then Sergius already knew of Agathangelus’ assumption of the rights of locum tenens, and his keeping quiet about this very important fact in his letter to Metropolitan Peter was highly suspicious. For he must have realized that Metropolitan Agathangelus, having returned from exile (he actually arrived in his see of Yaroslavl on April 27), had every right to assume power as the eldest hierarch and the only patriarchal locum tenens named by Patriarch Tikhon who was in freedom at that time. In view of the very ruthless behaviour now displayed by Metropolitan Sergius, it seems likely that he deliberately decided to hide the information about Metropolitan Agathangelus’ return from Metropolitan Peter – and Tuchkov, quickly reassessing the situation, fell in behind Sergius’ ambitions.

With the appearance of Metropolitan Agathangelus the claims of both the Gregorians and Sergius to supreme power collapsed. But Sergius, having tasted of power, was not about to relinquish it, and rejected all attempts by Agathangelus to take over the reins of the Church, even threatening him with a trial. And so just as Metropolitan Agathangelus’ rights as locum tenens were swept aside by the renovationists in 1922, so now the same hierarch was swept aside again by the former renovationist Sergius: on May 24, “for the sake of the peace of the Church”, he surrendered his rights to Sergius.

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345 Savelev, op. cit., p. 200.
347 Gubonin, op. cit., p. 454.
On June 7, 1926 a group of bishops imprisoned on Solovki issued an epistle that squarely faced up to the problems of Church-State relations: “The signatories of the present declaration are fully aware of how difficult the establishment of mutually reliable relations between the Church and the State in the conditions of present-day actuality are, and they do not consider it possible to be silent about it. It would not be right, it would not correspond to the dignity of the Church, and would therefore be pointless and unpersuasive, if they began to assert that between the Orthodox Church and the State power of the Soviet republics there were no discrepancies of any kind. But this discrepancy does not consist in what political suspicion wishes to see or the slander of the enemies of the Church points to. The Church is not concerned with the redistribution of wealth or in its collectivization, since She has always recognized that to be the right of the State, for whose actions She is not responsible. The Church is not concerned, either, with the political organization of power, for She is loyal with regard to the government of all the countries within whose frontiers She has members. She gets on with all forms of State structure from the eastern despotism of old Turkey to the republics of the North-American States. This discrepancy lies in the irreconcilability of the religious teaching of the Church with materialism, the official philosophy of the Communist Party and of the government of the Soviet republics which is led by it.

“The Church recognizes spiritual principles of existence; Communism rejects them. The Church believes in the living God, the Creator of the world, the Leader of Her life and destinies; Communism denies His existence, believing in the spontaneity of the world’s existence and in the absence of rational, ultimate causes of its history. The Church assumes that the purpose of human life is in the heavenly fatherland, even if She lives in conditions of the highest development of material culture and general well-being; Communism refuses to recognize any other purpose of mankind’s existence than terrestrial welfare. The ideological differences between the Church and the State descend from the apex of philosophical observations to the region of immediately practical significance, the sphere of ethics, justice and law, which Communism considers the conditional result of class struggle, assessing phenomena in the moral sphere exclusively in terms of utility. The Church preaches love and mercy; Communism – camaraderie and merciless struggle. The Church instills in believers humility, which elevates the person; Communism debases man by pride. The Church preserves chastity of the body and the sacredness of reproduction; Communism sees nothing else in marital relations than the satisfaction of the instincts. The Church sees in religion a life-bearing force which does not only guarantee for men his eternal, foreordained destiny, but also serves as the source of all the greatness of man’s creativity, as the basis of his earthly happiness, sanity and welfare; Communism sees religion as opium, inebriating the people and relaxing their
energies, as the source of their suffering and poverty. The Church wants to see religion flourish; Communism wants its death. Such a deep contradiction in the very basis of their Weltanschauungen precludes any intrinsic approximation or reconciliation between the Church and the State, as there cannot be any between affirmation and negation, between yes and no, because the very soul of the Church, the condition of Her existence and the sense of Her being, is that which is categorically denied by Communism.

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

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

On June 10, Metropolitan Sergius issued an address to the archpastors, pastor and flock of the Russian Church in the same spirit, noting that there were certain irreconcilable differences between the Church and the State. At the same time, however, he argued for the necessity of the Church being legalized by the State: “The lack of free registration for our church government bodies is creating for the hierarchy many practical inconveniences, imparting to its activities a kind of secret and even conspiratorial character, which, in turn, generates all sorts of misunderstandings and suspicion. And he went on: “On receiving the right to a legal existence, we clearly take account of the fact that, together with rights, obligations are also laid upon us in relation to those authorities that give us these rights. And I have now taken upon myself, in the name of the whole of our Orthodox Old-Church hierarchy and flock, to witness before Soviet power to our sincere readiness to be completely law-abiding citizens of the Soviet Union, loyal to its government and decisively setting ourselves apart from all political parties and undertakings directed to the harm of the Union.

But let us be sincere to the end. We cannot pass over in silence the contradictions which exist between us Orthodox people and the Bolshevik-Communists who govern our Union. They see their task to be the struggle against God and His authority in the hearts of the people, while we see the significance and aim of our entire existence in the confession of faith in God as well as in the widest dissemination and affirmation of that faith in the hearts of the people. They accept only the materialistic conception of history, while we believe in Divine Providence, in miracles, etc. Far from promising reconciliation of that which is irreconcilable and from pretending to adapt our Faith to Communism, we will remain from the religious point of view what we are, that is, Old Churchmen or, as they call us, Tikhonites…”

With regard to the émigré bishops, who were, as we have seen, among the most anti-Soviet of the Russian bishops, Metropolitan Sergius kept to the same position as his predecessors, rejecting the possibility of taking any sanctions against them: “We cannot assume punitive functions and apply ecclesiastical punishments for vengeance… To inflict ecclesiastical punishment upon the émigré clergy for their disloyalty to the Soviet Union would be wholly inappropriate and would give unnecessary occasion for people to speak of the Soviet regime compelling us to do so.” A little later some ROCOR bishops asked Metropolitan Sergius to mediate in the dispute between their Synod and Metropolitan Eulogius of Paris, who refused to recognize the Synod’s authority. In his reply of September 12, 1926, Sergius refused “to be a judge in a case of which I know absolutely nothing... And in general, can the Moscow Patriarchate be the leader of the life of Orthodox émigrés?” No, he replied. And he called on the émigré bishops to create a single “central organ of Church administration which would be sufficiently authoritative to resolve all misunderstandings and differences, and which would have the power to cut off all disobedience, without recourse to our support. For grounds will always be found to suspect the authenticity of our instructions.” And again in its letter of April, 1927, Sergius’ Synod said that to govern the Orthodox dioceses which have arisen abroad “from Moscow is in the ecclesiastical sense impossible due to the lack of legal forms of relations with them”, demonstrating in detail that the Moscow Ecclesiastical Authorities were unable to judge the hierarchs abroad because the canons did not permit an ecclesiastical trial for political crimes, and also because it was impossible formally to organize a correct canonical court.”

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351 Bishop Gregory Grabbe, “Toward a History of the Ecclesiastical Divisions within the Russian Diaspora”, chapter IV, Living Orthodoxy, #83, vol. XIV, № 5, September-October,
This letter is important as it constitutes a de facto recognition of ROCOR by the Moscow Patriarchate. That recognition was withdrawn only when ROCOR refused to accept Sergius’ demand, in 1927, that her hierarchs swear loyalty to the Soviet Union...

At this point, however, Sergius committed a serious blunder. On the initiative of Archbishop Cornelius (Sobolev) and Bishop Paulinus (Kroshechkin), Metropolitan Sergius and other bishops close to him wrote a secret letter to the other bishops concerning the election of a Patriarch by means of a collection of signatures. By November, 1926, seventy-two signatures had been obtained for Metropolitan Cyril of Kazan, the first patriarchal locum tenens mentioned in Patriarch Tikhon’s list. Somehow the GPU learned about this, Bishop Paulinus’ messengers were arrested, and there were immediate massive arrests of the bishops who had signed – including Metropolitans Cyril and Sergius. However, according to the author of an anonymous work, the initiative for the election of Metropolitan Cyril came from Archbishop Hilarion (Troitsky), who was at that time in prison on Solovki. And, according to this version, it was Metropolitan Sergius who informed the authorities.

On December 8 Metropolitan Joseph of Petrograd took over as Peter’s deputy, in accordance with the latter’s will of one year before. But Joseph was prevented from leaving Yaroslavl by the authorities, so he handed the leadership of the Church to his deputies: Archbishop Cornelius (Sobolev), Archbishop Thaddeus (Uspensky) and Archbishop Seraphim (Samoilovich) of Uglich. On December 29, Metropolitan Joseph was arrested, and on the same day Archbishop Seraphim wrote that he was taking upon himself the duties of the deputy of the patriarchal locum tenens.

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

Then, on January 1, 1927, while he was in Perm on his way to exile on the island of Khe in Siberia, Metropolitan Peter confirmed Sergius as his deputy,

1992, p. 27; quoting from S.V. Troitsky, Pravda o Russkoj Tserkvi Na Rodine i Za Rubezhom (The Truth about the Russian Church in the Homeland and in the Diaspora).

352 Tsypin, op. cit., p. 85.
354 Gubonin, op. cit., p. 422. Peter’s choice of deputies was: Sergius of Nizhni-Novgorod, Michael of the Ukraine, and Joseph of Rostov, in that order.
355 If Archbishop Seraphim had not been in freedom, then, according to Metropolitan Joseph’s epistle, the bishops were to govern their dioceses independently (Tsypin, op. cit., p. 86).
356 Regelson, op. cit., p. 408.
being apparently unaware of the recent changes in the leadership of the Church. Though he came to regret this decision, Metropolitan Peter was not able to revoke it officially from his remote exile. And Metropolitan Sergius now acted as if he did not exist...

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

“But he’s in prison,” they said.

“Then free him,” said the archbishop.

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

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

‘‘All the others have appointed deputies…’

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

Another account of this dialogue was given by Archbishop Seraphim’s senior subdeacon, Michael Nikolaevich Yaroslavsky: “For 100 days Vladyka Seraphim happened to rule the whole of the Russian Orthodox Church. This was in 1926. Metropolitan Sergius was in prison, everybody was in prison…

“And so, as he had been put in charge, Vladyka told me that at that time the authorities offered him, as the Primate of the Church, a Synod of bishops. He did not agree and immediately received three years in Solovki camp. He did not betray the Church, but… declared the autocephaly of each diocese, since the Primate of the Church was another candidate for prison... Soon after, Metropolitan Sergius was released. He created the Synod out of all those members which the authorities suggested to Vladyka Seraphim.”

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

The communists also wanted a centralized administration; so Tuchkov now turned to Metropolitan Agathangelus with the proposal that he lead the Church. He refused. Then he turned to Metropolitan Cyril with the same proposal. He, too, refused. The conversation between Tuchkov and Metropolitan Cyril is reported to have gone something like this:-

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

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

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

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

**The Declaration of Metropolitan Sergius**

On March 20, 1927 Metropolitan Sergius was released from prison and was given back the reins of the Church by Archbishop Seraphim. On March 28 Metropolitan Cyril was given another term in exile – and it is clear from the court records that the main reason was his secret election as patriarch, which Metropolitan Sergius had organized. But why, then, was not Metropolitan Sergius not imprisoned, too? Evidently, he had reached an agreement with the authorities, while Metropolitan Cyril had rejected any such agreement...

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360 Regelson, *op. cit.*, p. 413.
361 In later years, after Sergius’ betrayal of the Church, Archbishop Seraphim is reported to have reasserted his rights as patriarchal locum tenens. See Michael Khlebnikov, “O tserkovnoj situatsii v Kostrome v 20-30-e gody” (On the Church Situation in Kostroma in the 20s and 30s), *Pravoslavnaia Zhizn’* (Orthodox Life), 49, No 5 (569), May, 1997, p. 19®.
We have seen Sergius’ leading role in the first Church revolution in 1917 and in the second, renovationist one in 1922, when he officially declared the renovationists’ Higher Church Authority to be “the only canonical, lawful supreme ecclesiastical authority, and we consider all the decrees issuing from it to be completely lawful and binding”\(^{363}\). In 1923 Metropolitan Sergius had supported the renovationists’ defrocking of Patriarch Tikhon as “a traitor to Orthodoxy”. True, on August 27, 1923, he was forced to offer public repentance for his betrayal of Orthodoxy in renovationism. But as Hieromartyr Damascene later pointed out, he had not been in a hurry to offer repentance... Moreover, as the Catholic writer Deinber points out, “the fact of the liberation of Metropolitan Sergius at this moment, when the repressions against the Church throughout Russia were all the time increasing, when his participation in the affair of the election of Metropolitan Cyril (Smirnov), for which a whole series of bishops had paid with exile, was undoubted, immediately aroused anxiety, which was strengthened when, on April 9/22, 1927, Bishop Paulinus [Kroshechkin] was freed, and when, on April 25 / May 8, a Synod was unexpectedly convoked in Moscow. It became certain that between Metropolitan Sergius, during his imprisonment, and the Soviet government, i.e. the GPU, some sort of agreement had been established, which placed both him and the bishops close to him in a quite exceptional position relative to the others. Metropolitan Sergius received the right to live in Moscow, which right he had not enjoyed even before his arrest. When the names of the bishops invited to join the Synod were made known, then there could be no further doubts concerning the capitulation of Metropolitan Sergius before Soviet power. The following joined the Synod: Archbishop Sylvester (Bratanovsky) – a former renovationist; Archbishop Alexis Simansky – a former renovationist, appointed to the Petrograd see by the Living Church after the execution of Metropolitan Benjamin [Kazansky]; Archbishop Philip [Gumilevsky] – a former beglopopovets, i.e. one who had left the Orthodox Church for the sect of the beglopopovtsi; Metropolitan Seraphim [Alexandrov] of Tver, a man whose connections with the OGPU were known to all Russia and whom no-one trusted...”\(^{364}\)

On May 20, the OGPU officially recognized this Synod\(^{365}\), which suggested that Metropolitan Sergius had agreed to the terms of legalization which Patriarch Tikhon and Metropolitan Peter had rejected. One of Sergius’ closest supporters, Bishop Metrophanes of Aksaisk, had once declared that “the legalisation of the church administration is a sign of heterodoxy”... In any case, Metropolitan Sergius and his “Patriarchal Holy Synod” now wrote to the bishops enclosing the OGPU document and telling them that their diocesan councils should now seek registration from the local organs of Soviet

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\(^{363}\) The Living Church, №№ 4-5, 14 July, 1922; Gubonin, op. cit., pp. 218-19.

\(^{364}\) Regelson, op. cit., p. 415; Gubonin, op. cit., p. 407.

\(^{365}\) Monk Benjamin, op. cit., pp. 163-164.
power. Then, in June, Sergius wrote to Metropolitan Eulogius of Paris directing him to sign a declaration of loyalty to the Soviet power. He agreed...

On July 14, in ukaz № 93, Sergius demanded that all clergy abroad should sign a formal pledge to cease criticizing the Soviet government. It also stated that any clergyman abroad who refused to sign such would no longer be considered to be a part of the Moscow Patriarchate. This ukaz, which completely contradicted his previous ukaz of September 12, 1926, which blessed the hierarchs abroad to form their own independent administration, even included the actual text of the pledge that was to be signed: “I, the undersigned, promise that because of my actual dependence upon the Moscow Patriarchate, I will not permit myself in either my social activities nor especially in my Church work, any expression that could in the least way be considered as being disloyal with regard to the Soviet government.”

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

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

On July 5, 1928, the Hierarchical Synod of ROCOR decreed: “The present ukaz [of Sergius] introduces nothing new into the position of the Church Abroad. It repeats the same notorious ukaz of his Holiness Patriarch Tikhon in 1922, which was decisively rejected by the whole Church Abroad in its time.” In response to this refusal, Metropolitan Sergius expelled the ROCOR hierarchs from membership of the Moscow Patriarchate. So the first schism between the Russian Church inside and outside Russia took place as a result of the purely political demands of Sergius’ Moscow Patriarchate.

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367 Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 171.
368 Tsypin, op. cit., p. 383. Monk Benjamin (op. cit., p. 172) writes that on September 13, Metropolitan Eulogius wrote to Sergius asking that he be given autonomy. On September 24 Sergius replied with a refusal.
369 Tsypin, op. cit., p. 384.
The refusal of ROCOR was supported by the Solovki bishops: “The epistle threatens those church-servers who have emigrated with exclusion from the Moscow Patriarchate on the grounds of their political activity, that is, it lays an ecclesiastical punishment upon them for political statements, which contradicts the resolution of the All-Russian Council of 1917-18 of August 3/16, 1918, which made clear the canonical impermissibility of such punishments, and rehabilitated all those people who were deprived of their orders for political crimes in the past.”

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

During a synodal session under the presidency of the new Catholicos, it was decided to introduce the new style into the Georgian Church. However, the reform was rejected by the people and the majority of the priests. So it fell through and was repealed within a few months. All this, according to Boris Sokolov, took place under the influence of the head of the Georgian KGB, Laurence Pavlovich Beria, who wrote in 1929: “By our lengthy labours we succeeded in creating an opposition to Catholicos Ambrose and the then leading group in the Georgian Church, and... in January, 1927 we succeeded in completely wresting the reins of the government of the Georgian Church from the hands of Ambrose, and in removing him and his supporters from a leading role in the Georgian Church. In April, after the death of Catholicos Ambrose, Metropolitan Christopher was elected Catholicos. He is completely loyal to Soviet power, and already the Council that elected Christopher has declared its loyalty to the power and has condemned the politics and activity of Ambrose, and in particular, the Georgian emigration.”

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

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372 Monk Benjamin (Gomarteli), Letopis’ Tserkovnykh Sobytiy (1928-1938) (Chronicle of Church Events (1928-1938), vol. 2, pp. 5-6 ®.
373 Zateishvili, 'Gruzinskaia Tserkov’ i polnota pravoslavia" (The Georgian Church and the Fullness of Orthodoxy), in Bessmertny. and Filatov, op. cit., p. 422 ®.
In October, 1930, the future Archbishop Leontius of Chile noted: “I arrived in Tbilisi in the evening,” he wrote in his Memoirs, and went straight with my letter to the cathedral church of Sion... The clergy of the cathedral were so terrified of the Bolsheviks that they were afraid to give me shelter in their houses and gave me a place to sleep in the cathedral itself.”

As if taking his cue from the Georgians, on July 16/29, Metropolitan Sergius issued the infamous Declaration that has been the basis of the existence of the Sovietized Moscow Patriarchate ever since, and which was to cause the greatest and most destructive schism in the history of the Orthodox Church since the fall of the Papacy in the eleventh century.

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

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

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

Protopriest Lev Lebedev comments on this: “This murder in Warsaw was the murder by B. Koverdaya of the Bolshevik Voikoff (also known as Weiner), who was one of the principal organizers of the murder of the Imperial Family, which fact was well known then, in 1927. So Sergius let the Bolsheviks clearly understand that he and his entourage were at one with them in all their evil deeds up to and including regicide.” 375

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

“We can be hindered only by that which hindered the construction of Church life on the bases of loyalty in the first years of Soviet power. This is an inadequate consciousness of the whole seriousness of what has happened in our country. The establishment of Soviet power has seemed to many like some kind of misunderstanding, something coincidental and therefore not long lasting. People have forgotten that there are no coincidences for the Christian and that in what has happened with us, as in all places and at all times, the same right hand of God is acting, that hand which inexorably leads every nation to the end predetermined for it. To such people who do not want to understand ‘the signs of the times’, it may also seem that it is wrong to break with the former regime and even with the monarchy, without breaking with Orthodoxy… Only ivory-tower dreamers can think that such an enormous society as our Orthodox Church, with the whole of its organisation, can have a peaceful existence in the State while hiding itself from the authorities. Now, when our Patriarchate, fulfilling the will of the reposed Patriarch, has decisively and without turning back stepped on the path of loyalty, the people who think like this have to either break themselves and, leaving their political sympathies at home, offer to the Church only their faith and work with us only in the name of faith, or (if they cannot immediately break themselves) at least not hinder us, and temporarily leave the scene. We are sure that they will again, and very soon, return to work with us, being convinced that only the relationship to the authorities has changed, while faith and Orthodox Christian life remain unshaken…” 376

An article in Izvestia immediately noted the essence of the declaration—return to renovationism: “The far-sighted part of the clergy set out on this path already in 1922.” So “sergianism”, as Sergius’ position came to be known, was “neo-renovationism”, and therefore subject to the same condemnation as the earlier renovationism of “the Living Church”. As recently as November, 2008 the True Orthodox Church of Russia378 has defined sergianism as “a neo-renovationist schism”.

The radical error that lay at the root of this declaration lay in the last sentence quoted, in the idea that, in an antichristian state whose aim was the extirpation of all religion, it was possible to preserve loyalty to the State while “faith and Orthodox Christian life remained unshaken”. This attitude presupposed that it was possible, in the Soviet Union as in Ancient Rome, to draw a clear line between politics and religion. But in practice, even more than in theory, this line proved impossible to draw. For the Bolsheviks, there was no such dividing line; for them, everything was ideological, everything had to be in accordance with their ideology, there could be no room for disagreement, no private spheres into which the state and its ideology did not pry. Unlike most of the Roman emperors, who allowed the Christians to order their own lives in their own way so long as they showed loyalty to the state, the Bolsheviks insisted in imposing their own ways upon the Christians in every sphere: in family life (civil marriage only, divorce on demand, children spying on parents), in education (compulsory Marxism), in economics (dekulakization, collectivization), in military service (the oath of allegiance to Lenin), in science (Darwinism, Lysenkoism), in art (socialist realism), and in religion (the requisitioning of valuables, registration, commemoration of the authorities at the Liturgy, reporting of confessions by the priests). Resistance to any one of these demands was counted as “anti-Soviet behaviour”, i.e. political disloyalty. Therefore it was no use protesting one’s political loyalty to the regime if one refused to accept just one of these demands. According to the Soviet interpretation of the word: "Whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one has become guilty of all of it" (James 2.10), such a person was an enemy of the people. Metropolitan Sergius’ identification of his and his Church’s joys and sorrows with the joys and sorrows of Soviet communism placed the souls of the millions who followed him in the most serious jeopardy.379

Only two months earlier the bishops imprisoned on Solovki had issued a statement affirming the loyalty of the Church to the Soviet State. But, as Danilushkin points out, “the tone of these affirmations were fundamentally different than in the Declaration of Metropolitan Sergius. Recognizing

377 Izvestia, in Zhukov, op. cit., p. 40.
378 At its Council in Odessa under the presidency of Archbishop Tikhon of Omsk and Siberia.
379 St. John Cassian writes: “You should know that in the world to come also you will be judged in the lot of those with whom in this life you have been affected by sharing in their gains or losses, their joys or their sorrows...” (cited by S. Brakus, [ROCElaiity] FW: Communists and Spies in cassocks, January 8, 2007).
necessity – mainly the inevitability of civil submission to the authorities – they decisively protested against the unceremonious interference of the authorities into the inner affairs of the Church, the ban on missionary activity and the religious education of children, firmly expressing their position that in this sphere there could be no compromise on the part of the Church. Although the Declaration of Metropolitan Sergius recognized the religious persecutions in the USSR, it called, not the state, but the believers, to peace. In this consists the fundamental difference between the two documents…

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

Thus Professor William Fletcher comments: “This was a profound and important change in the position of the Russian Orthodox Church, one which evoked a storm of protest.”

According to the Soviet scholar Titov, “after the Patriarchal church changed its relationship to the Soviet State, undertaking a position of loyalty, in the eyes of the believers any substantial difference whatsoever between the Orthodox Church and the renovationists disappeared.”

According to Archimandrite (later Metropolitan) John (Snychev), quoting from a renovationist source, in some dioceses in the Urals up to 90% of parishes sent back Sergius’ declaration as a sign of protest.

Again, Donald Rayfield writes: “In 1927... Metropolitan Sergi formally surrendered the Orthodox Church to the Bolshevik party and state.”

As was said above, the Declaration created the most serious schism in Orthodox Church history since the schism of the Papacy in 1054. If only a few had followed the traitor, the damage would have been limited to the loss of his soul and the souls of his followers. But in fact the majority followed him; which brought down the just retribution of God in the form of the worst persecution of the Church in history…

380 Danilushkin, op. cit., p. 291.
382 Cited in Fletcher, op. cit., p. 59.
383 Regelson, op. cit., p. 434.
385 Sergius Chechuga (“Deklaratsia”, ili Novij Velikij Raskol (The “Declaration”, or a New Great Schism), St. Petersburg, 2006) compares it to the schism of the Old Ritualists in the seventeenth century. There is indeed a resemblance, but the schismatics in the seventeenth century were those who rejected the Orthodox State, whereas the schismatics after 1927 were those who identified their interests with the interests of the theomachist State.
The Birth of the Catacomb Church

The winter of 1927-28 was critical in the history of the Russian revolution. In that winter Stalin came to supreme power in the Soviet Union, having banished his main rival, Trotsky, from the Party. And in that same winter the official Russian Church under Metropolitan Sergius, having disregarded the protests of senior bishops and believers, set about the persecution of all Orthodox Christians who rejected his position, which gave birth to the True Orthodox, or Catacomb Church.

Before this watershed, although the pre-revolutionary State had been destroyed, the economy amputated and enormous damage inflicted on the Church, with huge numbers of churches and monasteries destroyed, 117 bishops in prison or exile\textsuperscript{386}, and hundreds of thousands, if not millions of Christians martyred, the foundations of the building of Holy Rus’ still stood: the mass of the population, most of the peasants and many workers and intelligently, still held to the Orthodox faith and the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, while the structure of daily life in the countryside remained largely unchanged. Moreover, in some vital respects Holy Rus’ was reviving. Thus the spiritual authority of the Church had never been higher, church attendance was up, and church activities of all kinds were on the increase. E. Lopeshanskaia writes: “The Church was becoming a state within the state… The prestige and authority of the imprisoned and persecuted clergy was immeasurably higher than that of the clergy under the tsars.”\textsuperscript{387}

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

Vladimir Rusak writes: “The Church was divided. The majority of clergy and laymen, preserving the purity of ecclesiological consciousness, did not recognize the Declaration… On this soil fresh arrests were made. All those


who did not recognize the Declaration were arrested and exiled to distant regions or confined in prisons and camps. [In 1929] about 15 hierarchs who did not share the position of Metropolitan Sergius were arrested. Metropolitan Cyril, the main ‘opponent’ of Metropolitan Sergius, was exiled to Turukhansk in June-July. The arrest procedure looked something like this: an agent of the GPU appeared before a bishop and put him a direct question: what is your attitude to the Declaration of Metropolitan Sergius? If the bishop replied that he did not recognize it, the agent drew the conclusion: that means that you are a counter-revolutionary. The bishop was arrested.”

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

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

Although over 20 bishops signed this epistle, the majority of them did not consider Sergius’ declaration a reason for immediately breaking communion.

388 Rusak, op. cit., p. 175; Gubonin, op. cit., p. 409.
389 Regelson, op. cit., p. 440.
with him. Metropolitan Cyril of Kazan wrote to an unknown person that the Solovki bishops wanted to wait for the repentance of Sergius “until the convening of a canonical Council… in the assurance that the Council could not fail to demand that of him”. 390

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

On October 25, Bishop Nicholas (Yarushevich) proclaimed in the cathedral of the Resurrection of Christ in Petrograd the decision of the Provisional Synod, taken on September 13, to transfer Metropolitan Joseph (Petrovykh) from Petrograd to Odessa. This caused major disturbances in Petrograd, henceforth one of the major centres of the True Orthodox Church. Joseph himself refused to obey Sergius, regarding his transfer as “anti-canonical, ill-advised and pleasing to an evil intrigue in which I will have no part”. 391 He saw in it the hand of the OGPU. Certainly, the fact that more than 40 bishops were transferred by Sergius in this period was one of the main complaints of the confessing bishops against him.

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

391 Gubonin, op. cit., pp. 516, 524.
spectre of clemency. Let it be as it was before; it will be better like that. Somehow we’ll get to the time when they finally understand that the eternal, universal Truth cannot be conquered by exiles and vain torments... One compromise might be permissible in the given case... Let them (the hierarchs) settle in other places as temporarily governing them, but let them unfailingly retain their former title... I cannot be reconciled in my conscience with any other scheme, I am absolutely unable to recognize as correct my disgustingly tsarist-rasputinite transfer to the Odessa diocese, which took place without any fault on my part or any agreement of mine, and even without my knowledge. And I demand that my case be immediately transferred from the competence of your Synod, in whose competence I am not the only one to doubt, for discussion by a larger Council of bishops, to which alone I consider myself bound to display my unquestioning obedience.”

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

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

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

393 V.V.Antonov, “Otvet na Deklaratsiu” (Reply to the Declaration), Russkij Pastyr’ (Russian Pastor), № 24, 1996, p. 73 ©.
what he was – for it is written, ‘Let his habitation be made desolate, and his bishopric let another take’ (Acts 1.20) – then it were better for us never to have any kind of organization. What is the benefit if we, having become by God’s Grace temples of the Holy Spirit, become ourselves suddenly worthless, while at the same time receiving an organization for ourselves? No. Let the whole visible material world perish; let there be more important in our eyes the certain perdition of the soul to which he who presents such pretexts for sin will be subjected.” And he concluded that Sergius’ pact with the atheists was “not less than any heresy or schism, but is rather incomparably greater, for it plunges a man immediately into the abyss of destruction, according to the unlying word: ‘Whosoever shall deny Me before men…’ (Matthew 10.33).”

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

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

In Petrograd, meanwhile, probably the largest antisergianist group was being organized by Bishop Demetrius of Gdov with the blessing of Metropolitan Joseph of Petrograd. The “Josephites” were later to assume the leadership of the antisergianists in Petrograd, Tver, Moscow, Voronezh and

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still further afield. On December 12, they sent a delegation led by Bishop Demetrius and representing eight Petrograd bishops, clergy and academics to Moscow to meet Sergius. Here the conversation centred, not on Sergius’ canonical transgressions, but on the central issue of his relationship to Soviet power. At one point Sergius said: “By my new church policy I am saving the Church.” To which Archpriest Victorinus Dobronravov replied: “The Church does not have need of salvation; the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. You, yourself, Vladyka, have need of salvation through the Church.”

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

After further delegations and dialogues in this vein, Bishops Demetrius of Gdov and Sergius of Narva separated from Sergius on December 26: “for the sake of the peace of our conscience we reject the person and the works of our former leader [predstoiatelia – Sergius was meant], who has unlawfully and beyond measure exceeded his rights”. This was approved by Metropolitan Joseph (who had been prevented from coming to Petrograd) on January 7.

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

398 Andreyev, op. cit., p. 100.
399 Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 175.
will be not only bishops and not protopriests, but the simplest mortals, just as
at the Cross of Christ His last gasp of suffering was heard by a few simple
souls who were close to Him…”

It remained now to unite these scattered groups under a common
leadership, or, at any rate, under a common confession, through the
convening of a Council of the Catacomb Church… Now we can infer from a
remark of Hieromartyr Maximus, Bishop of Serpukhov, that there was some
Catacomb Council in 1928 that anathematized the Sergianists. Another
source has described a so-called “Nomadic Council” attended at different
times by over 70 bishops in 1928 which likewise anathematized the
Sergianists. But hard evidence for the existence of this council has proved
hard to obtain, and there are reasons for suspecting the authenticity of the
description of its proceedings…

A “Little Council” of Catacomb bishops did take place in Archangelsk in
1935. They met in order to approve an epistle issued in December, 1933 by
Archbishop Seraphim of Uglich placing Metropolitan Sergius under ban for
the anti-church actions he had committed since 1927: “We declare
Metropolitan Sergius, who has violated the purity of the Orthodox faith, who
has distorted the dogma of Salvation and of the Church, and who has caused
a schism and blasphemed against the Church of Christ and Her confessors,
and in scattering the Church has also blasphemed against the Holy Spirit, to
be deprived of communion in prayer with us and with all the Orthodox
bishops of the Russian Church. We commit him to ecclesiastical trial and ban
him from serving. The bishops who think like Metropolitan Sergius are
accepted by us into canonical and prayerful communion in accordance with
the rite of reception from renovationism.” One of those participating in this
Council was Archbishop Theodore of Volokolamsk.

400 Andreyev, op. cit., p. 100.
401 His words, as reported by Protopresbyter Michael Polsky (op. cit., vol. II, p. 30), were: “The
secret, desert, Catacomb Church has anathematized the ‘Sergianists’ and all those with them.”
402 Our information about this Council is based exclusively on Archbishop Ambrose (von
Sievers), “Katakombnaia Tserkov’: Kochuiushchij Sobor 1928 g.” (“The Catacomb Church:
The ‘Nomadic’ Council of 1928”), Russkoe Pravoslavie (Russian Orthodoxy), № 3 (7), 1997 ®,
whose main source is claimed to be the archives of the president of the Council, Bishop Mark
(Novoselov), as researched by the Andrewite Bishop Evagrius. Historians such as Osipova
(“V otvet na statiu ‘Mif ob “Istinnoj Tserkvi”’” (In Reply to the Article, “The Myth of ‘the
True Church’”), Russkoe Pravoslavie (Russian Orthodoxy), № 3 (7), 1997, pp. 18-19) and
Danilushkin (op. cit., p. 534) appear to accept the existence of this Council; but it is difficult to
find anything other than oblique supporting evidence for it, and von Sievers has refused to
allow the present writer to see the archives. A. Smirnov (perhaps von Sivers himself) writes
that the “non-commemorating” branch of the Catacomb Church, whose leading priest was Fr.
Sergius Mechev, had bishops who “united in a constantly active Preconciliar Convention
and who were linked with each other by special people called ‘svyazniki’” (“Ugashchie
nepominaiaushchii v bege vremeni” (The Extinguished Non-Commemorators in the Passing
403 M.V. Shkarovsky, Sud’by iosiflyanskikh pastyrej. Iosiflyanskoye dvizhenie RPTs v sud’bah ego
uchastnikov. Arkhiviynye dokumenty (The Destinies of the Josephite Pastors. The Josephite
Whether or not the Catacomb Church formally anathematized the Sergianists at this time, Metropolitan Sergius considered her graceless. On August 6, 1929 his synod declared: “The sacraments performed in separation from Church unity... by the followers of the former Metropolitan Joseph (Petrovykh) of Leningrad, the former Bishop Demetrius (Lyubimov) of Gdov, the former Bishop Alexis (Buj) of Urazov, as also of those who are under ban, are also invalid, and those who are converted from these schisms, if they have been baptized in schism, are to be received through Holy Chrismation.”

And yet, as the sergianist Bishop Manuel (Lemeshevsky) testified, these “schismatics” were among the finest hierarchs of the Russian Church: “It is the best pastors who have fallen away and cut themselves off, those who by their purity in the struggle with renovationism stood much higher than the others.”

They stood much higher then, and they continued to stand much higher after the Metropolitan Sergius’ declaration. For already in 1928 Metropolitan Sergius’ church was a Sovietized institution. We see this in the official church calendar for 1928, which included among the feasts of the church: the memory of the Leader of the Proletariat Vladimir Ilyich Lenin (on the 32nd Sunday after Pentecost), the Overthrow of the Autocracy (in the Third Week of the Great Fast), the memory of the Paris Commune (the same week), the Day of the Internationale and the Day of the Proletarian Revolution.

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

However, these acts did not cross the line separating compromise from apostasy. That line was passed by Metropolitan Sergius when he recognized the God-accursed power to be God-established, and ordered it to be commemorated while banning the commemoration of the confessing bishops. At this point the spirit of the Council flared up again in all its original strength. For, 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.” Again, as Protopresbyter Michael Polsky wrote: “The Orthodoxy that submits to the Soviets and has become a weapon of the worldwide antichristian deception is not Orthodoxy, but the deceptive heresy of antichristianity clothed in the torn raiment of historical Orthodoxy…”

**ROCOR and Metropolitan Sergius**

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

On September 1, 1927, Archbishop Theophan of Poltava wrote: “It is impossible to recognize the epistle of Metropolitan Sergius as obligatory for ourselves. The just-completed Council of Bishops rejected this epistle. It was necessary to act in this way on the basis of the teaching of the Holy Fathers on what should be recognized as a canonical power to which Christians must submit. St. Isidore of Pelusium, having pointed to the presence of the God-established order of the submission of some to others everywhere in the life of

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408 Russkaia Mysl’ (Orthodox Thought), № 3143, March 17, 1977 ®.
rational and irrational beings, draws the conclusion: 'Therefore we are right to say that the thing in itself, I mean power, that is, authority and royal power, have been established by God. But if a lawless evildoer seizes this power, we do not affirm that he has been sent by God, but we say that he, like Pharaoh, has been permitted to spew out this cunning and thereby inflict extreme punishment on and bring to their senses those for whom cruelty was necessary, just as the King of Babylon brought the Jews to their senses.' (Works, part II, letter 6). Bolshevik power in its essence is an antichristian power and there is no way that it can be recognized as God-established.”410

On May 9, 1928 Metropolitan Sergius threatened to ban the ROCOR hierarchs if they did not dissolve their Administration. On June 20, his Synod issued another ukaz to the Church Abroad declaring that any clergyman who recognized the Moscow Synod but did not accept Soviet citizenship would be removed from his post.411 Nobody obeyed this ukaz...

On August 28, 1928, Metropolitan Anthony issued “the completely definitive declaration of our Synod of Bishops that the Moscow Synod has deprived itself of all authority, since it has entered into agreement with the atheists, and without offering any resistance it has tolerated the closing and destruction of the holy churches, and the other innumerable crimes of the Soviet government... That illegally formed organization which has entered into union with God’s enemies, which Metropolitan Sergius calls an Orthodox Synod – but which the best Russian hierarchs, clergy and laymen have refused to recognize - ... must not be recognized by our Orthodox Churches, nor by our Synod of Bishops with its flock here abroad. Furthermore, the organization of the Moscow Synod must be recognized to be exactly the same sort of apostates from the Faith as the ancient libellatici, that is, Christians who although they refused to blaspheme openly against Christ and offer sacrifices to the idols, nevertheless still received from the priests of the idols false documents verifying that they were in complete accord with the adherents of pagan religion...”412

This statement was widely distributed and praised within Russia. It represented a clear denunciation of the Moscow Patriarchate as outside the Church. However, later statements by ROCOR Synod tended to step back from such clear-cut strictness...

412 Pisma Blagoveshchenskago Metropolita Antonia (Khrapovitskogo) (The Letters of his Beatitude Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky)), op. cit., pp. 105-106. Metropolitan Anthony secretly distributed this encyclical with an appeal to the archpastors to join ROCOR; it was widely read among the Josephites (Shkarovsky, M.B. “Iosiflianskoje dvizhenie i ‘Sviataia Rus” (The Josephite Movement and ‘Holy Russia’), Mera (Measure), 1995, # 3, p. 101 ®).
Early in 1930, just after Sergius had given his interview denying that there had ever been persecutions against the faith in Soviet Russia, the archbishop of Canterbury invited Metropolitan Eulogius of Paris to go to London for one day of prayers for the suffering Church of Russia. “I decided to go,” he wrote. “The whole of England will pray for us, and I will remain in Paris as a witness of the unanimous sympathy of all the Churches for our suffering Church, but not take part? Impossible! My conscience ordered me to take part in these prayers; and my flock undoubtedly felt the same way. I spent about a week in England. It is a long time since I experienced such a radiant feeling of brotherly Christian love between the Churches as I experienced in those unforgettable days, when the whole of ecclesiastical and believing England prayed on her knees for a cessation of the terrible sufferings of our Russian Orthodox Church... I pursued no political aims in England, and nowhere gave political speeches. Everywhere that I had to give speeches I only gave thanks for their sympathy and asked them to support our suffering Mother Church by their prayers. And now these speeches have served as an excuse for a strict inquiry from Metropolitan Sergius in Moscow: on what basis could I allow myself to go round England calling people to protest against the USSR? Then it was demanded that I condemn my journey and give an undertaking not to repeat such speeches... It was bitter for me to read these unjust reproaches, which were dictated by Soviet power, and I replied sharply to Metropolitan Sergius that my prayers in England did not have a political, but only a religious character: it was a protest of the religious and in general the human conscience against the terrible persecutions against the Church in Soviet Russia...”

On June 10, Metropolitan Sergius and his synod retired Metropolitan Eulogius from his post administering the Russian parishes in Western Europe because of his prayers in defence of the Russian Church. On July 10 Eulogius broke communion with the Moscow Patriarchate, and in February was received into the Ecumenical Patriarchate...

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

“What divides you from us is the fact that you, in your desire to guarantee a secure existence for your ecclesiastical centre, have tried to unite light with darkness. You have fallen into the temptation whose essence was revealed in

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the holy Gospel. Once the spirit of evil tried to draw even the Son of God Himself by a picture of external easy success, placing as a condition His worship of him, the son of destruction. You have not followed the example of Christ, the holy martyrs and confessors, who rejected such a compromise, but have bowed down to the age-old enemy of our salvation, when, for the sake of an illusory success, for the sake of the preservation of an external organization, you declared that the joys of the godless authorities are your joys and its enemies your enemies. You even tried to remove the crowns from the recent martyrs and confessors (including yourself, for I know that once you showed firmness and were in prison), affirming that they are suffering imprisonment, exile and torments not for the name of Christ, but as counter-revolutionaries. In this way you blasphemed against them. You denigrated their exploit, and dampened the enthusiasm of those who could have been numbered to the ranks of the martyrs for the faith. You excommunicated them from the flower and adornment of the Russian church. In this neither I nor my brothers abroad will ever follow you... We have no intercourse with the Orthodox archpastors, pastors and laymen who are imprisoned in Russia, except that we pray for them and know that they suffer only for the faith, though the persecutors charge them with State crimes which are alien to them, as the enemies of the Christians loved to do in ancient times... For you the way of the cross is now madness like it was to the Greeks contemporary with the Apostles (1 Corinthians 1.23). I implore you, as a pupil and friend, free yourself from this temptation, renounce publicly every lie which Tuchkov and other enemies of the Church have put into your mouth, do not yield in the face of probably tortures. If you are counted worthy of a martyr’s crown, the earthly and heavenly Churches will combine in glorification of your courage and of the Lord Who strengthened you; but if you stay on this wide path leading you to perdition (Matthew 7.13), on which you stand now, you will be ignominiously led to the pit of hell and until the end of its earthly existence the Church will not forget your betrayal. I always think of this when I look at the panagia of the Vladimir Mother of God with the engraved inscription which you presented to me twenty years ago: ‘To a dear teacher and friend.’ Your further words in this inscription are: ‘give us some of your oil, for our lamps are fading.’ Here we offer you the salutary oil of faith and loyalty in the Holy Church. Do not refuse it, but reunite with it as in 1922 when you solemnly declared to Patriarch Tikhon your repentance for your former wavering loyalty. Do not refuse the friendly appeal of one who tenderly loved you and continues to love you. Metropolitan Anthony.”

On July 8, 1933 ROCOR’s Hierarchical Council issued an encyclical with regard to Sergius’ epistle of March 23: “His appeal in its essence remains the same as it was in 1927 and can be formulated in the words: he who is with

415 Tserkovnaia Zhizn’ (Church Life), № 8, 1933; in Orthodox Life, vol. 27 (2), March-April, 1977; Archbishop Nicon, Zhizneopisanie Blazhennishago Antonia, Mitropolita Kievsago i Galitskago (Biography of His Beatitude Anthony, Metropolitan of Kiev and Galich), New York, 1960, vol. 6, pp. 263-269; Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 2, pp. 24-27 ©.
Soviet power is with the Russian Church; he who is against the former cannot be with the latter. In this way the link with the Mother Church can be realized for us only by accepting the God-fighting authorities that now rule in Russia. Before stretching out the hand of communion with Metropolitan Sergius, we must stretch it out first to the Bolsheviks and receive from them attestation of our political reliability, without which the deputy of the locum tenens cannot re-establish fraternal and canonical union with us…”

Again, in his 1934 Paschal encyclical Metropolitan Anthony wrote: “The present age is rich not in ascetical feats of piety and confession of faith, but in cheating, lies, and deceits. It is noteworthy that several hierarchs and their flocks, for the most part Russians, have already fallen away from Ecumenical unity, and to the question: ‘What do you believe?’, reply with references to self-proclaimed heads of all sorts of schisms in Moscow, America, and Western Europe. It is clear that, without admitting it, they have ceased to believe in the unity of the Church throughout the world. They try to bear calmly the refusal of the true Church to have relations with them, and imagine that one can save one’s soul even without communion with Her... Unfortunately, some Orthodox laymen, even, alas, many priests (and hierarchs) have subjected themselves to this state of gracelessness, although still retaining the outward appearance of the church services and the apparent performance of the Mysteries…”

The issue dividing ROCOR and Metropolitan Sergius is often described by the supporters of Sergius as “political”. And yet in the Soviet Union of the 1930s it was impossible to dissociate religion and politics. Bolshevism was not just a political system, but an all-embracing totalitarian religion, to which every citizen had to swear allegiance on peril of his life – and in opposition to which, therefore, every True Orthodox Christian had to give his life....

Moreover, as the Catacomb Church confessor and later professor at the Jordanville seminary, Professor Ivan Andreyev, pointed out: “To dissociate oneself in principle from any politics is impossible for an Orthodox person, for religion and politics are at the present time organically blended. The question: to be with Christ or against Him, has a political meaning today, because it commits one to protesting against those political systems which have as their main goal the destruction of Christianity. Whoever at the present time denies the necessity of political discussions (reasoning) and jurisdictional explanations (interpretations) denies the necessity of distinguishing the wolves in sheep’s clothing and finding out where Christ is and where the Antichrist.”

416 Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 2, p. 27.
Stalin’s War on Russia: (1) The Church

Vladimir Rusak writes: “1928, the beginning of collectivisation. Stalin could no longer ‘leave the Church in the countryside’. In one interview he gave at that time he directly complained against ‘the reactionary clergy’ who were poisoning the souls of the masses. ‘The only thing I can complain about is that the clergy was not liquidated root and branch,’ he said. At the 15th Congress of the party he demanded that all weariness in the anti-religious struggle be overcome.” 418 Also in 1928, economic cooperatives and all philanthropic organizations were banned.419

Then, “on 8 April 1929,” as W. Husband writes, “the VtsIK and Sovnarkom declaration ‘On Religious Associations’ largely superseded the 1918 separation of church and state and redefined freedom of conscience. Though reiterating central aspects of the 1918 separation decree, the new law introduced important limitations. Religious associations of twenty or more adults were allowed, but only if registered and approved in advance by government authorities. They retained their previous right to the free use of buildings for worship but still could not exist as a judicial person. Most important, the new regulations rescinded the previously guaranteed [!] right to conduct religious propaganda, and it reaffirmed the ban on religious instructions in state educational institutions. In effect, proselytising and instruction outside the home were illegal except in officially sanctioned classes, and religious rights of assembly and property were now more circumscribed.”420

“Henceforth,” writes Nicholas Werth, “any activity ‘going beyond the limits of the simple satisfaction of religious aspirations’ fell under the law. Notably, section 10 of the much-feared Article 58 of the penal code stipulated that ‘any use of the religious prejudices of the masses… for destabilizing the state’ was punishable ‘by anything from a minimum three-year sentence up to and including the death penalty’. On 26 August 1929 the government instituted the new five-day work week – five days of work, and one day of rest – which made it impossible to observe Sunday as a day of rest. This measure deliberately introduced ‘to facilitate the struggle to eliminate religion’.

“These decrees were no more than a prelude to a second, much larger phase of the antireligious campaign. In October 1929 the seizure of all church bells was ordered because ‘the sound of bells disturbs the right to peace of the vast majority of atheists in the towns and the countryside’. Anyone closely

419 M.I. Odintsev, “Put’ dlinoiu v sem’ deciatiletij; ot konfrontatsii k sotrudnichestvu” (A Path Seven Decades Long: from Confrontation to Cooperation), in Na puti k svobode sovesti (n the Path to Freedom of Conscience), op. cit., p. 41.
associated with the church was treated like a kulak and forced to pay special taxes. The taxes paid by religious leaders increased tenfold from 1928 to 1930, and the leaders were stripped of their civil rights, which meant that they lost their ration cards and their right to medical care. Many were arrested, exiled, or deported. According to the incomplete records, more than 13,000 priests were ‘dekulakised’ in 1930. In many villages and towns, collectivisation began symbolically with the closure of the church, and dekulakization began with the removal of the local religious leaders. Significantly, nearly 14 percent of riots and peasant uprisings in 1930 were sparked by the closure of a church or the removal of its bells. The antireligious campaign reached its height in the winter of 1929-30; by 1 March 1930, 6,715 churches had been closed or destroyed. In the aftermath of Stalin’s famous article ‘Dizzy with Success’ on 2 March 1930, a resolution from the Central Committee cynically condemned ‘inadmissible deviations in the struggle against religious prejudices, particularly the administrative closure of churches without the consent of the local inhabitants’. This formal condemnation had no effect on the fate of the people deported on religious grounds.

“Over the next few years these great offensives against the church were replaced by daily administrative harassment of priests and religious organizations. Freely interpreting the sixty-eight articles of the government decree of 8 April 1929, and going considerably beyond their mandate when it came to the closure of churches, local authorities continued their guerrilla war with a series of justifications: ‘unsanitary condition or extreme age’ of the buildings in question, ‘unpaid insurance’, and non-payment of taxes or other of the innumerable contributions imposed on the members of religious communities. Stripped of their civil rights and their right to teach, and without the possibility of taking up other paid employment – a status that left them arbitrarily classified as ‘parasitic elements living on unearned wages’ – a number of priests had no option but to become peripatetic and to lead a secret life on the edges of society.”

In 1929, the Bolsheviks began to imprison the True Orthodox on the basis of membership of a “church monarchist organization” called “True Orthodoxy”. Osipova notes that the numbers of True Orthodox Christians arrested between 1929 and 1933 exceeded by seven times the numbers of clergy repressed from 1924 to 1928. The main case against the True Orthodox was called the case of “The All-Union Counter-Revolutionary Church Monarchist Organization, ‘the True Orthodox Church’”. In 1929 5000

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422 I.I. Osipova, “Istoria Istinnogo Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi po Materialam Sledstvennogo Dela” (The History of the True Orthodox Church according to Materials from the Interrogation Process), Pravoslavnaja Rus’ (Orthodox Russia), № 14 (1587), July 15/28, 1997, p. 2 ®. According to Slovar’ Ateista (The Dictionary of the Atheist) (Moscow, 1964), “613 priests and monks” entered the True Orthodox Church.
clergy were repressed, three times more than in 1928; in 1930 – 13,000; in 1931-32 – 19,000.\(^\text{423}\) It is hardly a coincidence that this took place against the background of the collectivisation of agriculture and a general attack on religion\(^\text{424}\) spearheaded by Yaroslavsky’s League of Militant Godless, who numbered 17 million by 1933.

This persecution began to arouse criticism in the West – specifically, from Pope Pius XI and the Archbishop of Canterbury. On February 14, 1930 the Politburo decided “to entrust to Comrades Yaroslavsky, Stalin and Molotov the decision of the question of an interview” to counter-act these criticisms. The result was two interviews, the first to Soviet correspondents on February 15 and published on February 16 in Izvestia and Pravda in the name of Sergius and those members of his Synod who were still in freedom, and a second to foreign correspondents three days later. In the first interview, which is now thought to have been composed entirely by the Bolsheviks with the active participation of Stalin, but whose authenticity was never denied by Sergius\(^\text{425}\), it was asserted that “in the Soviet Union there was not and is not now any religious persecution”, that “churches are closed not on the orders of the authorities, but at the wish of the population, and in many cases even at the request of the believers”, that “the priests themselves are to blame, because they do not use the opportunities presented to them by the freedom to preach” and that “the Church herself does not want to have any theological-educational institutions”\(^\text{426}\).

Commenting on the interview, Archbishop Andrew of Ufa wrote: “Such is the opinion of the false-head of the false-patriarchal church of Metropolitan Sergius... But who is going to recognize this head after all this? For whom does this lying head remain a head, in spite of his betrayal of Christ?... All the followers of the lying Metropolitan Sergius... have fallen away from the Church of Christ. The Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church is somewhere else, not near Metropolitan Sergius and not near ‘his Synod’.”\(^\text{427}\)

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\(^\text{424}\) Although the Protestants had welcomed the revolution and thus escaped the earlier persecutions, they were now subjected to the same torments as the Orthodox (Pospielovsky, “Podvig very”, op. cit., pp. 233-34). Religious Jews also began to be persecuted.


\(^\text{427}\) Zelenogorsky, M. Zhizn’ i deiatel’nost’ Arkhipiskopa Andrea (Kniazia Ukhontskogo) (The Life and Activity of Archbishop Andrew (Prince Ukhontsky), Moscow, 1991, p. 216 ®. According to Archbishop Bartholomew (Remov), who never joined the Catacomb Church, the whole
Out of the approximately 150 Russian bishops in 1927, 80 declared themselves definitely against the declaration, 17 separated from Sergius but did not make their position clear, and 9 at first separated but later changed their mind. So a large part of the Russian episcopate went underground. Wandering bishops and priests served the faithful in secret locations around the country. Particular areas buzzed with underground activity. Thus Professor Ivan Andreyevsky testified that during the war he personally knew some 200 places of worship of the Catacomb Church in the Leningrad area alone. Popovskiy writes that the Catacomb Church “arose in our midst at the end of the 20s. First one, then another priest disappeared from his parish, settled in a secret place and began the dangerous life of exiles. In decrepit little houses on the outskirts of towns chapels appeared. There they served the Liturgy, heard confessions, gave communion, baptized, married and even ordained new priests. Believers from distant towns and regions poured there in secret, passing on to each other the agreed knock on the door…”

Stalin’s War on Russia: (2) Collectivization

In December, 1929 Stalin began his assault on the peasantry known as collectivization. This was a repeat performance of Lenin’s assault on the peasantry in 1918-21, but still more terrible and systematic. And, as in Lenin’s time, it was “as much an attack on their traditional religion as on their individual holdings”.

It began with a grain crisis in 1927-28. This threatened Stalin’s industrial plans. It also showed that the private producers of grain, the peasants, still held power. But the peasants were not going to sell their grain on the open market when the Five-Year-Plan for industry offered them so few goods to buy in exchange. Stalin announced that he would not allow industry to become “dependent on the caprice of the kulaks”, the richer peasantry...

activity of Metropolitan Sergius was carried out in accordance with the instructions of the Bolsheviks (Za Khrista Postradavshie (Suffered for Christ), Moscow: St. Tikhon’s Theological Institute, 1997, p. 220®).

428 Pravoslavnaia Rus’ (Orthodox Russia), № 14 (1587), July 15/28, 1997, p. 7®. These figures probably do not take into account all the secret bishops consecrated by the Ufa Autocephaly. In 1930 Sergius claimed he had 70% of the Orthodox bishops (not including the renovationists and Gregorians), which implies that about 30% of the Russian episcopate joined the Catacomb Church (Pospielovsky, "Mitropolit Sergii i raskoly sprava", op. cit., p. 70). According to the Catholic Bishop Michel D’Erbigny, once the Vatican’s representative in Russia, three quarters of the episcopate separated from him, but this is probably an exaggeration. (D’Erighbiny and Alexandre Deubner, Evêques Russes en Exil – Douze ans d’Epreuves 1918-1930 (Russian Bishops in Exile – Twelve Years of Trials, 1918-1930), Orientalia Christiana, vol. XXI, № 67 (F))

429 Grabbe, op. cit., p. 79.

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

“The eradication of the peasant family farm was the starting-point of this ‘revolution from above’. The Bolsheviks had a fundamental mistrust of the peasantry. In 1917, without influence in the countryside, they had been forced to tolerate the peasant revolution on the land, which they had exploited to undermine the old regime; but they had always made it clear that their long-term goal was to sweep away the peasant smallholding system, replacing it with large-scale mechanized collective farms in which the peasants would be transformed into a ‘rural proletariat’. Marxist ideology had taught the Bolsheviks to regard the peasantry as a ‘petty-bourgeois’ relic of the old society that was ultimately incompatible with the development of a Communist society. It was too closely tied to the patriarchal customs and traditions of Old Russia, too imbued in the principles and habits of free trade and private property and too given over to the ‘egotism’ of the family ever to be fully socialized.

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

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

“This enthusiasm for collective farms was relatively new. Previously, the Party had not placed much emphasis on collectivization. Under the NEP, the organization of collective farms was encouraged by the state through financial and agronomic aid, yet in Party circles it was generally agreed that collectivization was to be a gradual and voluntary process. During the NEP the peasants showed no sign of coming round to the collective principle, and the growth of the kolkhoz sector was pretty insignificant. After 1927, when the state exerted greater pressure through taxation policies – giving credits to collective farms and imposing heavy fees on ‘kulak’ farms – the kolkhoz sector grew more rapidly. But it was not the large kommuny (where all the land and property was pooled) but the smaller, more informal and ‘peasant-like’ associations called TOZy (where the land was farmed in common but the livestock and the tools were retained by the peasants as their private property) that attracted the most peasant interest. The Five Year Plan gave little indication that the Party was about to change its policies; it projected a moderate increase in the land sown by collective farms, and made no mention of departing from the voluntary principle.

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

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

“From the summer of 1929, thousands of Party activists were sent into the countryside to agitate for the collective farms... Most of the peasants were afraid to give up a centuries-old way of life to make a leap of faith into the unknown. There were precious few examples of good collective farms to persuade the peasantry. A German agricultural specialist working in Siberia in 1929 described the collective farms as ‘candidates for death’. Very few had tractors or modern implements. They were badly run by people who knew little about agriculture and made ‘crude mistakes’, which ‘discredited the whole process of collectivization’. According to OGPU, the perception of the peasants was that they would ‘lose everything’ – their land and cows, their horses and their tools, their homes and family – if they entered a kolkhoz. As one old peasant said: ‘Lecturer after lecturer is coming and telling us that we ought to forget possessions and have everything in common. Why then is the desire for it in our blood?’

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

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

“Peasants who spoke out against collectivization were beaten, tortured, threatened and harassed, until they agreed to join the collective farm. Many were expelled as ‘kulaks’ from their homes and driven out of the village. The herding of the peasants into the collective farms was accompanied by a violent assault against the Church, the focal point of the old way of life in the village, which was regarded by the Bolsheviks as a source of potential opposition to collectivization. Thousands of priests were arrested and churches were looted and destroyed, forcing millions of believers to maintain their faith in the secrecy of their own homes.”

These priests were mainly True Orthodox priests. For opposition to the betrayal of the Church by Metropolitan Sergius went hand in hand with opposition to collectivization. The war of the True Orthodox against collectivization was especially fierce in the Central Black Earth region, where resistance to collectivization and resistance to the Sovietized Moscow Patriarchate crystallized into a single powerful movement under the leadership of Bishop Alexis (Buy) of Voronezh.

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431 Figes, The Whisperers, pp. 81-86.
Meetings of the “Buyevtsy”, as Bishop Alexis’ followers were called, took place in the Alexeyev monastery in Voronezh. During one of these, in December, 1929, Archimandrite Tikhon said that collectivization was a way of removing the peasants from their churches, which were then closed. (This is what in fact happened.) Igumen Joseph (Yatsk) is reported to have said: "Now the times of the Antichrist have arrived, so everything that Soviet power tried to impose upon the peasantry: collective farms, cooperatives, etc., should be rejected."

At the beginning of 1930 the Voronezh peasantry rebelled against forcible collectivization in several places. Thus in Ostrog district alone between January 4 and February 5 there were demonstrations in twenty villages: Nizhny Ikorets, Peskovatka, Kopanishche, Podserednoye, Platava, Kazatskoye, Uryv, Dyevitsa, Godlayevka, Troitskoye, Drakonovo, Mashkino, Badyeyevo, Selyavnovo and others. At the same time there were demonstrations in the neighbouring areas of Usman district, from where they moved to the Kozlov, Yelets, Belgorod and other districts, encompassing more than forty districts in all. The OGPU considered that these demonstrations took place under the influence of the "Buyevtsy".

On January 21-22, in Nizhny Ikorets, some hundreds of peasants, mainly women, destroyed the village soviet, tore down the red flag, tore up the portraits of the "leaders" and walked down the streets with a black flag, shouting: "Down with the collective farms! Down with the antichrist communists!" An active participant in this event was Nun Macrina (Maslovskaya), who said at her interrogation: "I preached Christ everywhere... [I urged] the citizens to struggle with the apostates from God, who are emissaries of the Antichrist, and [I urged] the peasants not to go into the collective farms because by going into the collectives they were giving their souls to the Antichrist, who would appear soon... In the village of Nizhny-Ikorets the believers do not go and will not go into the collective farm... In 1929 I went round many places and everywhere I preached against the communists..."

In February-March, 1930, the OGPU investigated 492 people in connection with these disturbances. The anti-Soviet organization called "The Flock" which they uncovered was supposedly made up of 22 leaders and 470 followers, including 4 officers, 8 noblemen, 33 traders, 8 policemen, 13 members of the "Union of the Russian people", 81 priests, 75 monastics, 210 kulaks, 24 middle peasants, and 2 beggars. 134 people were arrested, of whom some were freed, some had their cases referred to higher authorities and some died during the investigation because of the violent methods used to extort confessions. There were several more trials of “Buyevites” in the 1930s.
The human cost of collectivization has been well described by Piers Brendon: “Stalin declared war on his own people – a class war to end class. In the first two months of 1930 perhaps a million kulaks, weakened by previous victimisation, were stripped of their possessions and uprooted from their farmsteads. They were among the earliest of ‘over five million’ souls deported during the next three years, most of whom perished. Brigades of workers conscripted from the towns, backed by contingents of the Red Army, and the OGPU (which had replaced the Cheka), swept through the countryside ‘like raging beasts’. They rounded up the best farmers [as Zinoviev said, ‘We are fond of describing any peasant who has enough to eat as a kulak’] and their families, banished them to the barren outskirts of their villages or drove them into the northern wastes. Often they shot the heads of households, cramming their dependents into ‘death trains’ – a prolonged process owing to a shortage of the blood-coloured cattle trucks known as ‘red cows’. While they waited, women and children expired of cold, hunger and disease. Muscovites, at first shocked by glimpses of the terror being inflicted on the countryside, became inured to the sight of peasants being herded from one station to another at gunpoint. A witness wrote: ‘Trainloads of deported peasants left for the icy North, the forests, the steppes, the deserts. There were whole populations, denuded of everything; the old folk starved to death in mid-journey, new-born babies were buried on the banks of the roadside, and each wilderness had its crop of little crosses of boughs or white wood.’ The survivors of these ghastly odysseys were concentrated in primitive camps which they often had to scratch with their bare hands from taiga or tundra. They were then sent to work at digging canals, lumbering and other projects, Stalin having recently been dazzled by the prospect of ‘constructing socialism through the use of prison labour’.

“Whatever Stalin may have envisaged, the assault on the kulaks was less like a considered piece of social engineering than ‘a nation-wide pogrom’. Often the urban cadres simply pillaged for private gain, eating the kulaks’ food and drinking their vodka on the spot, donning their felt boots and clothes, right down to their woollen underwear. Moreover the spoliation was marked by caprice and chaos since it was virtually impossible to decide which peasants were kulaks. Peasants of all sorts (including women) resisted, fighting back with anything from sporadic terror to full-scale revolt. There were major uprisings in Moldavia, the Ukraine, the Caucasus, Crimea, Azerbaijan, Soviet Central Asia and elsewhere. To quell them Stalin employed tanks and even military aircraft, unusual adjuncts to agrarian reform (though Lenin had also used poison gas). Some units refused to kill their countrymen and these he punished. Where troops did not mutiny their morale was shattered. ‘I am an old Bolshevik,’ sobbed one OGPU colonel to a foreign writer. ‘I worked in the underground against the Tsar and then I fought in the civil war. Did I do all that in order that I should now surround villages with machine-guns and order my men to fire indiscriminately into crowds of peasants? Oh, no, no!’
“Some kulaks fled from the holocaust, seeking refuge in the towns or the woods and selling as many of their possessions as they could. Braving the machine-guns of the blue-capped border guards, others crossed into Poland, Romania, China or Alaska, taking portable property with them, occasionally even driving their flocks and herds. Some tried to bribe their persecutors. Some committed suicide. Some appealed for mercy, of all Communist commodities the one in shortest supply. Like the troops, some Party members were indeed horrified at the vicious acts which they were called upon to perform. One exclaimed, ‘We are no longer people, we are animals.’ Many were brutes, official gangsters who revelled in licensed thuggery… Still others were idealists of a different stamp, convinced that they were doing their ‘revolutionary duty’. They had no time for what Trotsky had once called the ‘papist-Quaker babble about the sanctity of human life’. According to Marx’s iron laws of history, they shed the blood of the kulaks to achieve the dictatorship of the proletariat. Without this sacrifice the Soviet Union could not modernise and socialism could not survive. As one apparatchik expressed it: ‘When you are attacking there is no place for mercy; don’t think of the kulak’s hunger children; in the class struggle philanthropy is evil.’ This view, incidentally, was often shared by Western fellow-travellers. Upton Sinclair and A.J.P. Taylor both argued that to preserve the Workers’ State the kulaks ‘had to be destroyed’.

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

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

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

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

211
“Destroying the nation’s best farmers, disrupting the agricultural system and extracting grain from a famished countryside in return for Western technology – all this had a fatal impact on the Soviet standard of living. By 1930 bread and other foodstuffs were rationed, as were staple goods such as soap. But even rations were hard to get: sugar, for example, had ‘ceased to exist as a commodity’. The cooperative shops were generally empty, though gathering dust on their shelves were items that no one wanted, among them French horns and hockey sticks. There were also ‘tantalisingly realistic and mouth-watering’ wooden cheeses, dummy hams, enamelled cakes and other fake promises of future abundance. On the black market bread cost 43 roubles a kilo, while the average collective farmer earned 3 roubles a day. Some Muscovite workers shortened the slogan ‘pobeda’ (victory) to ‘obed’ (food), or even to ‘beda’ (misfortune).’…”

Stalin’s War on Russia: (3) Industrialization and Famine

With the True Church driven underground, and the peasantry destroyed, Stalin proceeded to industrialize the country at breakneck speed, herding millions of dispossessed peasants into the building of huge enterprises for which there existed as yet not even the most basic workers’ living conditions. “Egalitarian ideals were scrapped,” writes Brendon, “to increase productivity. For example, skilled workers received extra incentives in the shape of higher pay, better food and improved accommodation – at the massive steel plant of Magnitogorsk in the Urals there was a whole hierarchy of canteens. But Stalin favoured the stick rather than the carrot and those infringing industrial discipline were harshly punished. Men were tied to their machines like helots. Those arriving late could be imprisoned. Dismissal might mean starvation – the loss of a work card resulted in the denial of a food card. Diligence was kept at fever pitch by the arrest and execution of large numbers of economic ‘wreckers’, plus well-publicised show trials of ‘spies’ and ‘saboteurs’. Morbidly suspicious, Stalin seems to have persuaded himself of their guilt; but even if they were innocent their punishment would encourage the others. His solution to the shortage of small coins, hoarded for their tiny silver content because the government had printed so much paper money to pay for its own incompetence, was to shoot ‘wreckers’ in the banking system, ‘including several dozen common cashiers’.

“In 1931 Stalin also tried to squeeze the last valuables, particularly gold, from Russian citizens in order to purchase more foreign equipment. Among the methods of torture used were the ‘conveyor’, whereby relays of interrogators deprived prisoners of sleep; the sweat- and ice-rooms, to which victims were confined in conditions of intolerable heat and cold; the tormenting of children in front of their parents. Alternatively the OGPU might just beat their prey to death with a felt boot full of bricks. These bestial

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practices were theoretically illegal but their employment was an open secret. When a defendant at one show trial protested over-indignantly that he had suffered no maltreatment in the Lubyanka it was too much even for a court which had solemnly swallowed stories of a conspiracy masterminded by the likes of President Poincaré and Lawrence of Arabia: everyone simply roaring with laughter. The Lubyanka, the tall grey OGPU headquarters (formerly the office of the Rossiya Insurance Company) in Dzerzhinsky Square, was a place ‘fraught with horror’. Appropriately it was embellished with a sculpture representing the Greek Fates cutting short the threads of human life. Stalin saw himself as the atavar of destiny, the embodiment of the will of history, the personification of progress…

“The achievements of Stalin’s revolution were almost as staggering as the costs, even when propagandist fictions are discounted. Although its targets kept growing in the making, the first Five Year Plan was anything but ‘Utopian’. Initiated in 1928, its purpose was to transform the Russian economy at unprecedented speed. As the British Ambassador reported, it was ‘one of the most important and far reaching [experiments] that has ever been undertaken.’ Between 1928 and 1932 investment in industry increased from two billion to nine billion roubles and the labour force doubled to six million workers. Productivity too nearly doubled and huge new enterprises were established – factories making machine tools, automobiles, chemicals, turbines, synthetic rubber and so on. The number of tractors produced rose from just over 3,000 to almost 50,000. Special emphasis was placed on armaments and factories were established out of the reach of invaders – by 1936 a plant at Sverdlovsk in the Urals was actually turning out submarines, which were transported in sections to the Pacific, the Baltic and the Black Sea. In just four years, by a mixture of heroic effort, ‘economic patriotism’ and implacable coercion, the foundations of Soviet industrial greatness were laid. Cities had grown by 44 per cent. Literacy was advancing dramatically. By the mid-1930s Russia was spending nearly twice as much as the United States on research and development; by the end of the decade its output was rivalling that of Germany.

“In this initial stage, of course, progress was patchy and the quality of manufactured goods was poor. There were many reasons for this, such as the unremitting pressure to increase quantity and the fact that (as Sukhanov had said) ‘one only had to scratch a worker to find a peasant’. The novelist Ilya Ehrenburg described new factory hands as looking ‘mistrustfully at the machines; when a lever would not work they grew angry and treated it like a baulking horse, often damaging the machine’. After visiting Russia David Low drew a cartoon on a dairymaid-turned-engineer absent-mindedly trying to milk a steam-hammer. Managers were little help. They were terrorised from above: an American specialist sharing a hotel bedroom with his mill boss was woken by ‘the most ghastly sounds imaginable’ as the man ground his teeth in his sleep, tormented by stark, primitive ‘fears that none but his
subconscious mind could know’. Managers in their turn were encouraged to behave like ‘little Stalins’: as the Moscow Party chief Lazar Kaganovich said, ‘The earth should tremble when the director is entering the factory.’

“The atmosphere of intimidation was hardly conducive to enterprise even if management had been competent, which it generally was not. At the Gorky automobile plant, which had been designed by engineers from Detroit, several different types of vehicle were made simultaneously on one assembly line, thus making nonsense of Ford’s plan to standardise parts and performance. In the Urals asbestos ore was mined underground when it could have been dug from the surface by mechanical shovel far more safely and at a tenth of the cost. Everywhere so many older managers were purged that inexperienced young men had to be promoted – one found himself head of the State Institute of Metal Work Projects two days after he had graduated from Moscow’s Mining Academy. Vigour could compensate for callowness. Foreign experts, often Communists and others fleeing from unemployment in the West, were impressed by the frenetic enthusiasm and hysterical tempo with which their Russian colleagues tried to complete the Five Year plan in four years, a task expressed in Stalinist arithmetic as 2+2=5. They were even more impressed by the suffering involved. In the words of an American technician who worked at Magnitogorsk: ‘I would wager that Russia’s battle of ferrous metallurgy alone involved more casualties than the battle of the Marne.’

“Magnitogorsk, situated on the mineral-rich boundary between Europe and Asia, was a monument to Stalin’s gigantomania. Built to American designs, it was to be a showpiece of ‘socialist construction’ and the largest steelworks in the world. It was also the most important project in the Five Year Plan. So between 1928 and 1932 250,000 people were drawn willy-nilly to the remote ‘magnetic heart’ of the new complex. There were horny-handed peasants from the Ukraine, sparsely-bearded nomads from Mongolia, sheepskin-clad Tartars who had never before seen a locomotive, an electric light, even a staircase. There were Jews, Finns, Georgians and Russians, some of them products of three-month crash-courses in engineering and disparaged by the American and German experts as ‘90-day wonders’. There were 50,000 prisoners under OGPU supervision, including scientists, kulaks, criminals, prostitutes and child slave-labourers swept up from the gutters of Moscow. There was even a brigade of long-haired, bushy-bearded bishops and priests wearing ragged black robes and mitre-like hats.

“To accommodate this labour force a rash of tents, earthen huts and wooden barracks sprang up on the rolling steppe. These grossly overcrowded refuges were verminous and insanitary, especially during the spring thaw when Magnitogorsk became a sea of mud and there were outbreaks of bubonic plague. Moreover they afforded scant protection against the scorching summers and freezing winters. The same was true of the rows of
porous, box-like structures for the privileged, set up with such haste that for years the streets lacked names and the buildings lacked numbers. These were the first houses of the socialist city which was to rise out of chaos during the 1930s, a city which would boast 50 schools, 17 libraries and 8 theatres but not a single church. There was, however, a Communist cathedral – the steel plant itself. No place of worship was built with more fervour or more labour. Its construction involved the excavation of 500 million cubic feet of earth, the pouring of 42 million cubic feet of reinforced concrete, the laying of 5 million cubic feet of fire bricks and the erection of 250,000 tons of structural steel.

“Ill-clad, half-starved and inadequately equipped, the workers were pitilessly sacrificed to the work. Driven by terror and zeal, they were also the victims of incompetence. They lacked the tools and the skill to weld metal on rickety scaffolding 100 feet high in temperatures of -50 Fahrenheit. Countless accidents occurred, many of which damaged the plant. Confusion was worse confounded by gross management failures. American experts were horrified to find that Party propagandists rather than engineers were determining priorities – tall, open-hearth stacks were erected earlier than they should have been because they ‘made a nice picture’. But despite every setback the stately blast furnaces rose from their concrete beds, to the tune of ‘incessant hammering, resembling machine-gun fire’. By 1 February 1932 the first pig-iron was produced. Although less than half built by 1937 (its target date for completion), Magnitogorsk was already one of the biggest metallurgical works on earth.

“To the faithful it was a huge crucible for the Promethean energies unleashed by Russia’s man of steel. Enterprises such as Magnitogorsk symbolised Stalin’s successful ‘break’ with the past (perelom) and Russia’s great leap forward. It was a leap in the dark. But the shape of future terrors could be discerned and even committed Communists feared that too much was being sacrificed to the industrial Moloch. In the final speech at his show trial Nikolai Bukharin likened ‘our huge, gigantically growing factories’ to ‘monstrous gluttons which consumed everything’. What they certainly consumed was vast quantities of grain, both directly to feed the workers and indirectly to exchange [export] for the sinews of technology. In the 2 years after 1928 government grain requisitions had doubled and only a good harvest in 1930 enabled Stalin to commandeer 22 million tons (over a quarter of the total yield) from a countryside devastated by collectivisation and ‘dekulakisation’. Yet in 1931 he took slightly more grain even though the harvest was poor. The result was massive rural famine. It was the largest organised famine in history until that of Mao Tse-tung in 1959-60…”

The historian Sergius Naumov writes: “One of the most horrifice crimes of the God-hating communist regime was the artificially contrived famine in the Ukraine and the South of Russia in 1932-1933. As a result, in the Ukraine

434 Brendon, op. cit. 208-211.
alone more than nine million people died within two years, while as a whole in the USSR more than thirteen million died. The blow was deliberately directed against the age-old strongholds of Orthodox culture and tradition in the people for the defence of the Faith and the Church. This sin, the responsibility for this inhuman crime lies like an ineradicable blot on all the heirs of communism without exception. In the Ukraine this campaign for the mass annihilation of the Orthodox peasantry was carried out from the centre by the apparatus of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukraine under the leadership of Lazarus Moiseyevich Kaganovich.

“Kaganovich personally headed the campaign for the forcible requisitioning of all reserves of bread from the Ukrainian peasantry, which elicited the artificial famine of the 1930s. Thus on December 29, 1932, on the initiative of Kaganovich, the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukraine adopted a directive in which the collective farms were required to give up ‘all the grain they have, including the so-called seed funds’. It was ordered that all available funds be removed immediately, in the course of five to six days. Every delay was viewed as the sabotage of bread deliveries with all the consequences that ensued from that… (Istorian SSSR, №2/1989, p. 14). Or one more characteristic example, which helps us to understand much. At the January [1933] united Plenum of the Central Committee and the TsKK of the Communist Party one of its participants cried out during Kaganovich’s speech: ‘But you know, they have begun to eat people in our area!’ To which Kaganovich cynically replied: ‘If we give rein to our nerves, then they will be eating you and us… Will that be better?’ Nothing needs to be added to this cannibalistic revelation. Although, it must be said, already at the dawn of the Bolshevik dictatorship, ‘Trotsky, on receiving a delegation of church-parish councils from Moscow, in reply to Professor Kuznetsov’s declaration that the city was literally dying from hunger, declared: “This is not hunger. When Titus conquered Jerusalem, the Jewish mothers ate their own children. Then you can come and say: ‘We’re hungry.’”’ (Tsinichnoe zaiavlienie”, Donskie Vedomosti (Novocherkassk), №268/1919).

“One should point out that the famine artificially organized by the Bolsheviks in 1932-1933 was a logical step in the long chain of genocide of the Slavic Orthodox population of the country. Long before the year 1937 that is so bewailed by Memorial, G.E. Zinoviev (Ovsej-Hershen Aaronovich Radomyshelsky) defined the task directly: ‘We must ninety million out of the one hundred that populates Soviet Russia. We don’t need to talk to the rest – they must be annihilated’ (Северная Коммуна, 19.IX.1918). The control figure of those marked for annihilation by Zinoviev was reached with interest already before the forcible collectivization of the countryside began. Collectivization and ‘dekulakization’, in the carrying out of which the People’s Commissar for Agriculture, Yakov Arkadyevich Yakovlev (Epstein) and the president of the collective farm centre, Gregory Nakhumovich
Kaminsky particularly distinguished themselves, brought fresh millions of peasants to their deaths. To suppress the numerous peasant rebellions, on the orders of Over-Chekist Genrikh Girshevich Yagoda ('leguda') ‘individually selected GPU soldiers accustomed to civil war, the guardians of present order,’ were thrown in. ‘Machine guns were wheeled out, cannons were stations, balloons of poison gas were unscrewed… And often there was nobody you could ask: what was in this village? There was no village. None of those who lived in it were alive: neither the women nor the children nor the old men. Nobody was spared by the shells and the gas…’ (Dmitrievsky S., Stalin, Berlin, 1931, p. 330).

“The famine of 1932-1933 was specially organized so as finally to crush the active and passive resistance of the Orthodox peasantry to collectivization. To break their resistance to their forcible regeneration from an Orthodox people into a faceless mass, the so-called ‘collective farmers’ and homo sovieticus. That explains what at first sight appears to be the paradoxical fact that the boundaries of the famine coincided with the boundaries of the bread baskets of the country, which were always regions of agricultural abundance and strongholds of Orthodoxy. As the member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukraine, Mendel Markovich Khatayevich, said: ‘There had to be a famine, in order to show them who is boss here. That cost millions of lives, but we won.’…”

It is calculated that about 14 million people died as a result of the artificial famine created as a consequence of Stalin’s collectivization programme. “The fertile Ukraine,” writes Brendon, “where Stalin was already persecuting anyone suspected of local nationalism, suffered worst. But other regions were also affected, notably Kazakhstan where about 40 per cent of the 4 million inhabitants died as a result of the attempt to turn them from nomadic herders into collective farmers. As early as December 1931 hordes of Ukrainian peasants were surging into towns and besieging railway stations with cries of ‘Bread, bread, bread!’ By the spring of 1932, when Stalin demanded nearly half of the Ukrainian harvest, the granary of Russia was in the grip of starvation. While peasants collapsed from hunger Communist shock brigades, supported by units of the OGPU in their brown tunics and red and blue caps, invaded their cabins and took their last ounces of food, including seed for the spring sowing. They used long steel rods to probe for buried grain, stationed armed guards in the fields and sent up spotter planes to prevent the pilfering of Soviet property. This was now an offence punishable by death or, to use the jargon of the time, ‘the highest measure of social defence’. The OGPU suspected anyone who was not starving of hoarding. It also attempted to stop peasants from migrating in search of food; but by the summer of 1932 three million were on the move. Some Communist cadres tried to avoid carrying out their task. One rebellious Party man reported that he could fulfil his meat

quota, but only with human corpses. He fled, while others like him were driven to madness and suicide. But most activists were so frightened for their own skins that they endorsed Stalin’s ukase.

“So the Ukraine came to resemble ‘one vast Belsen’. A population of ‘walking corpses’ struggled to survive on a diet of roots, weeds, grass, bark and furry catkins. They devoured dogs, cats, snails, mice, ants, earthworms. They boiled up old skins and ground down dry bones. They even ate horse-manure for the whole grains of seed it contained. Cannibalism became so commonplace that the OGPU received a special directive on the subject from Moscow and local authorities issued hundreds of posters announcing that ‘EATING DEAD CHILDREN IS BARBARISM’. Some peasants braved machine-guns in desperate assaults on grain stockpiles. Others robbed graves for gold to sell in Torgsin shops. Parents unable to feed their offspring sent them away from home to beg. Cities such as Kiev, Kharkov, Dnepropetrovsk, Poltava, Odessa and Belgorod were overrun by pathetic waifs with huge heads, stunted limbs and swollen bellies. Arthur Koestler said that they ‘looked like embryos out of alcohol bottles’. Periodically the OGPU rounded them up, sending some to brutal orphanages or juvenile labour colonies, training others to be informers or secret policemen. Still others became the victims of ‘mass shootings’.

“Meanwhile adults, frantic to follow the slightest rumour of sustenance, continued to desert their villages. They staggered into towns and collapsed in the squares, at first objects of pity, later of indifference. Haunting the railway stations these ‘swollen human shadows, full of rubbish, alive with lice’, followed passengers with mute appeals and ‘hungry eyes’. A few managed to get out of the region despite the guards (who confiscated the food of Ukrainians returning to help), but for the most part these ‘miserable hulks of humanity dragged themselves along, begging for bread or searching for scraps in garbage heaps, frozen and filthy. Each morning wagons rolled along the streets picking up the remains of the dead.’ Some were picked up before they died and buried in pits so extensive that they resembled sand dunes and so shallow that bodies were dug up and devoured by wolves. In the summer of 1932 Stalin increased his squeeze on the villages, ordering blockades of those which did not supply their grain quotas and blaming kulak sabotage for the shortfall. It may well have been over the famine that on 5 November 1932 his wife Nadezhda Alliluyev committed suicide. Certainly she had lost any illusions she might have possessed about her husband. Some time before her death Nadezhda yelled at him: ‘You are a tormentor, that’s what you are! You torment your own son... you torment your wife... you torment the whole Russian people.’
“The better to control his victims Stalin reintroduced the internal passport. Communists had always denounced this as a prime instance of tsarist tyranny. Now it enabled them to hide the famine, or at any rate to render it less visible, by ensuring that most deaths occurred outside urban areas. This is not to suggest that Stalin was prepared to acknowledge the existence of the tragedy. When a courageous Ukrainian Communist gave details of what was happening Stalin replied that he had made up ‘a fable about famine, thinking to frighten us, but it won’t work’. It is clear, though, that Stalin was deliberately employing starvation as an instrument of policy. Early in 1933 he sent Pavel Postyshev to the Ukraine with orders to extract further deliveries from the barren countryside. Postyshev announced that the region had failed to provide the requisite grain because of the Party’s ‘leniency’. The consequence of his strictness was that, over the next few months, the famine reached its terrible climax. Entire families died in agony. Buildings decayed, schools closed, fields were choked with weeds, livestock perished and the countryside became a gigantic charnel-house. About a quarter of the rural population was wiped out and the mortality rate only began to decline in the summer of 1933, after it had become clear that no more grain could be procured and the State’s demands were relaxed…”

**Stalin’s War on Russia: (4) The Great Purges**

By the middle of the 1930s Stalin began to ease up in his unprecedentedly savage war on the Russian people. Not that life became significantly easier for them. On the surface, the God-haters appeared to have triumphed, and were now successfully building a new, godless civilization to replace the old civilization of Holy Russia.

The West, to its shame, cooperated. All the leading nations now recognized the Soviet Union, and helped its rapid industrial growth through trade. Moreover, comparing their own economic slump with the Soviet performance, they even began to applaud the achievements of Communism, as journalists closed their eyes to Stalin’s appalling assault on his own people. “Totalitarianism,” writes Brendon, “won adherents across frontiers, for the failures of capitalism were palpable during the Depression and the democracies suffered a sharp crisis of confidence. Hearing that Stalin had achieved planned progress and social equality [!], that Hitler had abolished unemployment and built autobahns, that Mussolini had revived Italy and made the trains run on time, people in Britain, France and the United States were inclined to believe that Utopia was another country…”

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438 Brendon, *op. cit.*, p. xvi.
“The trauma of the Great Slump,” writes Eric Hobsbawn, “was underlined by the fact that the one country that had clamorously broken with capitalism appeared to be immune to it: the Soviet Union. While the rest of the world, or at least liberal Western capitalism, stagnated, the USSR was engaged in massive ultra-rapid industrialization under its new Five Year plans. From 1929 to 1940 Soviet industrial production tripled, at the very least. It rose from 5 per cent of the world’s manufactured products in 1929 to 18 per cent in 1938, while during the same period the joint share of the USA, Britain and France, fell from 59 per cent to 52 per cent of the world’s total. What was more, there was [supposedly] no unemployment. These achievements impressed foreign observers of all ideologies, including a small but influential flow of socio-economic tourists to Moscow in 1930-35, more than the visible primitiveness and inefficiency of the Soviet economy, or the ruthlessness and brutality of Stalin’s collectivisation and mass repression. For what they were trying to come to terms with was not the actual phenomenon of the USSR but the breakdown of their own economic system, the depth of the failure of Western capitalism. What was the secret of the Soviet system? Could anything be learned from it? Echoing Russia’s Five Year Plans, ‘Plan’ and ‘Planning’ became buzz-words in politics... Even the very Nazis plagiarized the idea, as Hitler introduced a ‘Four Year Plan’ in 1933.”

So far, Stalin had simply continued the work of Lenin on a larger, more systematic scale. But in 1937 he began to do what Lenin had never done: destroy the members of his own party. Thus was fulfilled the prediction of Pierre Vergniaud in Paris in 1793: “There is reason to fear that, like Saturn, the Revolution may devour each of its children in turn”.

The swallow that portended the coming of this bloody massacre was the death of the Leningrad Party Boss, Kirov, on December 1, 1934 – as Evgenia Ginzburg put it in Into the Whirlwind: “That year, 1937, really began on the 1st of December, 1934”. Although it is likely that Stalin himself ordered the killing, it – together with the continued opposition of Trotsky from abroad - became the excuse to root out supposed counter-revolutionary conspiracies and fascist spy-rings within the party. By the end of 1938 almost all the Old Bolsheviks who had created Lenin’s party had been killed (or, as in the case of Ordzhonikidze, killed themselves) after prolonged tortures in NKVD prisons and show trials in which they confessed to the most horrific and improbable acts of sabotage against their own party. One of the few who refused to incriminate themselves was Bukharin, whom Lenin had called “the party’s favourite”. In his “Letter to a Future Generation of Party Leaders”, he wrote: “I feel my helplessness before a hellish machine, which has acquired gigantic

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440 Bullock, op. cit., p. 511.
441 Ginzburg, in Bullock, op. cit., p. 516.
power… and which uses the Cheka’s bygone authority to cater to Stalin’s
morbid suspiciousness… Any member of the Central Committee, any
member of the Party can be rubbed out, turned into a traitor or terrorist.”

With the murder of Trotsky in Mexico in 1940 the last possible threat to
Stalin’s absolute authority from the Old Guard was gone. For, as Bullock
writes, “his suspicion never slept: it was precisely the Bolshevik Old Guard
whom he distrusted most. Even men who had been closely associated with
him in carrying out the Second Revolution [of 1928 to 1934] were executed,
committed suicide or died in the camps.” In fact, no section of society was
exempt from Stalin’s murderous cull of his own people. He who used the
term “enemy of the people” to wipe out anyone who represented the remotest
prospect of opposition to the regime became the foremost “enemy of the
people” of Russia in the whole of her history.

His assault on the army was if anything still more thorough than his
assault on the party.

Thus, according to figures given in the Soviet press, “the military purge
accounted for:

“3 of the 5 Soviet marshals
“11 of the 15 army commanders
“8 of the 9 fleet admirals and admirals Grade 1
“50 of the 57 corps commanders
“154 of the 186 divisional commanders

“16 of the 16 army political commissars
“25 of the 28 corps commissars
“58 of the 64 divisional commanders

“11 of the 11 vice-commissars of defence
“98 of the 109 members of the Supreme Military Soviet

The effect was not confined to the upper echelons. Between May 1937 and
September 1938, 36,761 army officers and over 3000 navy officers were
dismissed. Allowing for 13,000 re-enrolled and adding the numbers
‘repressed’ after September 1938, this gives a total for 1937-41 of 43,000
officers at battalion and company-commander level arrested and either shot
or sent to the camps (the great majority) or permanently dismissed. Roy
Medvedev sums up an operation without parallel in the striking sentence:
‘Never has the officer staff of any army suffered such great losses in any war
as the Soviet Army suffered in this time of peace.’”

442 Bukharin, in Bullock, op. cit., p. 541.
443 Bullock, op. cit., p. 425.
444 Bullock, op. cit., pp. 547-548.
But the greatest victims of the great purges were neither the party, nor the army, but the clergy – a fact often forgotten by historians. If Metropolitan Sergius thought that his betrayal of the True Orthodox Christians would “save the Church”, the next few years would prove him terribly wrong. From 1935 the Bolsheviks began to repress all the clergy, sergianist as well as True Orthodox. The sergianist clergy often received longer sentences than their True Orthodox brothers had received in the early 1930s. This only went to show how futile their Judas-like collaboration with the Antichrist, and betrayal of their brothers, had been. It did not earn them a respite, but only the shame of collaborationism, while depriving them of a martyr’s crown.

According to Russian government figures, in 1937 alone 136,900 clergy were arrested, of whom 106,800 were killed (there were 180,000 clergy in Russia before the revolution); while between 1917 and 1980, 200,000 clergy were executed and 500,000 others were imprisoned or sent to the camps. According to another source, from October, 1917 to June, 1941 inclusive, 134,000 clergy were killed, of whom the majority (80,000) were killed between 1928 and 1940. According to a third source (Kharbinskoye Vremia, February, 1937, № 28), in the nineteen years of Soviet terror to that date there were killed: 128 bishops; 26,777 clergy; 7,500 professors; about 9,000 doctors; 94,800 officers; 1,000,000 soldiers; 200,000 policemen; 45,000 teachers; 2,200,000 workers and peasants. Besides that, 16 million Russians died from hunger and three million died in forced labour in the camps. As for churches, there were none at all in Belorussia (Kolarz), “less than a dozen” in Ukraine (Bociurkiw), and a total of 150-200 in the whole of Russia. In all, the numbers of functioning Orthodox churches declined from 54,692 in 1914 to 39,000 at the beginning of 1929 to 15,835 on April 1, 1936.

And yet the census of 1937 established that one-third of city-dwellers and two-thirds of country-dwellers still confessed that they believed in God. Stalin’s plan that the Name of God should not be named in the country by the year 1937 had failed…

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445 Thus Bullock (op. cit.) completely ignores the persecution of the clergy at this time.
446 A document of the Commission attached to the President of the Russian Federation on the Rehabilitation of the Victims of Political Repressions, January 5, 1996 ©; Service Orthodoxe de Presse (Orthodox Press Service), № 204, January, 1996, p. 15 (F). The rate of killing slowed down considerably in the following years. In 1939 900 clergy were killed, in 1940 –1100, in 1941 – 1900, in 1943 – 500. In the period 1917 to 1940 205 Russian hierarchs “disappeared without trace”; 59 disappeared in 1937 alone.
Nevertheless, the immediate outlook for believers was bleak indeed. E.L., writing about Hieromartyr Bishop Damascene, comments: “He warmed the hearts of many, but the masses remained... passive and inert, moving in any direction in accordance with an external push, and not their inner convictions... The long isolation of Bishop Damascene from Soviet life, his remoteness from the gradual process of sovietization led him to an unrealistic assessment of the real relations of forces in the reality that surrounded him. Although he remained unshaken himself, he did not see... the desolation of the human soul in the masses. This soul had been diverted onto another path – a slippery, opportunistic path which led people where the leaders of Soviet power – bold men who stopped at nothing in their attacks on all moral and material values – wanted them to go... Between the hierarchs and priests who had languished in the concentration camps and prisons, and the mass of the believers, however firmly they tried to stand in the faith, there grew an abyss of mutual incomprehension. The confessors strove to raise the believers onto a higher plane and bring their spiritual level closer to their own. The mass of believers, weighed down by the cares of life and family, blinded by propaganda, involuntarily went in the opposite direction, downwards. Visions of a future golden age of satiety, of complete liberty from all external and internal restrictions, of the submission of the forces of nature to man, deceitful perspectives in which fantasy passed for science... were used by the Bolsheviks to draw the overwhelming majority of the people into their nets. Only a few individuals were able to preserve a loftiness of spirit. This situation was exploited very well by Metropolitan Sergius...”

Sergius has had many apologists. Some have claimed that he “saved the Church” for a future generation, when the whirlwind of the persecution had passed. This claim cannot be justified, as we have seen. It was rather the Catacomb Church, which, as Alexeyev writes, “in a sense saved the official Church from complete destruction because the Soviet authorities were afraid to force the entire Russian Church underground through ruthless suppression and so to lose control over it.” As St. John of Shanghai and San Francisco wrote: “The Declaration of Metropolitan Sergius brought no benefit to the Church. The persecutions not only did not cease, but also sharply increased. To the number of other accusations brought by the Soviet regime against clergy and laymen, one more was added – non-recognition of the Declaration. At the same time, a wave of church closings rolled over all Russia... Concentration camps and places of forced labor held thousands of clergymen, a significant part of whom never saw freedom again, being executed there or dying from excessive labors and deprivations.”

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Others have tried to justify Sergius by claiming that there are two paths to salvation, one through open confession or the descent into the catacombs, and the other through compromise. Sergius, according to this view, was no less a martyr than the Catacomb martyrs, only he suffered the martyrdom of losing his good name. However, this view comes close to the “Rasputinite” heresy that there can be salvation through sin – in this case, the most brazen lying, the sacrifice of the freedom and dignity of the Church and Orthodoxy, and the betrayal to torments and death of one’s fellow Christians!

Thus Hieromartyr Sergius Mechev was betrayed by "Bishop" Manuel Lemeshevsky. And more generally, Metropolitan Sergius' charge that all the catacomb bishops were "counter-revolutionaries" was sufficient to send them to their deaths. This fact demonstrates that “sergianism” can best be defined as, quite simply, the sin of Judas...

Even sergianist sources have spoken about the falsity of Sergius' declaration, the true confession of those who opposed him, and the invalidity of the measures he took to punish them. Thus: “Amidst the opponents of Metropolitan Sergius were a multitude of remarkable martyrs and confessors, bishops, monks, priests... The ‘canonical’ bans of Metropolitan Sergius (Stragorodsky) and his Synod were taken seriously by no one, neither at that time [the 1930s] nor later by dint of the uncanonicity of the situation of Metropolitan Sergius himself...

And again: “The particular tragedy of the Declaration of Metropolitan Sergius consists in its principled rejection of the podvig of martyrdom and confession, without which witnessing to the truth is inconceivable. In this way Metropolitan Sergius took as his foundation not hope on the Providence of God, but a purely human approach to the resolution of church problems... The courage of the ‘catacombiks’ and their firmness of faith cannot be doubted, and it is our duty to preserve the memory of those whose names we shall probably learn only in eternity...”

author accepts this fact: “If Metropolitan Sergius, in agreeing in his name to publish the Declaration of 1927 composed by the authorities, hoping to buy some relief for the Church and the clergy, then his hopes not only were not fulfilled, but the persecutions after 1927 became still fiercer, reaching truly hurricane-force in 1937-38.” (Sergius Fomin, Strazh Doma Gospodnia (Guardian of the House of the Lord), Moscow, 2003, p. 262 ®.)


Gubonin, op. cit., pp. 809, 810.

Danilushkin, op. cit., pp. 297, 520.
Meanwhile, deep in the underground, the True Orthodox Church delivered its verdict on the traitors. In July, 1937, four bishops, two priests and six laymen met in Ust-Kut, Siberia, convened a council, and declared:

“1. The Sacred Council forbids the faithful to receive communion from the clergy legalized by the anti-Christian State.

“2. It has been revealed to the Sacred Council by the Spirit that the anathema-curse hurled by his Holiness Patriarch Tikhon is valid, and all priests and Church-servers who have dared to consider it as an ecclesiastical mistake or political tactic are placed under its power and bound by it.

“3. To all those who discredit and separate themselves from the Sacred Council of 1917-18 – \textbf{Anathema!}

“4. All branches of the Church which are on the common trunk – the trunk is our pre-revolutionary Church – are living branches of the Church of Christ. We give our blessing to common prayer and the serving of the Divine Liturgy to all priests of these branches. The Sacred Council forbids all those who do not consider themselves to be branches, but independent from the tree of the Church, to serve the Divine Liturgy. The Sacred Council does not consider it necessary to have administrative unity of the branches of the Church, but unity of mind concerning the Church is binding on all.”\textsuperscript{459}

This last measure effectively legalized the complete de-centralization of the Church, which Patriarch Tikhon had already begun through his famous \textit{ukaz} number 362 of 1920. It was elicited by the fact that the organization of the Church was now destroyed, and all its leaders dead or in prison or so deep underground that they could not rule the Church. This process was sealed in the autumn of 1937, when the patriarchal \textit{locum tenens} Metropolitan Peter of Krutitsa, and his only possible successors, Metropolitans Cyril of Kazan and Joseph of Petrograd, were shot. And so by the end of 1937, the Church’s descent into the catacombs, which had begun in the early 20s, was completed. From now on, with the external administrative machinery of the Church destroyed, it was up to each bishop – sometimes each believer – individually to preserve the fire of faith, being linked with his fellow Christians only through the inner, mystical bonds of the life in Christ. Thus was the premonition of Hieromartyr Bishop Damascene fulfilled: “Perhaps the time has come when the Lord does not wish that the Church should stand as an

\textsuperscript{459} Schema-Monk Epiphanius (Chernov), personal communication; B. Zakharov, \textit{Russkaia Mysl’} (Russian Thought), September 7, 1949; “Vazhnoe postanovlenie katakombnoj tserkvi” (An Important Decree of the Catacomb Church), \textit{Pravoslavnaja Rus’} (Orthodox Russia), \textnumero{} 18, 1949 \textcopyright{}. According to one version, there is a fifth canon: “To all those who support the renovationist and sergianist heresy – \textbf{Anathema}. See Bishop Ambrose (von Sievers), “Katakombnaia Tserkov’: Ust’-Kutskij Sobor 1937g.” (The Catacomb Church: the Ust-Kut Council of 1937), \textit{Russkoe Pravoslavie} (Russian Orthodoxy), \textnumero{} 4 (8), 1997, pp. 20-24 \textcopyright{}.
intermediary between Himself and the believers, but that everyone is called to stand directly before the Lord and himself answer for himself as it was with the forefathers!"  

The International Civil War (I)

For most of the 1930s the nations of Europe were expecting a war. This provided the dictators, both Communist and Fascist, with perfect excuses for their revolutionary reconstruction of society: the threat of war from without buttressed the arguments for continuing the war within. And so the apocalyptic atmosphere thickened as the sufferings of the people increased.

The Spanish Civil War of 1936-38 prefigured the international war that was to come, with the future antagonists of Italy and Germany, on the one hand, and Soviet Russia, on the other, supporting the nationalist and republican causes respectively. It indicated that the coming international war would in fact be a civil war between related secular ideologies, all of which had their roots in the early modern history of Western Europe. Some have seen the more important cleavage as running between, on the one hand, the rationalist Enlightenment ideologies of Liberalism and Communism, which go back to the French constitutional monarchy of 1789-1792 and the Jacobin dictatorship of 1792-94 respectively, and on the other hand, the anti-Enlightenment irrationalist ideology of nationalism, which goes back to Napoleon’s imperial expansion of the French revolution and the German reaction against it. Others, however, have seen a more fundamental cleavage between the totalitarian ideologies of Communism and Nazism, on the one hand, and the anti-totalitarian ideology of Liberalism, on the other.

As we have seen, both Liberalism and Communism trace their roots to the optimistic Enlightenment faith that a materialistic utopia can be achieved on earth by education, rationalism, science and the elimination of religious superstition. Both emphasize the role of the State as the spearhead of progress; and if Liberalism also tries to protect the “human rights” of the individual, it is nevertheless the State, rather than the Church or any other organization or individual, that determines what those rights are and how they are to be implemented. So if Liberalism gives greater protection to the individual than does Communism, this is a difference in emphasis rather than of principle, as the increasing convergence between the two systems after World War II demonstrates. If there is a difference in principle between the two systems it consists in Liberalism’s insistence that the dominance of the State should be limited by democratic elections, preceded by genuinely free debate, that permit the removal of governments that are perceived to have

460 E.L., op. cit., p. 92.
461 George Orwell prophesied this convergence at the end of his post-war novel Animal Farm, when the pigs (the communists) and the men (the capitalists) looked indistinguishable to the impoverished animals.
failed, whereas Communism posits the eternal rule of the Communist Party and punishes any criticism of it. And yet even here the difference is not as radical as might at first appear. For, on the one hand, Communism pays lip-service to the principle of democratic elections (during which the existing leaders are always, by a miracle, elected again with 99.9% of the vote); while on the other hand, the choice offered to voters in a liberal democracy becomes increasingly limited as real power is vested in two increasingly similar political party machines.

There is also a difference between the systems in the particular fallen passions they most pander to. Liberalism panders especially to greed and lust. It moderates, without basically undermining, this motivation through a recognition that one individual’s greed and lust should be satisfied only to the extent that it does not interfere with the satisfaction of another’s greed and lust. Of course, this motivation is not proclaimed for what it is, but is given a more or less decent covering by such slogans as “human rights” and “freedom, equality and fraternity”. Nor can it be denied that there is some genuine idealism and altruism among liberals and capitalists, especially where their slogans are grafted onto a Christian root. But with the gradual dechristianization of Western society in the course of the nineteenth century, the egoism of Liberalism became more and more evident, as Socialists and Communists are not slow to point out.

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

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462 Strictly speaking, Communism preaches the withering away of the State. But the State had to expand to its maximum first. Thus Stalin declared at the Sixteenth Party Congress in 1930: “We are for the withering away of the state. But at the same time we stand for the strengthening of the proletarian dictatorship, which constitutes the most powerful, the mightiest of all governing powers that have ever existed. The highest development of governmental power for the purpose of preparing the conditions for the withering away of governmental power, this is the Marxist formula. Is this ‘contradictory’? Yes, it is ‘contradictory’. But this contradiction is life, and it reflects completely the Marxist dialectic” (in Bullock, *op. cit.* p. 467).
For, as the former Polish Communist and Marxist philosopher Leszek Kolakowski wrote: “If you build equality by increasing inequality, you’ll be left with inequality; if you want to attain freedom by applying mass terror, the result will be mass terror; if you want to work for a just society through fear and repression, you will get fear and repression rather than universal fraternity… Suppression of the ‘class enemy’, the abolition of civil liberties and indeed terror were accepted as the necessary evil which precedes the new society. Today we can see clearly enough that means define ends, but Communist thinking has always held the reverse to be true.”

These facts were obvious to all those with eyes to see by the mid-1930s; but they were obscured, not only by the Depression in the West, but also by another phenomenon of surpassing barbarity – Italian and German Fascism. Since Fascism was defeated by Communism in the most vicious and large-scale war in history, it has commonly been asserted that they are ideological opposites. Certainly, this was the official view of the Communists themselves; and in the West the older thesis that the two systems are two varieties of “totalitarianism” has come in for much criticism. Nevertheless, in spite of the obvious differences between the two, the bulk of the evidence points to the fact that they are very closely related, and that their war was a civil war – and exceptionally savage precisely because of that. Thus the war correspondent and disillusioned communist Vasily Grossman, in a novel entitled Life and Fate, which was completed in 1960 but published only decades later, emphasizes the similarities between Soviet Communism and German Nazism. In one scene an SS officer is talking to his prisoner, an old Bolshevik. “When we look at one another in the face, we’re neither of us just looking at a face we hate – no, we are gazing into a mirror. That’s the tragedy of our age. Do you really not recognise yourself in us; yourselves and the strength of your will?... You may think you hate us, but what you really hate is yourselves in us... Our victory will be your victory... And if you should conquer, then we shall perish only to live in your victory.”

Richard Pipes has argued that Communism and Fascism are two varieties of “totalitarianism”. The fact that neither system achieved total control of society does not lessen the usefulness of the term, which accurately points to the main thrust of each. The term was first invented in 1923 “by an opponent of Mussolini, Giovanni Amendola (later murdered by the Fascists), who, having observed Mussolini’s systematic subversion of state institutions, concluded that his regime suffered fundamentally from conventional

463 Kolakowski, in Bullock, op. cit., p. 464.
465 “‘Totalitarian’ does not mean that they were ‘total’ parties, either all inclusive or wielding complete power; it means that they were parties concerned with the ‘totality’ of the societies in which they worked. In this narrower sense both movements did have totalitarian aspiration” (Richard Overy, The Dictators, London: Penguin, 2005, p. 173).
dictatorships. In 1925, Mussolini adopted the term and assigned it a positive meaning. He defined Fascism as ‘totalitarian’ in the sense that it politicized everything ‘human’ as well as ‘spiritual’: ‘Everything within the state, nothing outside the state, nothing against the state’.\footnote{Pipes, \textit{Russian under the Bolshevik Regime}, p. 241.}

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

“No prominent European socialist before World War I resembled Lenin more closely than Benito Mussolini. Like Lenin, he headed the antirevisionist wing of the country’s Socialist Party; like him, he believed that the worker was not by nature a revolutionary and had to be prodded to radical action by an intellectual elite. However, working in an environment more favourable to his ideas, he did not need to form a splinter party: whereas Lenin, leading a minority wing, had to break away, Mussolini gained a majority in the Italian Socialist Party (PSI) and ejected the reformists. Had it not been for his reversal, in 1914, of his stand on the war, coming out in favour of Italy’s entry on the Allied side, which resulted in his expulsion from the PSI, he might well have turned into an Italian Lenin. Socialist historians, embarrassed by these facts of Mussolini’s early biography, have either suppressed them or described them as a passing flirtation with socialism by a man whose true intellectual mentor was not Marx, but Nietzsche and Sorel. Such claims, however, are difficult to reconcile with the fact that Italian socialists thought well enough of the future leader of Fascism to name him in 1912 editor in chief of the Party’s organ, \textit{Avanti!} Far from having a fleeting romance with socialism, Mussolini was fanatically committed to it: until November 1913, and in some respects until early 1920, his ideas on the nature of the working class, the structure and function of the party, and the strategy of the socialist revolution, were remarkably like Lenin’s…”

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

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

The only significant difference between Soviet Communism and Italian Fascism was that Mussolini came to the conclusion that, for his revolutionary purposes, “nationalism was more potent fare than socialism. In December 1914, he wrote: ‘The nation has not disappeared. We used to believe that it was annihilated. Instead, we see it rise, living, palpitating before us! And understandably so. The new reality does not suppress the truth: class cannot destroy the nation. Class is a collectivity of interests, but the nation is a history of sentiments, traditions, language, culture, ancestry. You can insert the class into the nation. But they do not destroy each other.’ From this it followed that the Socialist Party must lead not only the proletariat, but the entire nation: it must create ‘un socialismo nationale’…”

However, even this difference between the two systems does not appear to be fundamental when we remember that Stalin adopted the slogan: “Socialism in one country”, thereby emphasizing the national uniqueness of Russia. And although the internationalist and class dimensions of Socialism were never denied, nationalist motifs steadily became stronger in Soviet life, reaching a climax in the Second World War, which the Soviets revealingly called the Great “Fatherland” War. Stalin now began to portray himself as the successor of the Tsars – not, of course, Nicholas II, who would remain “bloody Nicholas” to the end – but the less pious, more totalitarian (and more bloody) tsars such as Peter the Great.

In this policy, as Alan Bullock writes, “sentiment and calculation coincided. To combine the Marxist vision with the deep-seated nationalist and patriotic feelings of the Russian people was to give it a wider and stronger emotional appeal than ideology by itself could generate. As early as June 1934 Pravda had sounded the new note, ‘For the Fatherland’, ‘which alone kindles the flame of heroism, the flame of creative initiative in all fields, in all the realms of our rich, our many-sided life... The defence of the Fatherland is the supreme law... For the Fatherland, for its honour, glory, might and prosperity!’

“The purpose of Stalin’s summons to Kirov to spend the summer in 1934 at Sochi was to join him and Zhdanov in laying down the guidelines for the rewriting of history textbooks. Published in 1936, Remarks Concerning the Conспектus of a Textbook on the History of the USSR produced an abrupt reversal in Soviet historiography, establishing the Soviet regime as the custodian of national interests and traditions. The new history celebrated the great men of Russia’s Tsarist past – Peter the Great, Suvorov, Kutuzov – whose state-building, military victories and territorial conquests had created modern Russia. It was the autocratic tradition... which was highlighted, so establishing a natural link between the new patriotism and the cult of Stalin.”

The International Civil War (II)

If we turn from the relationship between Communism and Fascism to that between Communism and Nazism, we again find no fundamental contradictions. There were many similarities between Russia and Germany after the First World War. Both countries had suffered defeat; both were treated as pariahs by the western powers; both bitterly resented this treatment (however much they themselves had contributed to it), and therefore gravitated towards each other. Secret military and trade links were established in the 1920s. More significantly, there was also a trade in ideology.

In 1920 F.M. Vinberg, a Russian officer of German ancestry published, together with a German anti-Semite, the first translation of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion. It had a profound influence on the Nazis, and especially on Alfred Rosenberg, a Baltic German with a Russian passport, who introduced the forgery to Hitler. Pipes writes: “The Protocols made on the future Führer an overwhelming impression. ‘I have read the “Protocols of the Elders of Zion” – it simply appalled me,’ he told Hermann Rauschning, an early associate, ‘the stealthiness of the enemy, and his ubiquity! I saw at once that we must copy it – in our own way, of course.’ According to Rauschning, the Protocols served Hitler as a major source of political inspiration. Hitler thus used a spurious manual of Jewish strategy for world domination, not only to

469 Bullock, op. cit, pp. 701-702. The word “autocratic” here should be substituted by “absolutist”.

231
depict the Jews as the mortal enemy of Germany, but to carry out his own quest for world domination employing its methods. He so admired the alleged cunning of Jews in their drive to master the world that he decided to adopt fully their ‘ideology’ and ‘program’.

“It was only after he had read the Protocols that Hitler turned anti-Communist: ‘Rosenberg left a permanent mark on Nazi ideology. The party was rabidly anti-Semitic from the moment of its foundation in 1919, but it became obsessed with Russian communism only in 1921-22; and this seems to have been largely Rosenberg’s doing. He provided the link between Russian anti-Semitism of the Black Hundred type and the anti-Semitism of the German racists; more precisely, he took over Vinberg’s view of Bolshevism as a Jewish conspiracy and reinterpreted it in völkisch-racist terms. The resulting fantasy, as expounded in innumerable articles and pamphlets, became an obsessive theme in Hitler’s thinking and in the outlook and propaganda of the Nazi party.’ It has been said that Hitler had only two major political objectives: the destruction of Jewry and the expansion into the East European Lebensraum (‘Living Space’), all other elements of his program, capitalist as well as socialist, being only means to this end. The right-wing Russian theory linking Jews with Communism allowed him to connect these two objectives.

“Thus the ravings of extremist Russian monarchists, who sought and found a scapegoat for the catastrophe that had befallen their country in the ‘hidden hand’ of world Jewry, injected themselves into the political ideology of a party destined before long to acquire total power in Germany. The rationale for the Nazi extermination of Jews came from Russian right-wing circles: it was Vinberg and his friends who first called publicly for the physical extermination of Jews. The Jewish Holocaust thus turned out to be one of the many unanticipated and unintended consequences of the Russian Revolution.”

However, the Nazis borrowed even more from the Russian extreme left-wing, the Communists. In a speech delivered on February 24, 1941 Hitler bluntly stated that “basically National Socialism and Marxism are the same”. And “in a conversation with Rauschning,” writes Pipes, “he conceded his debt to socialism: ‘I have learned a great deal from Marxism as I do not hesitate to admit. I don’t mean their tiresome social doctrine or the materialist conception of history, or their absurd ‘marginal utility’ theories, and so on. But I have learned from their methods. The difference between them and myself is that I have really put into practice what these peddlers and pen-pushers have timidly begun. The whole of National Socialism is

471 Pipes, op. cit., p. 259, note.
based on it. Look at the workers’ sports clubs, the industrial cells, the mass demonstrations, the propaganda leaflets written specially for the comprehension of the masses; all these new methods of political struggle are essentially Marxist in origin. All I had to do is take over these methods and adapt them to our purpose. I only had to develop logically what Social Democracy repeatedly failed in because of its attempt to realize its evolution within the framework of democracy. National Socialism is what Marxism might have been if it could have broken its absurd and artificial ties with a democratic order.”

This last remark might seem strange at first in view of the fact that it was the Bolsheviks who destroyed the democratic order of Russia, whereas Hitler came to power through elections in a multi-party democratic system. But the paradox is explained if we remember that the cult of the leader was developed much earlier in Nazism, and occupied a much more critical place in its history. Both parties despised and destroyed democracy; but Stalin had to preserve the fiction of democracy for longer – as in the 1936 Constitution, which claimed to be supremely democratic when democracy no longer existed in Russia. That is the main reason why he felt the need to purge his party so thoroughly whereas Hitler did not. It is also the main reason why western intellectuals have always been more generous to Stalin than to Hitler – it is thought, quite wrongly, that since Stalin was at least striving to create a democracy (after all, that was the purpose of the Russian revolution, wasn’t it?), he was better than Hitler, who never denied his contempt for it.

The main difference between Stalinism and Hitlerism is that whereas Stalinism is based on class war, and the superiority of the working class, Hitlerism is based on racial war, and the superiority of the Aryan race. However, Hitler’s party, too, was distinctly proletarian; it was originally called the German Labor Party, which “combined socialism, anticapitalism, and anticientralism with German nationalism. In 1918, it renamed itself the German National Socialist Labor Party (DNSAP), adding anti-Semitism to its platform and luring to its ranks demobilized war veterans, shopkeepers, and professional personnel. (The word ‘Labor’ in its name was meant to include ‘all who work’, not only industrial workers.) It was this organization that Hitler took over in 1919. According to Bracher, the ideology of the party in its early years ‘contained a thoroughly revolutionary kernel within an irrational, violence-oriented political ideology. It was in no sense a mere expression of reactionary tendencies: it derived from the world of workers and trade unionists.’ The Nazis appealed to the socialist tradition of German labor, declaring the worker ‘a pillar of the community’, and the ‘bourgeois’ – along with the traditional aristocracy – a doomed class. Hitler, who told associates that he was a ‘socialist’, had the party adopt the red flag and, on coming to power, declared May 1 a national holiday; Nazi Party members were ordered to address one another as ‘comrades’ (Genossen). His conception of the party

472 Pipes, op. cit., p. 259.
was, like Lenin’s, that of a militant organization, a Kampfbund or ‘Combat League’... His ultimate aim was a society in which traditional classes would be abolished, and status earned by personal heroism. In typically radical fashion, he envisaged man re-creating himself: ‘Man is becoming god,’ he told Rauschning. ‘Man is god in the making.’”

In spite of their rivalry, Stalin and Hitler were much more complimentary of each other than either was of the Western democrats. Thus “Hitler called Stalin ‘one of the greatest living human beings’. The Soviet leader, he said, ‘towered above the democratic figures of the Anglo-Saxon powers’.”

Towards the end, he expressed the wish that he had purged his generals as Stalin had so wisely purged his. Stalin for his part considered Hitler to be “a very able man but not basically intelligent, lacking in culture and with a primitive approach to political matters” which was mild criticism by comparison with what he said of the great majority of his opponents.

Although the two systems pursued slightly different paths, the end result was the same: the suppression of all freedom, humanity and religion, and the worship of an infallible man-god. This worship served a similar psychological need in the two countries. According to Ida Vermehren, “the most seductive factor [in Nazism] was Hitler’s messianic image. For Germany found itself in an ideological and ethical vacuum. We had lost our Emperor, our national identity had been damaged. The majority of the population had no religious faith. I think that for many, National Socialism was a substitute religion which aroused a deep enthusiasm and provided a new source of strength. People wanted to get stuck in and work for a better life.” Much the same could be said of Russia, especially after the most educated and religious people had been exterminated. The remainder found in the worship of Stalin a substitute for the faith in Orthodoxy and Tsarism which they had lost.

The religious nature of Marxism was recognized in 1908 by A.V. Lunacharsky, who wrote that Marxism was “the fifth great religion formulated by Judaism”. And in 1937 Winston Churchill said: “It is a strange thing that certain parts of the world should now be wishing to revive the old religious wars. There are those non-God religions Nazism and Communism... I repudiate both and will have nothing to do with either... They are as alike as two peas. Tweedledum and Tweedledee were violently contrasted compared with them. You leave out God and you substitute the devil.”

However, Churchill came to see Hitler as more devilish than Stalin, saying that if Hitler had invaded Hell, he would have found it within himself “to make a favourable reference to the Devil in the House of Commons”.

475 Fenby, op. cit., p. 239.
the atheist Stalin said to Churchill: “May God help you”. Churchill replied: “God, of course, is on our side.” Stalin replied: “And the devil is, naturally, on mine, and through our combined efforts we shall defeat the enemy.”

Although explicitly anti-theist, Soviet power was not without elements of religiosity, and tried to introduce its own feasts and rites of passage to take the place of Orthodox rituals. The same was true, to a still greater degree, of the regimes of Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany. For the world before 1914, though decadent and containing all the elements that were to combine into the horrors of the post-1914 world, was still largely religious, and religion could not simply be destroyed or ignored. Therefore Soviet power injected ritual elements of Orthodox Christianity into its antichristian way of life; Italian Fascism adopted large elements of Catholicism; and German Nazism employed elements of both Protestantism and pre-Christian Nordic paganism.

This mass worship of the most evil of men requires an explanation. The religious mind will find it in demon-possession, in Satan’s taking over of a nation that has abandoned its faith and given in to the most primitive passions of envy, lust and hatred. The demonic nature of the Russian revolution hardly needs demonstrating. Many contemporaries reported that the coming of Soviet power was as if the country had been invaded by demons, and there were many incidents in which demonic activity was almost palpable. Similar incidents were reported in Nazi Germany.

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477 Fenby, op. cit., pp. 65, 152.
478 Later totalitarian regimes, such as Chinese and Korean communism, have incorporated pagan ancestor-worship.
479 Thus the Catacomb Christian P.M. writes: “I want to tell about the miracles of God of which I was a witness. In our village they closed the church and made it into a club. And then they declared that they would be showing a film – this was the first opening of the club. In the church everything was as it had been before, even the iconostasis was standing with its icons. They put in benches, hung up a screen and began to show the film. About half an hour passed, and then suddenly the people began to shout. Those who were at the back jumped up and rushed towards the exit, while those in front fell on the floor or crawled under the benches. What had happened? As many people later recounted, the holy Great Martyr George came out of an icon that was on the iconostasis on a horse, and taking a spear, galloped at the people, who began to flee in fear. But that was not the end of it. Somehow they got at any rate some of the people together again and continued to show the film. That was being shown by a mechanic and his assistant. And suddenly up in the choir they began to sing the Cherubic hymn – and so loudly that the film was scarcely audible. At that point they decided that some believers had climbed up and wanted to interrupt the showing of the film. So about seven members of the Komsomol and the assistant climbed up in order to catch them all and bring them down. But then they said that when they had climbed up the stairs the singing stopped, and they rejoiced - the believers had got frightened and fallen silent. But when they climbed up into the choir they saw that it was empty. They stood in bewilderment and could not understand how the singers could have run away. And then suddenly in the midst of them unseen singers began to sing the Cherubic hymn. Pursued by an unknown fear, they rushed to get out, not knowing the way, pushing and shoving each other. The assistant mechanic, who was running in front, suddenly fell down, and everyone ran over him since there was no other way because of the narrowness of the place. Having run down,
Psychoanalysis, which grew into prominence at about this time, also provides some insight into the phenomenon. Thus Freud considered it too simple to explain the worship of the masses for their totalitarian leaders simply as the consequence of fear of persecution, or because of political or economic motives. That would be to treat the matter in “far too rational a manner... Libidinal ties are what characterize a group”. It is the love of the people for their leader that creates the group and the relationships within the group, which disappear “at the same time as the leader”. (This was true of Nazism, but less so of Stalinism.) “The credulity of love is the most fundamental source of authority.”

Hitler himself came to a similar conclusion about his powers, emphasizing that the masses should stop thinking and surrender themselves to the power of instinct: “The masses are like an animal that obeys its instincts. They do not reach conclusions by reasoning... At a mass meeting, thought is eliminated... Mastery always means the transmission of a stronger will to a weaker one, [which follows] something in the nature of a physical or biological law.”

Certainly, it seems impossible to explain the passionate love of the peoples of Nazi Germany or Stalinist Russia for their leaders without invoking some such deep psychological motive – stirred up and exploited by the demonic powers of the spirit world. Let us consider, for example, the quasi-hypnotic effect that Hitler had on the German masses. The 1934 Nuremberg rally, writes Martin Gilbert, “had seemed to Hitler the ideal vehicle for nationwide propaganda, using documentary film with artistic presentation. He entrusted this task to a former actress and fiction film maker, Leni Riefenstahl, who worked to turn the 1934 rally into an epic paean of praise for the ‘Leader’. Her film *Triumph of the Will* (*Triumph des Willens*) was finished in 1935, and gave German audiences an almost mystical view of Hitler’s charismatic appeal: the film opens with Hitler in an aeroplane flying to Nuremberg, and descending they rushed out into the street. Now the showing was finally abandoned. The assistant mechanic was ill for a month and died, while the mechanic left, and nobody wanted to go to work in the club as a mechanic for any money. So from that time they stopped having a cinema in it.”

480 Thus “two British guests at a Hitler rally in Berlin in 1934, seated in a stadium just feet behind him, watched him captivate his listeners with the familiar rising passion and jarring voice. ‘Then an amazing thing happened,’ continued the account: ‘[we] both saw a blue flash of lightning come out of Hitler’s back... We were surprised that those of us close behind Hitler had not all been struck dead.’ The two men afterwards discussed whether Hitler was actually possessed at certain moments by the Devil: ‘We came to the conclusion that he was.’” (in Overy, op. cit., pp. 13-14)


482 Freud, *Group Psychology*, p. 94; in Rieff, op. cit., p. 235.


484 Overy, op. cit., p. 19.
through the clouds to the city and the rally, where the Nazi Party officials proclaim repeatedly: ‘Hitler is Germany, the Party is Germany, thus Germany is Hitler and the Party is Germany’. The film historian Charles Musser writes: ‘The exchange of looks and salutes creates a bond of obedience between these different levels, one in which the identity of the self is only found through identifying with the nation and the Party. In the process, Hitler and the various troops are eroticized by Riefestahl’s adoring vision.’

We see a similar process taking place in Stalinist Russia. A Lithuanian writer wrote: “I approached Stalin’s portrait, took it off the wall, placed it on the table and, resting my head in my hands, I gazed and meditated. What should I do? The Leader’s face, as always so serene, his eyes so clear-sighted, they penetrated into the distance. It seems that his penetrating look pierces my little room and goes out to embrace the entire globe... With my every fibre, every nerve, every drop of blood I feel that, at this moment, nothing exists in this entire world but this dear and beloved face.”

The masses’ eroticization of their leaders went together with their own brutalization. For “perhaps the most fundamental affinity among the three totalitarian movements lay in the realm of psychology: Communism, Fascism and National Socialism exacerbated and exploited popular resentments – class, racial, and ethnic – to win mass support and to reinforce the claim that they, not the democratically elected governments, expressed the true will of the people. All three appealed to the emotion of hate.”

Thus anti-war films, such as Remarque’s All Quiet on the Western Front, were mocked in Germany, and violence and hardness were exalted over tenderness and compassion. “Hitler rejected ‘the loathsome humanitarian morality’, which he followed Nietzsche in seeing as a mask for people’s defects: ‘In the end, only the urge for self-preservation can conquer. Beneath it is so-called humanity, the expression of a mixture of stupidity, cowardice, and know-it-all conceit, will melt like snow in the March sun. Mankind has grown great in eternal struggle, and only in eternal peace does it perish.’”

The same moral revaluation, the same emphasis on violence and steely hardness (Stalin comes from the Russian word for “steel”) was taking place in Stalinist Russia. “Nadezhda Mandelstam described how ‘Thou shalt not kill’ would be mocked in Germany...”

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485 Gilbert, A History of the Twentieth Century, vol. 2: 1933-1951, London: HarperCollins, 1998, p. 83. Italics mine (V.M.). “Consider this diary entry written by a witness of Stalin’s visit to a young communist congress in April 1936: ‘And HE stood, a little weary, pensive and stately. One could feel the tremendous habit of power, the force of it, and at the same time something feminine and soft. I look about: Everybody had fallen in love with this gentle, inspired, laughing face. To see him, simply to see him, was happiness for all of us’” (Overy, p. 129).


488 Glover, op. cit., p. 326.
was identified with ‘bourgeois’ morality: ‘A number of terms such as ‘honour’ and ‘conscience’ went out of use at this time – concepts like these were easily discredited, now the right formula had been found.’ She noticed that people were going through a metamorphosis: ‘a process of turning into wood – that is what comes over those who lose their sense of values’. 489

“The spirit of violence,” writes Fr. Seraphim Rose, “has been most thoroughly incarnated, in our century, by the Nihilist regimes of Bolshevism and National Socialism; it is to these there have been assigned the principal roles in the Nihilist task of the destruction of the Old Order. The two, whatever their psychological dissimilarities, and the historical ‘accidents’ which placed them in opposing camps, have been partners in their frenzied accomplishment of this task. Bolshevism, to be sure, has had the more ‘positive’ role of the two, since it has been able to justify its monstrous crimes by an appeal to a pseudo-Christian, messianic idealism which Hitler scorned; Hitler’s role in the Nihilist program was more specialized and provincial, but nonetheless essential.

“Even in failure – in fact, precisely in the failure of its ostensible aims – Nazism served the cause of this program. Quite apart from the political and ideological benefits which the Nazi interlude in European history gave to the Communist powers (Communism, it is now widely and erroneously believed, if evil in itself, still cannot be as evil as Nazism), Nazism had another, more obvious and direct, function. Goebbels explained this function in his radio broadcasts in the last days of the War. ‘The bomb-terror spares the dwellings of neither rich nor poor; before the labor offices of total war the last class barriers have had to go down... Together with the monuments of culture there crumble also the last obstacles to the fulfilment of our revolutionary task. Now that everything is in ruins, we are forced to rebuild Europe. In the past, private possessions tied us to a bourgeois restraint. Now the bombs, instead of killing all Europeans, have only smashed the prison walls which kept them captive... In trying to destroy Europe’s future, the enemy has only succeeded in smashing its past; and with that, everything old and outworn has gone.’

“Nazism thus, and its war, have done for Central Europe (and less thoroughly, for Western Europe) what Bolshevism did in its Revolution for Russia: destroyed the Old Order, and thus cleared the way for the building of the ‘new’. Bolshevism then had no difficulty in taking over where Nazism had left off; within a few years the whole of Central Europe had passed under the ‘dictatorship of the proletariat’ – i.e., Bolshevist tyranny – for which Nazism had effectively prepared the way.” 490

The Nazis Invade Russia

This analysis may help us to understand how, like Pilate and Herod, the Communists and the Nazis could, after years of reviling each other, form a pact in 1939. The two leaders were able to divide up East-Central Europe between them, with Stalin taking the Baltic States and Eastern Poland, because they shared the same complete disregard for moral norms, the same contempt for human life and liberty, the same disregard of public opinion, even in their own countries. Paradoxically, it may have been this closeness in evil that made Stalin refuse to believe the mountain of evidence that Hitler was going to invade Russia in 1941. It was as if he felt he could trust Hitler because he was so close to him, whereas his distrust of others, even his own followers, bordered on the psychotic.

And yet Satan’s kingdom is divided within itself, and two parties whose predominant cast of mind is hatred cannot fail to end up hating each other and destroying each other. So it was inevitable that the Bolsheviks and Nazis should go to war with each other, a war of the utmost savagery which ended with the triumph of the bigger demon over the smaller. The dividedness of Satan’s kingdom was providential for Orthodox Christians at this point; for it made possible a certain revival of the faith. But it also created further torments for them insofar as they found themselves between the hammer and the anvil, forced to choose between different states pursuing competing ideologies, neither of which was acceptable to the Orthodox conscience…

The holy elders had prophesied both the war and its outcome. Thus in 1911 Elder Aristocles of Moscow said: “You will hear about it in that country where you will be at that time, you will hear that the Germans are rattling their sabres on the borders of Russia… Only don’t rejoice yet. Many Russians will think that the Germans will save Russia from the Bolshevik power, but it will not be so. True, the Germans will enter Russia and will do much, but they will depart, for the time of salvation will not be yet. That will be later, later… Germany will suffer her punishment in her own land. She will be divided…”491

Again, in 1940 the holy Catacomb Elder Theodosius (Kashin) of Minvody said: “There’s going to be a war, such a terrible war, like the Terrible Judgement: people will perish, they have departed from the Lord, they have forgotten God, and the wind of war will carry them away like ashes, and there will be no sign of them. But if anyone will call on God, the Lord will save him from trouble.”492

491 Quoted in Fomin, Rossia pered Vtorym Prishestviem (Russia before the Second Coming), Sergiev Posad, 1993, p. 237 ®.
492 Chernov, Tserkov’ Katakombnaia na Zemle Rossii (The Catacomb Church in the Russian Land), MS, Woking, 1980 ®.
On June 22, 1941, the feast of All Saints of Russia, the Nazis invaded Russia. The invasion gave renewed impetus to that movement of Russian patriotism in a Soviet mould that Stalin had been encouraging since 1934. Thus “Vyacheslav Molotov, the Foreign Minister, gave a radio address in which he spoke of the impending ‘patriotic war for homeland, honour and freedom’. The next day the main Soviet army newspaper, Krasnaia Zvezda, referred to it as a ‘holy war’. Communism was conspicuously absent from Soviet propaganda in the war. It was fought in the name of Russia, of the ‘family of peoples’ in the Soviet Union, of Pan-Slav brotherhood, or in the name of Stalin, but never in the name of the communist system.”

Such patriotic appeals were necessary because, as Richard Overy writes, “by 1942 it was evident that the Communist Party alone could not raise the energies of the people for a struggle of this depth and intensity. The war with Germany was not like the war against the kulaks, or the war for greater production in the 1930s, although the almost continuous state of popular mobilization which these campaigns produced in some ways prepared the population to respond to emergency and improvisation. During 1942 the war was presented as a war to save historic Russia, a nationalist war of revenge against a monstrous, almost mythical enemy. The words ‘Soviet Union’ and ‘Communism’ appeared less and less frequently in official publications. The words ‘Russia’ and ‘Motherland’ took their place. The ‘Internationale’, the anthem of the international socialist movement played on state occasions, was replaced with a new nationalist anthem. The habits of military egalitarianism ingrained in the Red Army were swept aside. New medals were struck commemorating the military heroes of Russia’s past; the Tsarist Nevsky Order was revived but could be won only by officers. Aleksandr Nevsky, the Muscovite prince who drove back the Teutonic Knights in the thirteenth century, was a singularly apt parallel. In 1938 Stalin had ordered Sergei Eisenstein to produce a film on Nevsky. He interfered with the script to make the message clear about the German threat (and the virtues of authoritarianism). In 1939 the film was withdrawn following the Nazi-Soviet pact, but in 1942 it again became essential viewing.”

However, there was no genuine revival of Russian patriotism. Nor could there be, in spite of the modern peddling of the myth of “the Great Fatherland War” as a great victory for Russian patriotism over a foreign invader. For, as Anton Kuznetsov writes, “from the very beginning the Bolsheviks showed themselves to be an anti-Russian power, for which the concepts of Homeland, Fatherland, honour and duty do not exist; in whom the holy things of the Russian people elicit hatred; which replaced the word ‘Russia’ with the word ‘Internationale’, and the Russian flag with the red banner; which even in its national composition was not Russian: it was dominated by Jews (they

constituted a huge percentage, and at first it seemed as if it was a question of a purely 'Jewish power') and foreigners.

“During the 24 years of its domination the Bolshevik ('Soviet') power had had enormous successes in the annihilation of historical Russia. All classes were wiped out one by one: the nobility, the merchants, the peasantry, the clergy and the educated class (including all the Russian officers), and all the state institutions of what had been Russia were destroyed: the army, the police, the courts, local administration, charitable institutions, etc. A systematic annihilation of Russian culture was carried out – churches were blown up, museums were robbed, towns and streets were renamed, Russian family and everyday traditions were exterminated, Russian sciences and schools were liquidated, the whole of Russian history was blotted out and spat upon. In the place of the annihilated Russian element a red and Soviet element was created, beginning with the Red army and the Red professors and ending with Soviet orthography and Soviet sport. Our earthly Fatherland, Russia, was in fact destroyed, by terror she was transformed into the Sovdepia, which was a complete denial of Russia – it was anti-Russia. A Russian person has no right to forget that a consistent denial of Russian statehood is that on which the Soviet regime stood and on which it prided itself with emphasis.

“One has no right to call such a regime a national power. It must be defined as an anti-national, occupying power, the overthrow of which every honourable patriot can only welcome.”

As the Bolsheviks retreated, “the NKVD carried out a programme of liquidation of all the prisoners sitting in their jails. In the huge Lukyanov prison in Kiev thousands were shot in their cells. But in Stavropol they still had time to take the ‘contras’, including several old priests and monks, out of the city. They were led out onto the railway line from Kislovodsk to Moscow. At the small station of Mashuk, where the poet Lermontov had his duel, the wagons containing the prisoners were uncoupled from the trains and shunted into a siding at Kamenolomnya. Then the priests and monks were taken out with their hands bound and their eyes covered. In groups of five they were led to the edge of a sheer cliff, and thrust over the edge. Then the bodies were lifted up with hooks and covered with crushed stone and sand before a tractor levelled the area for the next wagon-full…”

“There is a myth that the only time Stalin ceased the war against his own people was during 1941 and 1942; but during that period, 994,000 servicemen were condemned, and 157,000 shot, more than fifteen divisions…”

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496 Chernov, up. cit.
497 Montefiore, Stalin, p. 401.
The Germans were in general greeted with ecstatic joy. Thus Solzhenitsyn writes: “Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia gave the Germans a jubilant welcome. Belorussia, the Western Ukraine, and the first occupied Russian territories followed suit. But the mood of the people was demonstrated most graphically of all by the Red Army: before the eyes of the whole world it retreated along a 2,000-kilometre front, on foot, but every bit as fast as motorized units. Nothing could possibly be more convincing than the way these men, soldiers in their prime, voted with their feet. Numerical superiority was entirely with the Red Army, they had excellent artillery and a strong tank force, yet back they rolled, a rout without compare, unprecedented in the annals of Russian and world history. In the first few months some three million officers and men had fallen into enemy hands!

“That is what the popular mood was like – the mood of peoples some of whom had lived through twenty-four years of communism and others but a single year. For them the whole point of this latest war was to cast off the scourge of communism. Naturally enough, each people was primarily bent not on resolving any European problem but on its own national task – liberation from communism…”

The Church During the War

By 1939 there were only four bishops, all of a sergianist persuasion, at liberty, and only a tiny handful of Orthodox churches of any persuasion open, in the whole of the country. Stalin had silenced his greatest enemy, the Church of Christ, and the Russian people were now apparently defenceless against the most powerful and antichristian state in the whole of human history...

However, the Word of God is not bound, and from 1941, thanks to the advance of the Germans deep into Russia, Orthodoxy experienced a miraculous revival. Thus “in the years of the war,” writes Anatoly Krasikov, “with the agreement of the German occupying authorities, 7547 Orthodox churches were opened (as against 1270 opened in 1944-1947 with the permission of the Council for the Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church).”

Even in fully Sovietized regions such as Pskov and the Eastern Ukraine, 95% of the population, according to German reports, flooded into the newly-opened churches. There was also a revival in Transnistria, the formerly Soviet region between the Dniestr and Bug rivers that had come under the control of the Germans’ allies, the Romanians. In September, 1941 the Romanian newcalendarist church sent a mission there under Archimandrite Julius

(Skriban) which opened many churches and monasteries. However, it also introduced the new calendar and the Romanian language even in mainly Ukrainian areas. The Ukrainian Autocephalous and Autonomous Churches were not allowed to operate in these regions by the Romanian authorities. This elicited protests from the Slavic believers.\footnote{Monk Benjamin, \textit{op. cit.}, part 3, pp. 31-32.}

In the Baltic region, the Germans were quite happy to deal with the MP’s exarch, Metropolitan Sergius (Voskresensky), who quickly showed his loyalty to them.\footnote{In Latvia, Metropolitan Augustine asked the Germans to allow him to re-establish the Latvian Church within the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. But they refused...} He immediately proceeded to bless the formation of an “Orthodox mission in the liberated regions of Russia”, otherwise known as the “Pskov Orthodox Mission”, whose official aim was the restoration of church life “destroyed by Soviet power”. This mission, staffed mainly by members of the Eulogian jurisdiction, included within its jurisdiction parts of the Leningrad and Kalinin regions, as well as the Pskov and Novgorod regions, with a population of about two million people.

Its third head was Protopriest Cyril Zaits, whose activity, according to Vasilyeva, “suited both the exarch and the occupation authorities. The mission supplied its own material needs, supplementing its resources from the profits of its economic section (which included a candle factory, a shop for church utensils and an icon studio) and from 10\% of the deductions coming from the parishes. Its monthly profits of 3-5000 marks covered the expenses of the administration, while the remaining money of the mission went on providing for theological courses in Vilnius.

“Priests were needed to restore church life in a number of parishes. And as he accompanied the missionaries [who were graduates of a theological seminary in Western Europe], ... the exarch said: ‘Don’t forget that you have come to a country where in the course of more than twenty years religion has been poisoned and persecuted in the most pitiless manner, where the people are frightened, humiliated, harried and depersonalised. You will have not only to restore church life, but also to arouse the people to new life from its hibernation of many years, explaining and pointing out to them the advantages and merits of the new life which is opening up for them.’”\footnote{O. Vasilieva, ‘Russkaia Pravoslavnaia Tserkov’ v 1927-1943 godakh’ (The Russian Orthodox Church from 1927 to 1943), \textit{Voprosy Istorii (Questions of History)}, 1994, No. 4, p. 44.} \footnote{Monk Benjamin, \textit{op. cit.}, part 3, p. 46.}

At the beginning the mission had only two open churches, one in Pskov and one in Gdov. But in November, 1942, Metropolitan Sergius succeeded in opening a theological seminary in Vilnius.\footnote{And by 1944 there were 200 parishes and 175 priests. Lectures were read on Pskov radio, help was given to Soviet prisoners of war, and a children’s home was created in a church in}
Pskov. The region, on the insistence of Metropolitan Sergius (an NKVD agent, after all), remained ecclesiastically part of the Leningrad diocese under Metropolitan Alexis (Simansky), whose name was commemorated in each service. However, while remaining formally within the MP, Metropolitan Sergius (Voskresensky) carried out the commands of the Germans. For example, in the summer of 1943 he ordered that a thanksgiving service with the participation of all the clergy should take place in Pskov to mark the Germans’ handing back of the land into the hands of the peasantry.

In general, the elders of the True Orthodox Church did not allow their spiritual children to fight in the Red Army, and some Catacomb Christians were martyred for their refusal to do so. They were also wary of the Germans, but took advantage of the possibility granted by the Germans of freedom of worship. Thus the Kiev-Caves Lavra was reopened, and Catacomb Schema-Archbishop Anthony (Abashidze) returned to it with his monks, staying there until his death in 1942. Also in Kiev, Archimandrite Michael (Kostyuk), together with Schema-Abbess Michaela (Shelkina), directed a large community of catacomb monks and nuns. They were even able to build an above-ground church with the permission of the Germans.

Josephite parishes continued to exist in German-occupied Russia. Thus Hieromonk Tikhon (Zorin), like other Josephite clergy, refused to work with the Pskov mission, but recognized the German authorities. But the Pskov mission was hostile to the Catacomb Church. Thus one of the priests of the Pskov mission, Protopriest Nicholas Zhundy, was appointed superior of the parish in the village of Meletovo, where the Josephite Hieromonk Sergius (Samsonik) was also serving. In December, 1942 he received the command from the mission “in every way to counteract the activities of the Josephite priest”. He was able to carry out this command, “having sorted out parish life in Meletovo”. Nothing more was ever heard of Fr. Sergius...

“In the whole,” writes M.V. Shkvarovsky, “the Catacomb Church in North-West Russia preferred to remain underground. The point was that the ‘Pskov Orthodox Mission’ (1941-1943), which existed with the permission of the commanding officers of army group ‘North’, was in canonical submission to the MP and tried to winkle out the secret communities. Schema-Bishop Macarius (Vasilyev), who settled in the Pskov-Caves monastery at the end of

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504 Chernov, op. cit. Soldatov (op. cit.) writes: “In the Catacomb Church a tradition has been preserved about Schema-Monk Leontius (Mymrikov), who blessed True Orthodox Christians to go to war against the communists”.

505 Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 3, p. 32.


1941, foretold the unsuccessful end of the war for Germany. Together with the secret Bishop of Pskov John (Lozhkov), he tried to enter into relations with Metropolitan Seraphim (Lyade) of Berlin and Germany, who belonged to ROCOR. However, the hieromonk whom he sent, Nicephorus (Richter-Mellin) was detained in Konigsberg on a train and sent back.

"The well-known historian of the Catacomb Church I. Andreyev (Andreyevsky) wrote that in spite of the insistent demands of the exarch of the Baltic, Metropolitan Sergius (Voskresensky), the True Orthodox priests, who began to serve in some of the opened churches, refused to commemorate the patriarchal locum tenens. 'Thus, for example, in the city of Soltsy in Novgorod diocese the mitre-bearing Protopriest Fr. V., former dean of the churches of the city of Minsk, who then became a catacomb priest, in spite of the very severe command of the dean of the Novgorod region Fr. Basil Rushanov, categorically refused to commemorate the Soviet Metropolitan Sergius. This was in 1942. And in 1943 and 1944 Fr. B. began to commemorate Metropolitan Anastasy [Gribanovsky].'

"The fact that most of the communities of the True Orthodox Christians in Leningrad region during the occupation remained underground allowed them to continue their activity even after the end of the war, in spite of the deaths of their leaders... In a series of other regions of the country the German High Command was more favourably disposed to the Catacomb Christians: in Bryansk, Orel and Voronezh districts, and also in Belorussia, the Crimea and on the Don."508

Perhaps for this reason, on July 7, 1944, as the Red Army returned to the occupied territories, Beria wrote to Stalin asking permission for the deportation of 1,673 Catacomb Christians from the Ryazan, Voronezh and Orel regions to Siberia. He described the Catacomb Christians as "leading a parasitical way of life, not paying taxes, refusing to fulfil their obligations and service, and forbidding their children to go to school."509 As Bishop Irinarchus of Tula and Briansk writes: "In 1943, according to the personal order of Stalin, several hundred Catacomb Orthodox Christians were removed from Tula and Ryazan regions and sent to Siberia. Many of them perished, but not all, glory to God. In Tula region they have been preserved to this day [2004]. The Lord entrusted them to me, and with God’s help I am spiritually caring for them..."


“Before the war only a few Catacomb priests were surviving in Briansk region. But when the region was occupied by the Germans, several hundred churches were opened in it, where they commemorated, not Metropolitan Sergius (Stragorodsky) as first hierarch, but Metropolitan Anastasy, the head of ROCOR. In Briansk region the Catacomb Christians were served by Bishop Stefan (Sevbo). Under the pressure of the red army Bishop Stefan and many clergy and laity emigrated to Belorussia, and then to Germany. Vladyka Stefan later ruled the Viennese diocese of ROCOR, and died in 1965.”

M.V. Shkarovskiy writes that “the activity of the True Orthodox Christians seriously worried the higher leadership of the country. It received discouraging reports about a significant rise in the influence of the catacomb movement in the first years of the war. Thus the July, 1943 special communication of the head of the NKVD Administration in Penza province spoke of the activity of more than 20 illegal and semi-illegal groups that arranged prayers in private flats. In some region there were hundreds of these groups. In the report of the president of the Council for the affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church, G. Karpov, to V. Molotov dated October 5, 1944, it was emphasised: ‘In the provinces with an insignificant number of functioning churches, and in the regions where there are no churches, a massive spreading of group worship in the homes of believers or in the open air has been noticed… Moreover, in these cases, believers invite clergy who are not registered to carry out the rite… A significant part of the activists of these unregistered church groups, together with their clergy, are hostile to the legal patriarchal church, condemning the latter for its loyal relationship to Soviet power and for its patriotic stance…”

**The Church in Belorussia and Ukraine**

In Belorussia, the Germans tried to create an autocephalous Belorussian Church that would be independent of both Great Russian and Polish influence (Catholic Poles were doing a lot of missionary work in the region). To this end, on October 3, 1941 Metropolitan Panteleimon (Rozhnevsky) and Bishop Benedict of Brest were allowed them to create an independent Belorussian Church (to be called “Autocephalous”) whose internal life would be free from interference from the German authorities and in which services would be in Church Slavonic, but whose preaching and ecclesiastical correspondence would be in Belorussian. The two bishops accepted these conditions and on October 6 officially published “Act № 1 of the proceedings of the Council of the Belorussian Orthodox Church”. Archbishop Panteleimon

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510 “Interviu s episkopom Irinarkhom Tul’skim i Brianskim (RPATs)” (Interview with Bishop Irinarch of Tula and Briansk (ROAC), *Vertograd*, № 440, 10 March, 2004 ®.
511 Shkarovsky, *Russkaiia Pravoslavnaia Tserkov’ pri Staline i Khruscheve (The Russian Orthodox Church under Stalin and Khruschev)*, Moscow, 2005, pp. 250-251 ®.
was to move from the Zhirovitsky monastery to Minsk, be called “Metropolitan of Minsk and All Russia” and open a theological seminary.\textsuperscript{512}

However, at a Council in Minsk in 1942 the Synod of the Belorussian Church insisted that the autocephaly of their Church would have to be approved by the other Autocephalous Churches. This displeased the Germans; they appointed Bishop Philotheus of Slutsk in the place of Metropolitan Panteleimon, who was exiled to the monastery of Lyade.\textsuperscript{513} According to another source, however, Metropolitan Panteleimon at first refused to accept the idea of a Belorussian Autonomous Church in communion with the MP, and refused to concelebrate with the MP’s exarch in the Baltic, Metropolitan Sergius (Voskresensky). And that was why the more pliable Bishop Philotheus of Slutsk was appointed as de facto head of the Church in Belorussia.\textsuperscript{514}

“In August-September 1942,” writes Michael Woerl, “under pressure from both the Germans and their Belorussian nationalist cohorts, Archbishop Philotheus summoned a council of the Belorussian Church with the blessing of Metropolitan Panteleimon, but only he, Bishop Athanasius, and Bishop Stefan (Sevbo)… were allowed to take part. On the question of the Belorussian Church declaring itself to be autocephalous, the bishops stated that this could not be done without the knowledge and agreement of the other local Churches, which they knew would be impossible because, among other things, a world war was in progress.\textsuperscript{515} However, a letter addressed to the heads of the autocephalous Orthodox Churches was signed by Metropolitan Panteleimon and given to the German authorities, but it was never sent.

“Archbishop Philotheus and his fellow hierarchs persistently sought the return of Metropolitan Panteleimon, who finally was allowed by the Germans to return to Minsk in April of 1943. In May of 1944, the council of bishops met, and rejected the idea of seeking the autocephaly that had been attempted by the nationalistic element.”\textsuperscript{516}

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{512} Archbishop Athanasius (Martos); Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 3, p. 33.
\textsuperscript{513} See Mikhail Woerl, “Dobrij Pastyr’” (A Good Pastor), Pravoslavnaia Rus’ (Orthodox Russia), № 24 (1597), December 15/28, 1997, p. 7; Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 3, p. 43 ®.
\textsuperscript{515} Nevertheless, they did call the Church “autocephalous”: “The first All-Belorussian Orthodox Church Council in history meeting in Minsk in the name of the Orthodox Belorussians sends you, Mr. Reich-Chancellor, heartfelt gratitude for the liberation of Belorussia from the Muscovite-Bolshevik yoke, for giving us the opportunity freely to organize our religious life in the form of the Holy Belorussian Orthodox Autocephalous Church, and desires the speediest and complete victory to your unconquerable arms.” (V.M.)
\end{footnotesize}
Throughout this period, the Belorussian Church had no contact with the MP - the Germans forbade the commemoration of Sergius. So formally speaking the Belorussians were not part of the MP. Moreover, in October, 1943, they were represented by a bishop and a priest at a Council of the anti-communist Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia (ROCOR) in Vienna, so de facto they were now in communion with ROCOR. At that council the election of Metropolitan Sergius as “Patriarch” was condemned as uncanonical, and a bishop, George, was consecrated for the see of Gomel and Mozyr by ROCOR.517 Another Belorussian hierarch, Bishop Stefan (Sevbo) of Smolensk, had good relations with the Catacomb Church.518 And after fleeing to the West after the war the entire episcopate was received into ROCOR “in their existing rank” on April 23 / May 6, 1946.519

In Ukraine, the Germans allowed the creation of two Churches independent of the MP. The Ukrainian Autocephalous Church was in essence a reactivation of the Lypkivsky “self-consecrators” schism, which had flourished in the Ukraine in the 1920s before being eliminated by Stalin, via the Polish Autocephalous Church. Thus on December 24, 1941, Metropolitan Dionysius of Warsaw, at the request of Ukrainian political and social-ecclesiastical activists, appointed Archbishop Polycarp (Sikorsky) of Lutsk as “Temporary Administrator of the Orthodox Autocephalous Church on the liberated lands of Ukraine” 520 Into this Church, without reordination, poured the remnants of the Lypkivsky schism, which soon led it onto the path of extreme Ukrainian nationalism. About 40% of the Orthodox in the Ukraine were attracted into this Church, which was especially strong in the West; but it had no monastic life, and very soon departed from traditional Orthodoxy.

On August 18, 1941, a Council of Bishops meeting in the Pochaev monastery elected Metropolitan Alexis (Gromadsky) as leader of the Ukrainian Autonomous Church, which based her existence on the decision of the Pochaev Synod.521

518 “Good, albeit also not unambiguous relations were established between the True Orthodox Christians and the Belorussian Church. In particular, thanks precisely to the catacombniki the Belorussian Church took a more anti-patriarchal stand and entered into conflict with Metropolitan Sergius (Voskresensky), who was trying to infiltrate his people into Belorussia. The most ardent relations were with Bishop Stefan (Sevbo) of Smolensk (+1963), who even ordained several priests for the True Orthodox Christians and of whom a good memory was preserved in the ‘catacombs’. It was precisely in Smolensk province and Mozhaisk district in Moscow province that the True Orthodox Christians became so active that they regenerated and greatly increased their flock, which had become very thin on the ground since the repressions of 1937” (Archbishop Ambrose (von Sievers), “Istinno-Pravoslavnie Khristiane i Vojna 1941-1945gg.” (True Orthodox Christians and the War, 1941-1945), Russkoe Pravoslavie (Russian Orthodoxy), № 1 (15), 1999, pp. 23-24®).
519 The whole of the Ukrainian Autonomous Church was also received into the ROCOR at this time. See Pravoslavnaia Rus’ (Orthodox Russia), № 20 (1545), October 15/28, 1995, p. 4; Alexeyev, W. and Stavrou, T., The Great Revival, op. cit., chapter 4.
520 Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 3, p. 35.
the 1917-18 Local Council of the Russian Church granting the Ukrainian Church autonomy within the framework of the Russian Church. Although the Germans tended to favour the Autocephalous Church over the Autonomous Church, it was the latter that attracted the majority of believers (55%) and opened the most churches. It even attracted catacomb priests, such as Archimandrite Leontius (Filippovich), who after his consecration as Bishop of Zhitomir restored about 50% of the pre-revolutionary parishes in his diocese and ordained about two hundred priests, including the future leader of the “Seraphimo-Gennadiiite” branch of the Catacomb Church, Gennadius Sekach, before he (Leontius) himself fled westwards with the Germans and joined ROCOR.521 Also linked with the Autonomous Churches was the Georgian Schema-Archbishop Anthony (Abashidze), who lived in retirement in Kiev.

Andrew Psarev writes: “The Ukrainian Autonomous Church was formally subject to the Moscow Patriarchate, insofar as her leading hierarchs considered that they did not have the canonical right to declare themselves an autocephaly. But since the Moscow Patriarchate was subject to the Bolsheviks, in her administrative decisions the Autonomous Church was completely independent, which is why her spiritual condition was different from that of the Moscow Patriarchate.”522

On March 30, 1942 the Autonomous Church sent an Archpastoral Epistle to its children, declaring that the newly formed autocephalists were to be considered as “the Lipkovtsy sect”, and all the clergy ordained by them – graceless. In consequence, and because the Autonomous Church did not go along with the extreme nationalist politics of the autocephalists, it suffered persecution in the German-occupied regions both from the autocephalists and the Ukrainian nationalist “Benderite” partisans, who had formed an alliance. Thus S. Raevsky writes: “The autocephalist bishop in Rovno, Platon Artemiuk, was closely linked with the Benderite centre in Derman; he twice went to their headquarters and was twice triumphantly received by them, going between two rows of Benderite youngsters dressed in Gestapo-like uniforms, and sat at a meal with them. Here at the centre it was decided to kill


522 Psarev, op. cit., p. 10. The Ukrainian Autonomous Church was also represented at the ROCOR’s Council in Vienna in 1943, which condemned the election of Sergius as uncanonical (Woerl, op. cit.)
the head of the Ukrainian Autonomous Orthodox Church, Metropolitan Alexis (Gromadsky), and the resolution was put into effect on May 7, 1943.

“The Benderites also killed another hierarch of the Autonomous Church, Manuel (Tarnavsky), who was taken from his flat in Vladimir in Volhynia at night and hanged in the wood [on July 9/22]. The Benderites mercilessly liquidated the older priests who did not want to betray their oath and enter into the Ukrainian Autocephaly, while the younger ones were beaten almost to death and expelled from their parishes. So many older priests perished, receiving martyrlic deaths for standing on guard for Orthodoxy. As an example we may speak about the martyrlic death of the elder and protopriest Meletius Ryzhkovsky in the village of Malaya Moschanka, in Dubensk uyezd, who refused to serve services in Ukrainian. The Benderites arrived at his house and began to beat him, then cut him up with knives, before casting him still half alive head first into a well.”

Although the period of revival of ecclesiastical life in these regions was brief, it had important consequences for the future. First, many of the churches reopened in this period were not again closed by the Soviets when they returned. Secondly, some of those bishops and priests who could not, or chose not to, escape westwards after the war went underground and helped to keep the Catacomb Church alive in the post-war period. And thirdly, ROCOR received an injection of new bishops and priests from those who fled westwards to Germany in the closing stages of the war.

**ROCOR and the Germans**

It was natural for ROCOR to welcome the resurrection of Orthodoxy in the German-occupied territories. Thus in his paschal epistle for 1942 Metropolitan Anastasy wrote: “The day that they (the Russian people) expected has come, and it is now truly rising from the dead in those places where the courageous German sword has succeeded in severing its fetters... Both ancient Kiev, and much-suffering Smolensk and Pskov are radiantly celebrating their deliverance as if from the depths of hell. The liberated part of the Russian people everywhere has already begun to chant: ‘Christ is risen!’”

In June, the ROCOR Synod made some suggestions to the German authorities on the organization of the Church in Russia. In June it wrote: “…In the spirit of the canons of the Orthodox Church there exists only one solution in the question of the organization of the Church’s administration, and that is the convening of a Council of Russian hierarchs by the eldest among them and the appointment by this Council of a temporary head of the Church and

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524 *Tserkovnaia Zhizn’* (Church Life), 1942, № 4; Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.* part 3, p. 41.
of the rest of the Church administration.” The final organization of the
governing organs and the election of a Patriarch could take place, in the
opinion of the Synod, only when ‘hierarchs will be appointed to all the vacant
sees and normal relations are established in the country’.

However, the real attitude of the Germans to the Orthodox Faith was
hostile. A. Rosenberg, the head of the ministry of the East, said that “the
Church’s Yahweh is now dead, as Wotan was dead 1500 years ago”. Hitler,
while feigning religious tolerance for political reasons, was “utterly
irreligious”. Thus “the heaviest blow that ever struck humanity,” he said,
“was the coming of Christianity. Bolshevism is Christianity's illegitimate
child. Both are inventions of the Jew. The deliberate lie in religion was
introduced into the world by Christianity. Bolshevism practises a lie of the
same nature, when it claims to bring liberty to men, only to enslave them.”
At the same time he recognized that Christianity "can't be broken so simply. It
must rot and die off like a gangrened limb." And on April 11, 1942, he said:
"We must avoid having one solitary church to satisfy the religious needs of
large districts, and each village must be made into an independent sect,
worshipping God in its own fashion. If some villages as a result wish to
practise black magic, after the fashion of Negroes or Indians, we should do
nothing to hinder them. In short, our policy in the wide Russian spaces
should be to encourage any and every form of dissension and schism.”

The Germans wanted to prepare new priestly cadres who would conform
to their views on the Jews. On October 31, 1941 a directive went out from the
Main Administration of Imperial Security for the Reich: “The resolution of the
ecclesiastical question in the occupied eastern provinces is an exceptionally
important… task, which with a little skill can be magnificently solved in
favour of a religion that is free from Jewish influence. However, this influence
is predicated on the closing of churches in the eastern provinces that are
infected with Jewish dogmas…”

One thing the Germans did not want was the resurrection of the Great
Russian people through the Church. On May 16, 1942 Rosenberg said in Riga
to a meeting of General and Security Commissars: “The Russian Orthodox
Church was a political instrument of the power of tsarism, and now our

525 Synodal Archive of the ROCOR in New York, d. 15/41, l.27-30; Monk Benjamin, op. cit.,
part 3, p. 44.
527 Overy, Russia’s War, p. 162.
528 Cited in Bullock, op. cit., p. 801.
529 Cited by W. Alexeyev and T. Stavrou, The Great Revival, Minneapolis: Burgess Publishing
Co., 1979, pp. 60-61.
530 I. Altman, Kholokost i evrejskoe soprotivlenie na okkupirovannoj territorii SSSR (The Holocaust
and Jewish resistance in the occupied territories of the USSR); Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 3,
p. 34.
political task consists in creating other ecclesiastical forms where the Russian Church used to exist. In any case we will hinder the Great Russian Orthodox Church from lording it over all the nationalitie… We should think more about introducing the Latin script instead of the Russian. Therefore it is also appropriate that some churches should remain as far as possible restricted to the province of one General Commissar… It is also appropriate for Estonia and Latvia that they should have their own national churches…”

Again, on August 8, 1942 the head of the German General Commissariat wrote to Archbishop Philotheus, temporary head of the Belorussian Church, forbidding the baptism of Jews, the opening of work-houses attached to monasteries, the opening of theological seminaries and academies without the permission of the German authorities and the teaching of the Law of God in school. He also removed the juridical status of Church marriages. It was becoming clear that the authorities were not intending to give any rights to the Orthodox Church in Belorussia.

On August 12, Archbishop Seraphim (Lyade) wrote from Vienna to Metropolitan Anastasy: “With regard to the question of sending priests to Russia: unfortunately, according to all available data, the higher government authorities are so far not well-disposed towards a positive solution of this question. I made several petitions, but without success. In all probability, the authorities suspect that the clergy from abroad are bearers of a political ideology that is unacceptable for the German authorities at the present time. I did not even succeed in getting permission to transfer several priests to Germany from abroad (for example, Fr. Rodzianko), and according to the information I have received permission was not given because these priests supposedly worked together with émigré political organizations.”

On October 21, 1943, with the permission of the Germans (the first time they had given such permission), Metropolitan Anastasy came to Vienna from Belgrade and convened a Conference of bishops (Seraphim (Lukyanov), Seraphim (Lyade), Benedict (Bobkovsky), Basil (Pavlovsky), Philip (von Gardner), Gregory (Boriskevich)). On October 25 the bishops condemned the election of the patriarch as unlawful and invalid, comparing Sergius’ compromises to the third temptation of the Saviour, “to whom Satan promised to give all the kingdoms of the world if He would worship him”.

“The conference composed and sent to the German authorities a memorandum which contained a series of bold demands. The memorandum

531 Shkarovsky, *Pravoslavie i Rossia* (Orthodoxy and Russia); Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 3, pp. 41-42.
532 Archbishop Athanasius (Martos); Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 3, p. 45.
533 ROCOR Synodal Archive in New York, d. 15/41, l.27-30; Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 3, pp. 45-46.
534 Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 3, pp. 63-64.
is the best proof of the fact that the Conference took decisions independently, and not at the command of the Nazis. In it first of all should be highlighted the protest against the Nazis’ not allowing the Russian clergy abroad to go to the occupied territories of the USSR. The memorandum demanded ‘the removal of all obstacles hindering the free movement of bishops from this side of the front’, and the reunion of bishop ‘on occupied territories and abroad’. (A.K. Nikitin, Polozhenie russkoj pravoslavnoj obschiny v Germanii v period natsistkogo rezhima (1933-1945 gg.) [The Situation of the Russian Orthodox Community in Germany in the Nazi period (1933-1945)], Annual Theological Conference PSTBI, Moscow, 1998). A vivid expression of this protest was the consecration by the participants of the Conference of Bishop Gregory (Boriskevich). He was consecrated for the Belorussian Autonomous Church and received the title of Bishop of Gomel and Mozyr. At the Council an appeal to Russian believers was agreed. The conference did not send any greetings to Hitler or other leaders of the Third Reich. The third agreed point was unexpected for the Nazi institutions. De facto it contained a critique of German policy in relation to the Russian Church and included demands for greater freedom: ‘(1) The free development and strengthening of the Orthodox Church in the occupied regions and the unification of all Orthodox ecclesiastical provinces liberated from Soviet power with the Orthodox Church Abroad under one common ecclesiastical leadership would serve as an earnest of the greater success of these parts of the Russian Church in the struggle with atheist communism... (3) It is necessary to give Russian workers in Germany free satisfaction of all their spiritual needs. (4) In view of the great quantity of various Russian military units in the German army, it is necessary to create an institution of military priests... (6) A more energetic preaching of the Orthodox religio-moral world-view... (9) Petition for the introduction of apologetic programmes on the radio... (10) The organization of theological libraries attached to the parishes... (13) Giving Orthodox ecclesiastical authorities the possibility of opening theological schools and the organization of pastoral and religio-moral courses.’”

As the war progressed and the behaviour of the Germans became steadily crueler, the attitude of the Russian Orthodox to them changed. As Metropolitan Anastasy wrote in October, 1945, in response to Patriarch Alexis’ charge that ROCOR sympathised with the Nazis: “… The Patriarch is not right to declare that ‘the leaders of the ecclesiastical life of the Russian emigration’ performed public prayers for the victories of Hitler’. The Hierarchical Synod never prescribed such prayers and even forbade them, demanding that Russian people prayed at that time only for the salvation of Russia. Of course, it is impossible to conceal the now well-known fact that, exhausted by the hopelessness of their situation and reduced almost to

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535 Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 3, pp. 64-65; M.V. Shkarovsky, RPTsZ na Balkanakh v gody Vtoroj Mirovoj Vojny [ROCOR in the Balkans in the years of the Second World War]; Bishop Gregory (Grabbe), Arkhieiejskij Synod vo II Mirovuyu Vojnu [The Hierarchical Synod in World War II].
despair by the terror reigning in Russia, Russian people both abroad and in Russia itself placed hopes on Hitler, who declared an irreconcilable war against communism (as is well-known, this is the explanation for the mass surrender of the Russian armies into captivity at the beginning of the war), but when it became evident that he was in fact striving to conquer Ukraine, Crimea and the Caucasus and other rich regions of Russia, and that he not only despised the Russian people, but was even striving to annihilate it, and that in accordance with his command our prisoners had been starved to death, and that the German army during its retreat had burned and destroyed to their foundations Russian cities and villages on their path, and had killed or led away their population, and had condemned hundreds of thousands of Jews with women and children to death, forcing them to dig graves for themselves, then the hearts of all reasonable people – except those who ‘wanted to be deceived’ - turned against him…” 536

G.M. Soldatov writes: “It was suggested to the metropolitan [by the Germans] that he issue an appeal to the Russian people calling on them to cooperate with the German army, which was going on a crusade to liberate Russia from the Bolsheviks. If he were to refuse to make the address, Vladyka was threatened with internment. However, the metropolitan refused, saying that German policy and the purpose of the crusade was unclear to him. In 1945 his Holiness Patriarch Gabriel of Serbia witnessed to Metropolitan Anastasy’s loyalty to Serbia and the Germans’ distrust of him…

“Referring to documents of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other departments of the German government, the historian M.V. Shkarovsky pointed out that Metropolitan Anastasy and the clergy of ROCOR were trying to go to Russia to begin organizing missionary and charitable work there, but this activity did not correspond to the plans of Germany, which wanted to see Russia weak and divided in the future.” 537

Nevertheless, of the two alternatives – the Germans or the Soviets – ROCOR quite understandably considered the latter the more dangerous enemy. For Soviet power had been anathematized at the Russian Local Council in 1918, and had subjected the Russian Church to a persecution that was unprecedented in the history of Christianity. Thus in November, 1944 Metropolitan Anastasy addressed the Russian Liberation Movement as follows: “In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit! From ancient times there has existed such a custom in the Russian land; before undertaking any good work, especially a collective work, they used to

536 Poslanie k russkim pravoslavnym liuidiam po povodu ‘Obraschenia patriarkha Aleksia k arkipastyriam i kliru tak nazvvaemoj Karlovatskoj orientatsii’ (Epistle to the Russian Orthodox people on the ‘Address of Patriarch Alexis to the archpastors and clergy of the so-called Karlovtsy orientation), in G.M. Soldatov, Arkhierejskij Sobor Russkoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi Zagranitsej, Miunkhen (Germania) 1946 g. (The Hierarchical Council of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad at Munich in 1946), Minneapolis, 2003, p. 13 ©.
537 Soldatov, op. cit, pp. 12, 13.
ask the blessing of God on it. And you have gathered here, dear brothers and fellow-countrypeople, you workers and inspirer of the Russian national movement, thereby demonstrating the historical link of the great work of the liberation of Russia with the actions of our fathers and great-grandfathers... We are now all united by one feeling - a feeling of deadly irreconcilability with the Bolshevik evil and a flaming desire to extirpate it on the Russian land. For we know that as long as it reigns there, no rational human life is possible, no spiritual movement forward; as long as this evil threatens both our fatherland and the whole of Europe, death and destruction will be established everywhere. And insofar as you, dear brothers and sisters, are striving to crush this terrible evil... you are doing a truly patriotic, even more than that, universal work, and the Church cannot fail to bless your great and holy beginning... Dear brothers and sisters, let us all unite around this Liberation Movement of ours, let each of us struggle on this path and help the common great work of the liberation of our Homeland, until this terrible evil of Bolshevism falls and our tormented Russia is raised from her bed...”

**The Stalin-Sergius Pact**

Not only all patriotic and cultural forces, but also the Church was enrolled in defence of the Soviet “motherland”. Thus on the very first day of the invasion, Metropolitan Sergius (Stragorodsky) made an appeal to the nation to support the Soviets. Then the Germans asked the MP’s exarch in the Baltic, Metropolitan Sergius (Voskresensky), who had refused to be evacuated eastwards with the Red Army, to react to it. His response was: “Soviet power has subjected the Orthodox Church to an unheard of persecution. Now the punishment of God has fallen on this power... Above the signature of Metropolitan Sergius of Moscow and Kolomna, the patriarchal locum tenens, the Bolsheviks have distributed an absurd appeal, calling on the Russian people to resist the German liberators. We know that the blessed Sergius, a man of great learning and zealous faith, could not himself compose such an illiterate and shameless appeal. Either he did not sign it at all, or he signed it under terrible threats...”

Sergius Shumilo writes: “The hierarchs of the Moscow Patriarchate on the territories that remained under the Soviets officially declared a ‘holy war’ and unambiguously called on the people to fight on the side of the God-hating regime of Stalin. Thus Metropolitan Sergius, who had usurped for himself the title ‘patriarchal locum tenens’, already on the first day of the war, June 22, 1941, appealed to ‘the Soviet people’, not only calling on them to ‘the defence of the Soviet Homeland’, but also declaring ‘a direct betrayal of pastoral duty’ even the very thought that the clergy might have of ‘possible advantages to be

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538 I.L. Solonevich, “Rossia v kontslagerere” (Russia in the concentration camp), Volia naroda (The Will of the People), November 22, 1944; Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 3, pp. 78-79.
539 M.V. Shkarovsky, *Pravoslavie i Rossia* (Orthodoxy and Russia); Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 3, p. 31.
gained on the other side of the front’. With the cooperation of the NKVD this appeal was sent to all the parishes in the country, where it was read after services as a matter of obligation.

“Not having succeeded in starting the war first, and fearing to lose the support of the people, Stalin’s regime in desperation decided to use a German propaganda trick – the cultivation of national-patriotic and religious feelings in the people. As E.I. Lisavtsev affirms, already in July, 1941 unofficial negotiations took place for the first time between Stalin’s government and Metropolitan Sergius. In the course of a programme of anti-Hitlerite propaganda that was worked out in October, 1941, when the German armies had come right up to Moscow, Metropolitan Sergius issued an Epistle in which he discussed the Orthodox hierarchs and clergy who had made contact on the occupied territories with the local German administration. De facto all the hierarchs and clergy on the territories occupied by the Germans, including those who remained in the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate, came under Metropolitan Sergius’ excommunication.

“Having issued the Epistle, Metropolitan Sergius and all the members of the chancellery of the MP, together with the Soviet government and the leadership of the Soviet army and the NKVD, were evacuated from Moscow to Ulyanovsk (formerly Simbirsk), where on November 24 Metropolitan Sergius delivered a new appeal to the people, in which he called them to ‘a holy war for Christian civilization, for freedom of conscience and faith’. In all during the years of the war S. Stragorodsky delivered more than 23 similar addresses. Metropolitan Nicholas (Yarushevich) also repeatedly called to a ‘holy war’; his appeals to the partisans and the people in the form of leaflets were scattered in enormous quantities by Soviet military aviation onto the territories occupied by the German armies. However, such epistles only provoked the German command, and elicited reprisals against the local clergy and population. Besides this, Metropolitan Nicholas repeatedly appealed to the ‘erring’ Romanian and Bulgarian Orthodox Churches, to the Romanian and Bulgarian soldiers who were fighting on the side of Germany, and also to the population and Church in Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Greece and other countries. Nicholas Yarushevich himself was appointed a member of the so-called ‘Pan-Orthodox Committee’ created according to a decision of the communist party, and also of the Extraordinary State Commission for the investigation of fascist crimes. And it is precisely on Metropolitan Nicholas, as a member of this commission, that there falls the blame for the lie and disinformation concerning Stalin’s crimes: he was among those who signed the unprecedentedly mendacious declaration to the effect that the shootings of thousands of Polish officers in a wood near Katyn were carried out by the Germans, and not by Soviet punishment squads, as was the case in actual fact. Moreover these were not the only such cases.
“It was for the same propagandistic aims that in 1942, in the printing-house of the Union of Militant Atheists, which had temporarily been handed over for the use of the MP, there appeared in several foreign languages a solidly produced book, *The Truth about Religion in Russia*, the foreword to which was composed by S. Stragorodsky. As it said in the foreword: ‘… This book is a reply first of all to the “crusade” of the fascists undertaken by them supposedly for the sake of liberating our people and our Orthodox Church from the Bolsheviks’. The whole of the book, from the first page to the last, is overflowing with outpourings of unreserved devotion to Stalin’s regime and with false assurances about ‘complete religious freedom in the USSR’.  

“The text of the telegram of Metropolitan Sergius of Moscow on November 7, 1942 addressed to Stalin on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Bolshevik coup sounds like an evil joke, a mockery of the memory of hundreds of thousands of martyrs for the faith who perished during the years of the Stalinist repressions: ‘In your person I ardently and prayerfully greet the God-chosen leader of our military and cultural forces, leading us to victory over the barbarian invasion...’  

“However, besides propagandistic and ideological support for the Soviet regime, the clergy and parishioners of the MP also provided serious financial help to the army in the field. Thus in a telegram of Metropolitan Sergius to I. Stalin on February 25, 1943 we are formed: ‘On the day of the jubilee of our victorious Red Army I greet you as its Supreme Commander in the name of the clergy and believers of the Russian Orthodox Church, I prayerfully desire that you experience the joy of complete victory over the enemy... The believers in their desire to help the Red Army have willingly responded to my appeal: they have collected money to build a tank column in the name Demetrius Donskoy. In all about 6,000,000 roubles have been collected, and, besides, a large quantity of gold and silver things...’”  

In fact, all parishes in Soviet Russia were required to make contributions to the Soviet war effort. Sergius – the “compatriarch” or communist patriarch, as the Germans called him - announced huge contributions towards the outfitting of a tank unit. From November, 1941 even the last open church of the Josephites in Leningrad, that of the Holy Trinity in Lesny, began to contribute. However, helping the Soviet war effort and remaining True

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540 Sergius wrote: “With complete objectivity we must declare that the Constitution, which guarantees complete freedom for the carrying out of religious worship, in no way constrains the religious life of believers and the Church in general…” Concerning the trials of clergy and believers, he said: “These were purely political trials which had nothing to do with the purely ecclesiastical life of religious organizations and the purely ecclesiastical work of individual clergy. No, the Church cannot complain about the authorities.”

Orthodox were clearly incompatible aims; and in November, 1943 the Trinity parish applied to join the Moscow Patriarchate...\(^{542}\)

Shumilo continues: “Taking into consideration this loyal position of the leadership of the MP, and relying on the successful experiment of Nazi Germany on the occupied territories, Stalin, after long hesitations, finally decided on a more broadly-based use of religion in order to attain his own political ends. The more so in that this would help the new imposition of communist tyranny on the ‘liberated’ territories and in the countries of Eastern Europe. ‘First of all,’ wrote the Exarch of the MP in the Baltic region, Metropolitan Sergius (Voskresensky), in his report to the German occupying authorities already on November 12, 1941, ‘for the Soviet state the existence of legal ecclesiastical administration was very important for purposes of advertisement and propaganda. In the foreign Jewish press, which wanted to attract the hearts of its liberal readers to “Stalin’s constitution”, it was possible to point to the existence of the “Patriarchate” as an indisputable proof that in the Soviet state even the Orthodox Church, that support of tsarist reaction, had complete religious freedom. On the other hand, if the patriarchal administration and its members were annihilated, it would be difficult to bring the press abroad to silence. This would elicit a particularly powerful and long-lasting response among the Orthodox Balkan peoples... The existence of the patriarchal administration was allowed, since its abolition, like any form of open persecution of the Church, would not correspond to the interests of the subtle atheist propaganda, and could elicit politically undesirable disturbances in the broad masses of the Orthodox believers (their number is calculated at from 30 to 60 million) and arouse still greater hatred for the authorities.

“‘The forcible disbanding of the officially recognized leadership of the patriarchate would inevitably call into existence a secret leadership, which would significantly increase the difficulties of police supervision... In general there has existed in Russia a very lively secret religious life (secret priests and monks; secret places for prayer; secret Divine services; christenings; confessions; communions; marriages; secret theological studies; secret possession of the Sacred Scriptures, liturgical vessels, icons, sacred books; secret relations between communities).

“‘In order to destroy the catacomb patriarchate also, they would have to execute all the bishops, including the secret ones that would undoubtedly be consecrated in case of need. And if we imagine the impossible, that the whole ecclesiastical organization would be annihilated, then faith would still remain, and atheism would not make a single step forward. The Soviet government

understood this, and preferred to allow the existence of a patriarchal administration.”

“But there were other more substantial reasons: already at the end of September, 1941 William Everell, the authorized representative of President Franklin Roosevelt of the USA in Moscow, during negotiations with Molotov and Stalin with regard to drawing the USA onto the side of the USSR in the war with Nazi Germany, raised the question of politics in relation to religion in the USSR. For Roosevelt this was one of the key questions, on which depended the final result of the negotiations and the possibility of giving military help to the USSR. In connection with this, on October 4, 1941 the Soviet deputy foreign minister Solomon Lozovsky assured the delegation of the USA that religion both in the USSR and outside it had a great significance for raising the patriotic spirit in a country, and for that reason, if some faults and mistakes had been admitted in the past, they would be corrected. So as to imitate so-called ‘freedom of conscience’ in the USSR and thereby win over the countries of the West, Stalin began cautiously flirting with religion. But in the beginning not with the Moscow Patriarchate, … but with the Vatican…

“Cardinal changes in the internal politics of Stalin in relation to the Moscow Patriarchate… took place in the second half of 1943. At the beginning of autumn the leaders of the allied countries in the anti-Hitlerite coalition were preparing for their first personal meeting in Teheran. Stalin placed great hopes on the Teheran meeting, and so he sought out various means of urging on the allies. First of all, public movements in England and the USA for giving help to the USSR were given the most active support. Among these organizations with whose leaders Stalin carried out a personal correspondence, was Hewitt Johnson, the rector of the cathedral church of Canterbury. The Soviet historian V. Alexeev thinks that ‘this was a partner whom Stalin treasured, and who had no small influence in an allied country, where the Anglican church was the state religion.’

“Besides Hewitt Johnson, other hierarchs of the Anglican church were actively involved into the movement for the speediest provision of help to the USSR, including Archbishop Cosmo Lang. More than a thousand activists of the Episcopalian church of the U.S.A. addressed similar appeals to the president of the USA Franklin Roosevelt. Moreover, by the autumn of 1943 the leadership of the Anglican church had addressed the Soviet government through the embassy of the USSR in Great Britain with a request to allow a

544 See D. Volkogonov, Triumf i Tragedia (Triumph and Tragedy), Moscow: Novosti, 1989, book II, part 1, pp. 382-83 ©; Shkvarovsky, losifianstvo, op. cit., p. 185. Donald Rayfield writes: “Stalin may also have listened to an American envoy, who had pointed out that Congress would not hesitate to send the USSR military aid if religious suppression stopped” (Stalin and his Hangmen, London: Viking, 2004, p. 405). (V.M.)
visit of their delegation to Moscow. As V. Alexeev remarks: ‘On the eve of the Teheran conference the visit of the delegation was recognized as desirable and useful by Stalin. In this situation it was extremely advantageous that the head of the delegation, the Archbishop of York, should be received by the higher leadership of the Russian Orthodox Church headed by the patriarch.’

“In connection with the above-mentioned political perspectives, Metropolitan Sergius (from Ulyanovsk) and Metropolitan Alexis (from Leningrad) were very quickly transported to Moscow on government planes. Together with Metropolitan Nicholas (Yarushevich), they were brought late at night on September 4, 1943 to Stalin in the Kremlin. Besides Stalin, the deputy president of the Sovnarkom of the USSR, V. Molotov and NKVD General-Major G. Karpov took part in the talks. As Alexeev witnesses, relying on G. Karpov’s report, at the meeting ‘Stalin approved of the convening of a council, but advised that a Hierarchical, not a Local council be convened at the given time... The metropolitans agreed. When Sergius touched upon the question of the time necessary for the preparation of the council, Stalin asked him: “Can we not produce a Bolshevik tempo?” Then, turning to Karpov, he asked him to help the leadership of the church to get the bishops to the council as quickly as possible. For this he was to bring in aviation and other forms of transport. Karpov assured Stalin that all the necessary work would be carried out and the council could be opened already in three to four days. Immediately Stalin and Metropolitans Sergius, Alexis and Nicholas agreed to set September 8 as the opening of the council.’

“Here we must note that Karpov’s report545 sins through obvious exaggerations, which create the deceptive impression that the initiative in these ‘negotiations’ came from the hierarchs, while Stalin spoke only in the role of a ‘kind magician’ who carried out all their demands. In actual fact the subject of the so-called ‘negotiations’, and the decisions taken during them, had been worked out long before the meeting. Stalin, Malenkov and Beria had examined this question in their dacha already before the middle of the day on September 4. Confirmation of this is given by the speedy transport of Sergius and Alexis to Moscow, and also the spineless agreement of the metropolitans with Stalin’s proposals – ‘the metropolitans agreed’, as it says in Karpov’s report. But the delegation of metropolitans, being loyal to the authorities, could not act differently in their meeting with the dictator, in connection with which Karpov spiced up his report with invented initiatives of Sergius.

“Reviewing the question of the convening of the council, it was decided that Metropolitan Sergius (Stragorodsky) should, for political reasons, be

545 According to Karpov’s report, Metropolitan Sergius brought up the question of electing a patriarch right at the beginning of the meeting as being “the most important and most pressing question” (Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 3, p. 53). This report was published in full in Russian in Monk Benjamin, op. cit., pp. 53-60, and in English in Felix Corbey (ed.), Religion in the Soviet Union: an archival reader, New York: New York University Press, 1996. (V.M.)
proclaimed ‘patriarch of all Rus’” and not ‘of Russia [Rossii]’, as it was under Patriarch Tikhon (Bellavin).546 Turning to the metropolitans, Stalin said that the government was ready to provide her with the necessary financial means to support the international image of the Moscow Patriarchate, and also informed them that for the accommodation of the chancellery of the MP he was giving over to them a three-storey house with all its furniture – the past residence of the German ambassador Schulenberg. Obviously, Stalin presented this gift to annoy the Germans, who had opened Orthodox churches on the occupied territories.

“At the end of the meeting Stalin declared that he was intending to create a special organ for control of the Church – the Council for the Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church (SD RPTs). ‘… In reply the metropolitans thanked the government and Stalin personally for the reception he had given them, his enormous help to, and respect for, the Church, and assured the president of the Sovnarkom of their patriotic position, noting that they looked very favourably on the creation of a new state organ for the affairs of the Orthodox Church and on the appointment of [NKVD Major-General] G. Karpov to the post of its president… Turning to Metropolitan Sergius, Molotov asked him when it would be better, in his opinion, to receive the delegation of the Anglican church in Moscow… Sergius replied that since the council at which they would elect the patriarch would be held in four days, the delegation could be received practically at any time after that. On hearing this, Molotov concluded that it would be appropriate to receive it in a month’s time [that is, on the eve of the Teheran conference]. Stalin agreed.”547

The three hierarchs also raised the question of opening more churches. Stalin replied that the government had no objections. Then Metropolitan Alexis raised the question of releasing certain hierarchs who were in the camps. Stalin said: “Give me a list, and we shall look at it.”548

546 This was an important symbolic change. The pre-revolutionary Russian Church was rossijskaia, that is, the Church of the whole of the Russian empire and of all the Orthodox in it, whether they were Russian by race or not. By changing the title to russkaia, Stalin emphasised that it was the Church exclusively of the ethnically Russian people – that is, of the russkikh. Over half a century later, ROAC – the Russian Orthodox Autonomous Church – resumed the title rossijskaia. (V.M.)

547 Shumilo, op. cit.

548 Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 3, p. 56. According to Anatolius Levitin-Krasnov, Molotov at one point “said that the Soviet government and Stalin personally would like to know the needs of the Church. While the other metropolitans remained silent, Metropolitan Sergius suddenly spoke up… The metropolitan pointed out the need for the mass re-opening of churches… for the convocation of a church council and the election of a patriarch… for the general opening of seminaries, because there was a complete lack of clergy. Here Stalin suddenly broke his silence. ‘And why don’t you have cadres? Where have they disappeared?’ he said… looking at the bishops point blank… Everybody knew that ‘the cadres’ had perished in the camps. But Metropolitan Sergius… replied: ‘There are all sorts of reasons why we have no cadres. One of the reasons is that we train a person for the priesthood, and he becomes the Marshal of the Soviet Union.’ A satisfied smile touched the lips of the dictator: ‘Yes, of course. I am a seminarian…’ Stalin began to reminisce about his years at the
As a result of this meeting, the Soviet church acquired the right to open a bank account, to publish *The Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate* and a few booklets, to reopen some seminaries and churches, and, most important, to “elect” a new patriarch after the release from prison of some of the most malleable bishops. In return, it had to accept censorship and control of every aspect of its affairs by the newly constituted Council for Russian Orthodox Affairs, which came to be nicknamed "Narkombog" (People's Commissar for God) and "Narkomopium" (People's Commissar for Opium). At first, the Council for Religious Affairs exerted its control downwards via the bishops in accordance with the Church's rigidly centralized structure. From 1961, however, its control came to be exercised also from below, through the so-called dyadsatky, or parish councils of twenty laypeople, who could hire and fire priests at will, regardless of the bishops. Thus for all its increased size and external power, the MP remained as much a puppet of Soviet power as ever. As Vasilyeva and Knyshevsky write: “There is no doubt that Stalin’s ‘special organ’ and the government (to be more precise, the Stalin-Molotov duet) kept the patriarch under ‘eternal check’. Sergius understood this. And how could he not understand when, on November 1, 1943, the Council made it obligatory for all parishes to submit a monthly account with a detailed description of their activity in all its facets?”

Stalin’s new ecclesiastical policy was effective. Donald Rayfield writes: “Promoting Orthodoxy had been more effective in galvanizing the nation than reiterating the slogans of Stalinism. Stalin may also have listened to an American envoy, who had pointed out that Congress would not hesitate to send the USSR military aid if religious suppression stopped. Right until Stalin’s death Russian metropolitan bishops were delivered in large black limousines to appear on international platforms, such as peace congresses, in the company of such stalwart atheists as Fadeev and Ehrenburg... The Church was now... an arm of the state.”

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Shumilo continues: “The so-called ‘hierarchical council’... took place on September 8, 1943. In all 19 hierarchs took part in it, six of whom were former renovationists who had been hastily consecrated not long before the ‘council’, and also several loyal bishops who were specially freed from prison and sent to Moscow in planes. At the given assembly there were no bishops from the occupied territories, nor from the emigration, or, still more, those who did not agree with Sergius and his ecclesiastical politics, who continued to languish in Soviet concentration camps. As the patriarchal historian D. Pospelovsky notes: ‘... At that time there were at least some tens of bishops in exile and the camps... Some of the imprisoned bishops refused to recognize the ecclesiastical politics of Sergius after 1927 as the condition of their liberation. At that time the Catacomb Church was still very active.’”

At the 1943 council, contrary to the rules laid down by the 1917-18 Council, only one candidate for the patriarchy was put forward. “I think that this will be made infinitely easier for us by the fact that we already have someone bearing the patriarchal privileges, and so I suppose that an election with all the details that usually accompany such events is not necessary for us,” declared Metropolitan Alexis (Simansky), who put forward the candidacy of Sergius. There was nothing for the delegates to do but submit to the will of “the father of the peoples, Joseph Stalin”, and to the question of Metropolitan Sergius: “Is nobody of another opinion?”, reply: “No, agreed”.

“At the end of the session the council accepted a resolution read out by Sergius that was unprecedented in its amorality and uncanonicity. It said that ‘every person who is guilty of betraying the common work of the Church and of passing over to the side of fascism is to be counted as excommunicated as being an enemy of the Cross of the Lord, and if he is a bishop or cleric is deprived of his rank.’ Thus practically the whole of the population and clergy of the occupied territories – except, of course, the red partisans – fell under the anathema of the Soviet church, including 7.5 million Soviet prisoners of war, who had become prisoners of the Germans. According to Stalin’s ukaz № 260 of September, 1941, all of them were declared traitors to their Homeland. ‘There are no captives, there are only deserters,’ declared Molotov, commenting on this ukaz.”

Sergius was enthroned on September 12. Then the Council for the Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church was created, headed by Karpov. Since 1940 he had been “head of the Fifth Department of the NKVD, whose assignment was to combat ‘the counterrevolutionary clergy.’ In the NKVD Karpov’s duty was to fight the church, in the council [-] to assist it...”

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551 Shumilo, op. cit.
552 Shumilo, op. cit.
553 Shumilo, op. cit.
554 Radzinsky, Stalin, p. 508.
The Consequences of the Pact

This pact between the supposed representative of Christ and Belial had profoundly ungodly consequences. However, church leaders round the world welcomed it. “A week after the enthronement,” writes Shumilo, “on the orders of the Sovnarkom, Sergius accepted the long-awaited delegation of the Anglican church led by Archbishop Cyril Garbett in Moscow… In general, in the run-up to the Teheran conference the politics of the Soviet regime was ‘reconstructed’ not only in relation to the Moscow Patriarchate but also in relation to the Vatican. In October, 1943 support had been given to the official Georgian Orthodox and Armenian-Gregorian churches. The regime cooperated with the Muslims in convening in Tashkent a conference of loyal Muslim clergy and believers, in the organization in Bujnaks of a legal spiritual administration of the Muslims of the North Caucasus, in the opening of Muslim theological schools (medrese) in Bukhara, Tashkent, etc. However, it is quite mistaken to think that this ‘warming’ was a fully-fledged offering of freedom to the religious organizations in the USSR. In spite of their external freedom, the religious workers of the country, all without exception, remained hostages of the totalitarian system and remained under the constant strict supervision of the Soviet special services. But in relation to the so-called ‘unreliables’, the communist repressive apparatus continued to operate as before, although the religious workers themselves in all their official declarations categorically denied this, insinuating into popular opinion abroad the false idea that complete freedom of conscience and religious organizations had been re-established in the USSR. As V. Alexeev remarks: ‘... The deeply religious F.D. Roosevelt was very satisfied with the new relationship of the authorities to the church in the USSR. These steps undertaken by Stalin also received approval in England, Canada and France, where the position of religious organizations in society was very strong. The Russian emigration was also satisfied with them.”

In an encyclical dated October 14, 1943, Metropolitan Sergius (Stragorodsky) threatened all the clergy who were cooperating with the Germans with an ecclesiastical trial. The Germans countered by confronting Metropolitan Sergius (Voskresensky) with the acts of the Vienna conference of ROCOR, which condemned Sergius' election as uncanonical, and demanded that he approve of them. In April, 1944, Metropolitan Sergius (Voskresensky) was ambushed and shot, probably by Soviets dressed in German uniforms whose leader was Dr. Aschach, local head of German counter-intelligence.

On October 27, 1943 Metropolitan Sergius wrote to Karpov: “I ask you to petition the government of the USSR for an amnesty for the people named in

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555 Shumilo, op. cit. Of course, not all of the Russian emigration – only that (large) part that believed in the good intentions of the Soviet government.

the attached list, whom I would like to draw into Church work under my administration. I will not take upon myself to decide the question to what extent these people deserved the punishment they underwent. But I am convinced that clemency given them by the Government would arouse them (and give them the opportunity) to apply all their energy to demonstrate their loyalty to the Government of the USSR and to wipe out their guilt completely.” To this declaration was attached a list of 26 clergy, including 24 hierarchs. Most of them, as it turned out, had already been shot or had perished in the camps.557

On October 31, after the Georgians congratulated Sergius on his election, Sergius’ representative, Archbishop Anthony of Stavropol and Pyatigorsk, concelebrated with Catholicos Callistratus of Georgia in Tbilisi. So eucharistic communion was re-established without preconditions. Until 1990 the Ecumenical Patriarchate did not accept this act since it was carried out without his agreement, but only with his knowledge.558

In the period from the Stalin-Sergius pact of September, 1943 to the enthronement of the new “patriarch” Alexis in January, 1945, the 19 bishops of the MP (they had been only four at the beginning of the war) were more than doubled to 41.

Catacomb Bishop “A.” wrote: “Very little time passed between September, 1943 and January, 1945. Therefore it is difficult to understand where 41 bishops came from instead of 19. In this respect our curiosity is satisfied by the Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate for 1944. Looking through it, we see that the 19 bishops who existed in 1943, in 1944 rapidly gave birth to the rest, who became the members of the 1945 council.

“From the Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate we learn that these hasty consecrations were carried out, in the overwhelming majority of cases, on renovationist protopriests.

“From September, 1943 to January, 1945, with a wave of a magic wand, all the renovationists suddenly repented before Metropolitan Sergius. The penitence was simplified, without the imposition of any demands on those who caused so much evil to the Holy Church. And in the shortest time the ‘penitent renovationists’ received a lofty dignity, places and ranks, in spite of the church canons and the decree about the reception of renovationists imposed [by Patriarch Tikhon] in 1925…

“As the Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate informs us, the ‘episcopal’ consecrations before the ‘council’ of 1945 took place thus: the protopriest who had been recommended (undoubtedly by the civil authorities), and who was

557 GARF, f. 6991, op. 1, d. 5, l. 1; Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 3, p. 66.
558 Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 3, pp. 61-63.
almost always from the ‘reunited’ renovationists or gregorians, was immediately tonsured into monasticism with a change in name and then, two or three days later, made a ‘hierarch of the Russian Church’.”

This acceptance of the renovationists was dictated in the first place by the will of the Bolsheviks, who now saw the Sergianists as more useful to them than the renovationists. Thus on October 12, 1943 Karpov wrote to Stalin and Molotov: “The renovationist movement earlier played a constructive role but in recent years has lost its significance and base of support. On this basis, and taking into account the patriotic stance of the Sergiite church, the Council for Russian Orthodox Church Affairs has decided not to prevent the dissolution of the renovationist church and the transfer of the renovationist clergy and parishes to the patriarchal, Sergiite church.”

On October 16 Karpov sent secret instructions to the regions not to hinder the transfer of renovationists to the Sergianist church. Since Karpov wanted the renovationists to join the state church, the rules for their reception were relaxed. Thus in 1944 Metropolitan Alexis (Simansky) severely upbraided Bishop Manuel (Lemeshevsky) for forcing “venerable” renovationist protopriests to “turn somersaults”, i.e. repent, before the people, in accordance with Patriarch Tikhon’s rules.

As Roslof writes: “The relaxation of rules by the patriarchate reflected the needs of both church and state. The patriarchal synod had full backing from the government and expected to emerge as the sole central authority for the Orthodox Church. So it could afford to show mercy. At the same time, the patriarchate faced a scarcity of clergy to staff reopened parishes and to run the dioceses. Sergii’s bishops had problems finding priests for churches that had never closed. This shortage of clergy was compounded by the age and poor education of the candidates who were available. The patriarchate saw properly supervised red priests as part of the solution to the problem of filling vacant posts.”

However, the penetration of the patriarchate by these “red priests” meant that the new, post-war generation of clergy was quite different from the pre-war generation in that they had already proved their heretical, renovationist

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561 Roslof, op. cit., p. 195.

562 See Metropolitan John (Snychev) of St. Petersburg, Mitropolit Manuil (Lemeshevsky) (Metropolitan Manuel Lemeshevsky), St. Petersburg, 1993, p. 185 ®. Of course, a guilty conscience may also have had something to do with it: both “Patriarch” Sergius and his successor, “Patriarch” Alexis, were themselves “repentant renovationists”.

563 Roslof, op. cit., p. 196.
cast of mind, and now returned to the neo-renovationist MP like a dog to his vomit (II Peter 2.22), forming a heretical core that controlled the patriarchate while being in complete obedience to the atheists. Their obedience was illustrated a few years later, when the MP sharply reversed its attitude towards ecumenism, from strictly anti-ecumenist in 1948 to pro-ecumenist only ten years later.

A still clearer sign of their total submission to the atheists is the cult of Stalin which began to take root during the war, and reached truly idolatrous proportions after it. Thus Fr. Gleb Yakunin writes: “From the beginning of the war and the church ‘renaissance’ that followed it, the feeling became stronger in the leadership of the Moscow Patriarchate that a wonderful act of Divine Providence in the historical process had happened in Russia. God’s instrument in this process was, in their opinion, the ‘wise, God-established’, ‘God-given Supreme Leader’.” And yet Stalin never changed his basic hostility to the Church. In 1947 he wrote to Suslov: “Do not forget about atheistic propaganda among the people”. And the bloodletting in the camps continued...

Together with the cult of Stalin went the enthusiastic acceptance of communist ideology and studied refusal to contemplate the vast scale of its blasphemies and cruelties. Thus just after the war the MP expressed itself as follows concerning the elections to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR: “On this day in all the cathedrals, churches and monasteries of our country there will be offered the bloodless Sacrifice, whose beginning was laid by Him Who brought into the world the ideas of love, justice and equality. Deeply moved church-servers will come out onto the ambons and bless their children to hurry from the churches to the voting urns. They will bless them to cast their votes for the candidates of the bloc of communists… They themselves will cast their votes… The ideal of such a person is – Stalin…”

The apotheosis of the cult of Stalin came on the occasion of his birthday in 1949, when a “Greeting to the Leader of the peoples of the USSR” was addressed to him in the name of the whole Church. “Without the slightest hesitation,” write Fr. Gleb Yakunin and a group of Orthodox Christians, “we can call this address the most shameful document ever composed in the name of the Church in the whole history of the existence of Christianity and still more in the thousand-year history of Christianity in Rus’.”

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564 Yakunin, op. cit, p. 190.
568 Cited in Potapov, What is False is also Corrupt, p. 223.
Again, on the day after Stalin’s death in March, 1953, Patriarch Alexis wrote to the USSR Council of Ministers: “In my own name and in the name of the Russian Orthodox Church I express my deepest and sincerest condolences on the death of the unforgettable Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin, the great builder of the people’s happiness. His death is a heavy grief for our Fatherland and all the peoples who dwell in it. His death has been taken with deep grief by the whole of the Russian Orthodox Church, which will never forget his benevolent attitude towards the needs of the Church. His radiant memory will never be erased from our hearts. Our Church intones ‘eternal memory’ to him with a special feeling of unceasing love.”569 Again, in 1955 he declared: “The Russian Orthodox Church supports the totally peaceful foreign policy of our government, not because the Church allegedly lacks freedom, but because Soviet policy is just and corresponds to the Christian ideals which the Church preaches.”570

According to unconfirmed and possibly false reports, the MP’s cult of Stalin was anathematized by a Council of the Catacomb Church meeting in Chirchik, near Tashkent, in the autumn of 1948. It also anathematized the patriarchate’s 1948 council, and declared the canonical leader of the Russian Church to be Metropolitan Anastasius, first-hierarch of the Russian Church Abroad. This Council, which confirmed the decisions of the supposed “Nomadic Council” of 1928, was attended by thirteen bishops or their representatives, and was organized by Fr. Peter Pervushin, who had also played a major role in the 1928 Council.571

In response to the MP’s description of Stalin as “the chosen one of the Lord, who leads our fatherland to prosperity and glory”, Metropolitan Anastasy, first-hierarch of ROCOR, wrote that this was the point “where the subservience of man borders already on blasphemy. Really – can one tolerate that a person stained with blood from head to foot, covered with crimes like leprosy and poisoned deeply with the poison of godlessness, should be named ‘the chosen of the Lord’, could be destined to lead our homeland ‘to prosperity and glory’? Does this not amount to casting slander and abuse on God the Most High Himself, Who, in such a case, would be responsible for all

569 Izvestia, March 10, 1953 ®; Yakunin, op. cit., p. 199.
571 Bishop Ambrose (von Sievers), “Katakombnaia Tserkov’: Tainij Sobor 1948g.”, Russkoe Pravoslavie, № 5 (9), 1997, pp. 12-27 ®. In response to the increase in the infiltration of spies and provocateurs into the ranks of the True Church, the Chirchik Council passed the following canon: “We used to accept sergianist ‘priests’ and on the basis of the 19th canon of the Council of Nicaea we even ordained some of them with the true ordination. But now we see that they all turned out to be agents of the antichristian power or traitors who destroyed a multitude of Christians. From now on we forbid this; whoever dares to violate our decision – let him be anathema.” (ibid., pp. 17-18). This decision was confirmed by a larger Catacomb Council at the Nikolsky Council in Bashkiria in 1961 (Bishop Ambrose (von Sievers), “Katakombnaia Tserkov’: Tainie Sobory 1961-81gg.”, Russkoe Pravoslavie, 1998, № 1 (10), pp. 25-26 ®.)
the evil that has been going on already for many years in our land ruled by
the Bolsheviks headed by Stalin? The atom bomb, and all the other
destructive means invented by modern technology, are indeed less dangerous
than the *moral disintegration* which the highest representatives of the civil and
church authorities have put into the Russian soul by their example. The
breaking of the atom brings with it only physical devastation and destruction,
whereas the *corruption of the mind, heart and will* entails the *spiritual death*
of a whole nation, after which there is *no resurrection.*

Sergius did more than place the MP in unconditional submission to the
God-hating authorities. As Archimandrite (now Bishop) Nectarius
(Yashunsky) writes, he introduced a heretical understanding of the Church
and salvation: “Metropolitan Sergius’ understanding of the Church (and
therefore, of salvation) was heretical. He sincerely, it seems to us, believed
that the Church was first of all an organization, an apparatus which could not
function without administrative unity. Hence the striving to preserve her
administrative unity at all costs, even at the cost of harming the truth
contained in her.

“And this can be seen not only in the church politics he conducted, but also
in the theology [he evolved] corresponding to it. In this context two of his
works are especially indicative: ‘Is There a Vicar of Christ in the Church?’ (*The
Spiritual Heritage of Patriarch Sergius*, Moscow, 1948) and ‘The Relationship
of the Church to the Communities that have Separated from Her’ (*Journal of the
Moscow Patriarchate*).

In the first, although Metropolitan Sergius gives a negative answer to the
question (first of all in relation to the Pope), this negative answer is not so
much a matter of principle as of empiricism. The Pope is not the head of the
Universal Church only because he is a heretic. But in principle Metropolitan
Sergius considers it possible and even desirable for the whole of the Universal
Church to be headed by one person. Moreover, in difficult times in the life of
the Church this person can assume such privileges even if he does not have
the corresponding canonical rights. And although the metropolitan declares
that this universal leader is not the vicar of Christ, this declaration does not
look sincere in the context both of his other theological opinions and of his
actions in accordance with this theology.”

In the second cited article, Metropolitan Sergius explained the differences
in the reception of heretics and schismatics, not on the basis of their objective
confession of faith, but on the subjective (and therefore changeable)
relationship of the Church’s first-hierarch to them. Thus “we receive the
Latins into the Church through repentance, but those from the Karlovtsy
schism through chrismation”.

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572 I.M Andreyev, *Is the Grace of God present in the Soviet Church?* op. cit., pp. 32-33 (with some
changes in the translation).
And so for Sergius, concludes Fr. Nectarius, “the truth of Holy Orthodoxy is not necessary for salvation, but it is belonging to a legal church-administrative organization that is necessary”!

This heretical transformation of the MP into an “eastern papacy” was described by Fr. Vyacheslav Polosin: “If Metropolitan Sergius was ruled, not by personal avarice, but by a mistaken understanding of what was for the benefit of the Church, then it was evident that the theological foundation of such an understanding was mistaken, and even constituted a heresy concerning the Church herself and her activity in the world. We may suppose that these ideas were very close to the idea of the Filioque: since the Spirit proceeds not only from the Father, but also from the Son, that means that the vicar of the Son… can dispose of the Spirit, so that the Spirit acts through Him ex opere operato. It follows necessarily that he who performs the sacraments of the Church, ‘the minister of the sacrament’, must automatically be ‘infallible’, for it is the infallible Spirit of God Who works through him and is inseparable from him... However, this Latin schema of the Church is significantly inferior to the schema and structure created by Metropolitan Sergius. In his schema there is no Council, or it is replaced by a formal assembly for the confirmation of decisions that have already been taken – on the model of the congresses of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

“The place of the Council in his Church structure is taken by something lacking in the Latins’ scheme – Soviet power, loyalty to which becomes in the nature of a dogma... This scheme became possible because it was prepared by Russian history. But if the Orthodox tsar and the Orthodox procurator to some extent constituted a ‘small Council’, which in its general direction did not contradict... the mind-set of the majority of believers, with the change in world-view of those came to the helm of Soviet power this scheme acquired a heretical character, since the decisions of the central ecclesiastical authorities, which were associated in the minds of the people with the will of the Spirit of God, came to be determined neither by a large nor by a small Council, but by the will of those who wanted to annihilate the very idea of God (the official aim of the second ‘godless’ five-year-plan was to make the people forget even the word ‘God’). Thus at the source of the Truth, instead of the revelation of the will of the Holy Spirit, a deadly poison was substituted... The Moscow

573 Hierodeacon Jonah (now Archimandrite Nectarius) (Yashunsky), “Sergianstvo: Politika ili Dogmatika?” (Sergianism: Politics or Dogmatics?), 29 April / May 12, 1993, pp. 2-3, 5 (MS) ®. Since, for Sergius, salvation was not the Truth of Holy Orthodoxy, it is not surprising to find the seeds of ecumenism in him. Thus in his article, “The Relationship of an Orthodox Person to his Church and to the Heterodox” (Zhurnal Moskovskoj Patriarkhii (The Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate), 1993, No 3) he wrote: “Outside the Church one does not find an immediate darkness between the Church and the heretical communities. Rather, there is found a partial shadow, which in its own way falls upon the schismatics and the self-willed (heretics). These two groups cannot be in the strict sense considered strangers to the Church nor completely torn away from Her.”

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Patriarchate, in entrusting itself to the evil, God-fighting will of the Bolsheviks instead of the conciliar will of the Spirit, showed itself to be an image of the terrible deception of unbelief in the omnipotence and Divinity of Christ, Who alone can save and preserve the Church and Who gave the unlying promise that ‘the gates of hell will not overcome her’… The substitution of this faith by vain hope in one’s own human powers as being able to save the Church in that the Spirit works through them, is not in accord with the canons and Tradition of the Church, but ex opere operato proceeds from the ‘infallible’ top of the hierarchical structure.”

The Moscow Council of 1945

“Patriarch” Sergius died on May 15, 1944. “They say that not long before his death [he] had a vision of Christ, after which he sobbed for a long time over the crimes he had committed.” It would be good to know that this Judas had really repented of his terrible crimes; but there is no evidence that he ever tried to mitigate, let alone reverse, their impact on Church life…

After Sergius’ death, “with the approval of the Council for the Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church the ‘right hand’ of Sergius, the former renovationist Metropolitan Alexis (Simansky) of Leningrad entered into the rights of the patriarchal locum tenens. Metropolitan Alexis’ first act as locum tenens was to send a telegram on May 19, 1944 to Stalin, in which he thanked him for the trust he had showed him, promised to continue the politics of Stalin without wavering and assured him of his love and devotion to the cause of the party and Stalin….

“It was expected that Stalin would reply to such protestations of loyalty by allowing the convening of a council and the election of a new patriarch. However, Stalin, in spite of the fact that, eight months before, on the eve of the Teheran conference, he had hastily convened a council, now seemed not to be aiming for it. But such suspicions were mistaken. The talented scenarist was acting, according to the expression of V. Alexeyev, ‘in accordance with a previously worked out plan’, and was by no means planning to stop using the Church for his criminal aims. As became clear later, he resorted to convening the council at the beginning of 1945, that is, in time for the official meeting of the heads of the governments of the USSR, USA and Great Britain from February 4 to 12 in Yalta, which had for Stalin a strategically important significance. With this aim, already at the end of November, 1944 a congress

574 Polosin (Sergius Ventsel), “Razmyslenia o Teokratii v Rossii” (Thoughts on Theocracy in Russia), Vestnik Khristianskogo Informatsionnogo Tsentra (Herald of the Christian Information Centre), № 48, November 24, 1989 ®. Fr. Michael Ardov has argued that the Soviets would not have been able to exert such pressure on the Church if it had been ruled by a Synod, as before the revolution, rather than by a Patriarch, as after the 1917-18 Council. (“Takticheskaia pobeda obrnulas’ strategicheskoj oshibkoj” (A Tactical Victory Turned out to be a Strategic Error), http://www.portal-credo.ru/site/print.php?act=kolokol_texts&id=70 ©.)

575 Shumilo, op.cit.
of bishops had been carried out in Moscow at which they were given special
instructions and commands on the order in which the council was to be
carried out and the role of each of them in it. It was here that the projected
conciliar documents were drawn up, and the order for the election of the new
Soviet patriarch was drawn up. The former Catacomb Archbishop Luke
(Vojno-Yasensky), who had been freed from a camp during the war and
united to the MP, reminded the gathered bishops of the resolution of the
Local Council of 1917-1918 to the effect that the patriarch had to be elected by
secret ballot from several candidates. But none of the sergianist bishops
decided to support this resolution and the single candidate, as had been
planned, remained Metropolitan Alexis (Simansky). Since Archbishop Luke
did not agree with this violation of the conciliar norms, he was through the
efforts of Protopriest Nicholas Kolchitsky and Metropolitan Alexis not
admitted to the council and took no part in it.\footnote{Shumilo, \textit{op. cit.}; Fr. Sergius Gordun, "Russkaia Pravoslavnaia Tserkov' pri Svyaateishikh
Patriarkakh Sergii i Aleksii" (The Russian Orthodox Church under their Holinesses
Patriarchs Sergius and Alexis), \textit{Vestnik Russkogo Khristianskogo Devizhenia (Herald of the Russian

Some have seen in the behaviour of Archbishop Luke proof that the MP
was not completely sovietized at this time, and that its hierarchy still
contained some true bishops. Unfortunately, however, there is clear evidence
that Archbishop Luke, like the other hierarchs of the Moscow Patriarchate,
was infected by the Soviet bacillus to such an extent that he deviated from
Orthodox teaching. Thus he wrote that Christ’s commandment to love one’s
neighbour did not apply “to the German murderers... it is absolutely
impossible to love them.” And again: “How shall we now preach the Gospel
of love and brotherhood to those who do not know Christ, but who have seen
the satanic face of the German who claims to be a Christian?”\footnote{Zhurnal Moskovskoj Patriarkhii (Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate), № 2, 1944, pp. 26-28; № 4,
1943, p. 25 \®; cited in Pospiełowsky, \textit{The Russian Church under the Soviet Regime}, \textit{op. cit.}, vol. 1,
pp. 208-209. In 1941 Metropolitan Sergius said something similar: “The heart of the Christian
is closed for the fascist beast; it oozes out only an annihilating deadly hatred for the
enemy…” (Monk Benjamin, \textit{op. cit.}, part 3, p. 34).}

Such sentiments from one who knew from his own experience how “Christian” his
own government was, were possible only for one who allowed revolutionary
morality to obscure the light of Christian truth. Indeed, Archbishop Luke
(who has recently been canonized by the MP) is known to have said that if he
had not been a priest he would have been a communist.\footnote{Protopriest Valerius Lapkovsky, “Kto Vozdvigal Pamiatnik Arkhiepiskopu Luke?” (Who
Raised the Monument to Archbishop Luke?), \textit{Pravoslavnaiia Rus’ (Orthodox Russia)}, № 17
(1566), September 1/14, 1996, p. 10; I.I. Voloshin, “Kanonizatsia Moskovskoj patriarkhiej
arkhiepiskopa Luka (Vojno-Yasenetskogo) kak znamenie vremenii (“The Canonization by the
Moscow Patriarchate of Archbishop Luke (Vojno-Yasenetsky) as a sign of the times),
Vertograd-Inform, № 6 (63), 2000, pp. 8-17 \®.}

In January, 1945, another council assembled in Moscow, consisting of four
Russian metropolitans, 41 bishops and 141 representatives of the clergy and

\footnote{576 Shumilo, \textit{op. cit.}; Fr. Sergius Gordun, "Russkaia Pravoslavnaia Tserkov' pri Svyaateishikh
Patriarkakh Sergii i Aleksii" (The Russian Orthodox Church under their Holinesses
Patriarchs Sergius and Alexis), \textit{Vestnik Russkogo Khristianskogo Devizhenia (Herald of the Russian
577 Zhurnal Moskovskoj Patriarkhii (Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate), № 2, 1944, pp. 26-28; № 4,
1943, p. 25 \®; cited in Pospiełowsky, \textit{The Russian Church under the Soviet Regime}, \textit{op. cit.}, vol. 1,
pp. 208-209. In 1941 Metropolitan Sergius said something similar: “The heart of the Christian
is closed for the fascist beasts; it oozes out only an annihilating deadly hatred for the
enemy…” (Monk Benjamin, \textit{op. cit.}, part 3, p. 34).
Raised the Monument to Archbishop Luke?), \textit{Pravoslavnaiia Rus’ (Orthodox Russia)}, № 17
(1566), September 1/14, 1996, p. 10; I.I. Voloshin, “Kanonizatsia Moskovskoj patriarkhiej
arkhiepiskopa Luka (Vojno-Yasenetskogo) kak znamenie vremenii (“The Canonization by the
Moscow Patriarchate of Archbishop Luke (Vojno-Yasenetsky) as a sign of the times),
Vertograd-Inform, № 6 (63), 2000, pp. 8-17 \®.}
laity. Also present were the patriarchs of Alexandria, Antioch and Georgia, and representatives of the Constantinopolitan, Romanian, Bulgarian, Serbian and other Churches. In all there were 204 participants.

"A significant amount of money," writes Shumilo, "was set apart by Stalin for its preparation. The best hotels of the capital, the "Metropole" and "National" were placed at the disposal of the participants of the council gratis, as well as Kremlin government food reserves, government "ZIS" automobiles, a large government house with all modern conveniences and much else. Stalin was also concerned about the arrival in the USSR of representatives of foreign churches, so as to give an international significance to the given action. As V. Alexeev notes: ‘... By having a local council Stalin forestalled possible new accusations of the council’s lack of competency and representativeness, etc. for the election of a patriarch from the foreign part of the Orthodoxy clergy... So that the very fact of the election of a new patriarch should not elicit doubts, the patriarchs of the Orthodox churches and their representatives from Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia and the Middle East were invited for the first time to Moscow.’ And although in the actual council only three patriarchs – those of Georgia, Alexandria and Antioch – took part, representatives from other local churches also arrived; they were specially brought to Moscow by Soviet military aeroplanes.

"The council opened on January 31, 1945 with a speech of welcome in the name of the Soviet Stalinist regime by the president of the Council for the Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church, NKVD Major-General G. Karpov. He noted that the council ‘was an outstanding event in the life of the Church’, whose activity was directed ‘towards helping the Soviet people to secure the great historical aims set before it’, that is, the construction of ‘communist society’.

"In its turn the council did not miss the opportunity yet again to express its gratitude and assure the communist party, the government and Stalin personally of its sincere devotion. As the address put it: ‘The Council profoundly appreciates the trusting, and to the highest degree benevolent and attentive attitude towards all church undertakings on the part of the state authorities... and expresses to our Government our sincerely grateful feelings’.

"As was planned, the sole candidate as the new Soviet patriarch was unanimously confirmed at the council – Metropolitan Alexis (Simansky). Besides this, a new ‘Temporary Statute for the Administration of the Russian Orthodox Church’, composed by workers at the Council for the Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church and the chancellor of the MP, Protopriest Nicholas Kolchitsky, was accepted at the council. This Statute radically contradicted the canonical principles of Orthodoxy. ‘This Statute turned the Moscow patriarchate into a certain likeness of a totalitarian structure, in which three
people at the head with the so-called “patriarch of Moscow and all Rus’” received greater power than a local council, and the right to administer the Church in a still more dictatorial fashion than Peter’s synod. But if the emperors up to 1917 were nevertheless considered to be Orthodox Christians, now the official structures of the Church were absolutely subject to the will of the leaders of the God-fighting regime. Church history has not seen such a fall in 2000 years of Christianity! By accepting in 1945 the new Statute on the administration of the Russian Orthodox Church that contradicted from the first to the last letter the conciliar-canonical principles of the administration of the Church confirmed at the All-Russian Local Church Council of 1917-1918, the Moscow patriarchate once more confirmed its own Soviet path of origin and development, and also the absence of any kind of link or descent from the canonical ‘Tikhonite’ Church, which legally existed in the country until 1927.”

The MP, having meekly submitted to the rule of the totalitarian dictator Stalin, was now in effect a totalitarian organization itself. All decisions in the Church depended effectively on the single will of the patriarch, and through him, of Stalin. And this critical dependence on the atheist state continued throughout the Soviet period (and after).

For, as Fr. Sergius Gordun writes: “For decades the position of the Church was such that the voice of the clergy and laity could not be heard. In accordance with the document accepted by the Local Council of 1945, in questions requiring the agreement of the government of the USSR, the patriarch would confer with the Council for the Affairs of the Orthodox Church attached to the Council of People’s Commissars of the USSR. The Statute did not even sketchily outline the range of questions in which the patriarch was bound to agree with the Council, which gave the latter the ability to exert unlimited control over church life.”

The power over the Church that the 1945 council gave to the atheists was revealed in the secret 1974 Furov report of the Council for Religious Affairs to the Central Committee: “The Synod is under the control of the Council for Religious Affairs. The question of the selection and placing of its permanent members was and remains completely in the hands of the Council, and the candidature of the non-permanent members is also agreed beforehand with responsible members of the Council. All issues which are to be discussed at the Synod are first discussed by Patriarch Pimen and the permanent members of the Synod with the leaders of the Council and in its departments, and the final ‘Decisions of the Holy Synod’ are also agreed.”

579 Shumilo, op. cit.
580 Gordun, op. cit., p. 94.
After the enthronement of Alexis (on February 4), Stalin ordered the Council to congratulate Alexis and give him “a commemorative present. The value of the gift was determined at 25-30,000 rubles. Stalin loved to give valuable presents. It was also decided to ‘show gratitude’ to the foreign bishops for their participation in the Council.

The commissariat was told to hand over 42 objects from the depositories of the Moscow museums and 28 from the Zagorsk state museum – mainly objects used in Orthodox worship – which were used as gifts for the Eastern Patriarchs. Thus, for example, Patriarch Christopher of Alexandria was given a golden panagia with valuable stones... Naturally, the patriarchs were expected to reciprocate, and they hastened to express the main thing – praise... Patriarch Christopher of Alexandria said: ‘Marshal Stalin,... under whose leadership the military operations have been conducted on an unprecedented scale, has for this purpose an abundance of divine grace and blessing.’”

As was to be expected, the Eastern Patriarchs recognised the canonicity of the election, “hastening,” as Shumilo says, “to assure themselves of the support of the head of the biggest and wealthiest patriarchate, which now, moreover, had acquired ‘the clemency [appropriate to] a great power’”. The price they paid for the favour of this “great power” was an agreement to break communion with ROCOR. As Karpov reported: “The Council was a clear proof of the absence of religion in the USSR [! ] and also had a certain political significance. The Moscow Patriarchate in particular agreed with Patriarch Christopher of Alexandria and with the representatives of the Constantinople and Jerusalem patriarchates to break links with Metropolitan Anastasy, and on the necessity of a joint struggle against the Vatican.”

The Triumph of the Moscow Patriarchate: (1) Inside the USSR

The results of the joint victory of the Red Army and the MP were not slow to manifest themselves, both inside and outside Russia. Andreev writes: “The Underground or Catacomb Church in Soviet Russia underwent her hardest trials after February 4th, 1945, that is, after the enthronement of the Soviet Patriarch Alexis. Those who did not recognize him were sentenced to new terms of imprisonment and were sometimes shot. Those who did recognize him and gave their signature to that effect were often liberated before their terms expired and received appointments... All secret priests detected in the Soviet zone of Germany were shot.”

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582 Alexeyev, "Marshal Stalin doveriaet Tserkvi" (Marshal Stalin trusts the Church), Agitator, № 10, 1989, pp. 27-28 ©.
583 Shumilo, op. cit.
Commenting on these words, M.V. Shkarovsky writes: “The given fact is partly confirmed by documents in the archives of the security police. In 1944-45 in the camps a whole series of cases on counter-revolutionary organizations was fabricated. In these, many clergymen were sentenced to an increase in their sentence or were shot.”

Towards the end of the war the NKVD GULAG administration made the following decisions: “1. To enrol qualified agents from among the prisoners who are churchmen and sectarians, ordering them to uncover the facts concerning the anti-Soviet activity of these prisoners. 2. In the process of the agents’ work on the prisoners, to uncover their illegal links with those in freedom and coordinate the work of these links with the corresponding organs of the NKVD.” As a result of these instructions, many catacomb organizations among the prisoners were liquidated. For example, “in the Ukhtoizhemsksky ITL an anti-Soviet group of churchmen prisoners was liquidated. One of the leaders of this group, the priest Ushakov, composed prayers and distributed them among the prisoners. It turned out that he had illegal links with a Bishop Galynsky [a Catacomb hierarch].”

“An internal result of the Moscow council of 1945 that was positive for the Soviet regime was the fact that, thanks to the participation in it of the Eastern Patriarchs, the appearance of ‘legitimacy’ and ‘canonicity’ had been given to this Stalin-inspired undertaking, which led into error not only a part of the Orthodox clergy and hierarchy in the emigration [about which, more below], but also many of the True Orthodox Catacomb pastors in the USSR, who naively did not suspect that there might have been any anti-canonical crimes at [the council].”

“One of the first to recognise the new Soviet patriarch was the former Catacomb Bishop Athanasius (Sakharov) of Kovrov. Together with his spiritual father, Hieromonk Hierax, he distributed to his Catacomb clergy and flock his appeal concerning ‘the legality of the newly elected patriarch’ and the supposed beginning in the country of ‘a regeneration of canonical Orthodoxy’. Contrasting the ‘conciliar election’ of Patriarch Alexis to the unlawful usurpation of the power of the first hierarch by Metropolitan Sergius (Stragorodsky), Bishop Athanasius affirmed that with the death of the latter and ‘the canonical election as patriarch’ of Alexis (Simansky), the reasons leading to a schism in the Church had been automatically removed. This thought of Bishop Athanasius was also supported by the former Catacomb Bishop Gabriel (Abalymov) and some others. Trusting the appeals

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586 Shkarovsky, Russkaia Pravoslavnaia Tserkov’ pri Staline i Khruscheve (The Russian Orthodox Church under Stalin and Khruschev), Moscow, 2005, p. 205 ©.
587 Irina Osipova, Khotelos’ by vsekh poimennno nazvat’ (I would like to call all of them by name), Moscow: Fond 'Mir i Chelovek', 1993, pp. 161, 193 ©. Bishop Galynsky was probably Archbishop Anthony Galynsky-Mikhailovsky, one of the greatest Catacomb hierarchs of the post-war period, who died in 1975 in Kiev.
588 Shumilo, op. cit.
of these archpastors, the affirmations of the Eastern Patriarchs and the Moscow patriarchate itself, many ‘non-commemorating’ priests (especially on the formerly occupied territories) followed their example, agreed to come out of the underground and receive official registration. Soon the majority of them were retired as hierarchs of the MP, while those who dared to display disagreement were arrested by the NKVD and again sent to the concentration camps. On August 30, 1946, Bishop Athanasius was also arrested, and spent 11 years in prison. When he was freed in 1957, Vladyka was frequently subjected to slander and oppression from the hierarchs of the MP, and was not appointed to a see. Bishop Athanasius died in complete poverty on October 15, 1962 in the village of Petushki, Vladimir province.”

Another leading catacombnik who returned to the patriarchate was Protopriest Basil Veriuzhsky. But he continued to act as if his sympathies remained with the True Church. Thus in April, 1951 the Leningrad head of the Council for the Affairs of the ROC, A.I. Kushnarev, wrote to the president of the Council with some irritation: “… Veriuzhsky, the former rector of the church of the ‘resurrection-on-the-blood’, was repressed in his time as an inveterate Josephite, and on returning to Leningrad did not serve even once, continuing to remain hostile to Soviet power and not wishing to take part in services at which prayers are said for Soviet power. In spite of this, or out of respect for him, the patriarch supports Veriuzhsky in every way. In Moscow they have given him the academic degree of doctor of theology, the first in the Soviet Union, and have ardently wanted to advance him to the rank of professor in the Leningrad Theological Academy, and it is only the disagreement of the authorities that has hindered this protection…”

The Catacomb pastors who remained faithful to Orthodoxy were in a still more difficult position after than before the war. Those pastors who come into the open during the German occupation, were again deprived of their churches and forced to go underground. “And again, as in the 30s, repressions were renewed against the clergy who did not accept the ‘Soviet church’. Thus in Moscow province alone, where there had been more than ten Catacomb pastors in 1941, by the beginning of 1945 general searches had been carried out and all the clergy of the True Orthodox Church had been arrested.

“In the struggle with alternative underground Orthodox communities in the U.S.S.R. special commissions were created by the NKVD and the Council for the Affairs of the ROC in the middle of the 40s. They were occupied in observing, ferreting out and liquidating such groups. The special 5th department created by the NKVD to administer church questions was called just that ‘liquidatory’. A report of the president of the Council for the Affairs of the ROC, G. Karpov, to the deputy president of the Sovnarkom of the USSR, V. Molotov, on October 5, 1944 witnesses to serious anxiety in

589 Shumilo, op. cit.
590 TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 16, d. 650, l. 18; Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 4, p. 11.
connection with the activation and spread of the influence of the Catacomb Church, and to measures undertaken by the government. It said: ‘... In the regions with an insignificant number of functional churches, and in the areas where there are no churches, there has been a mass spread of group services in the houses of believers or under the open sky – in cemeteries, by the building of the church, with hundreds of worshippers. Moreover, in these cases believers invite unregistered clergy to carry out the rites. In a series of cases such services are carried out systematically... To a significant extent the activists of these unregistered church groups, and the clergy that belong to them, are hostile to the legal patriarchal Orthodox church, condemning the latter for its loyal attitude to Soviet power... The large numbers of believing fanatics under the influence of these groups are sharply different in their attitudes from the [pro-Soviet] clergy of the legal church. This situation results in all kinds of recidivism, in a significant resurgence of religious feelings in the form of the so-called ‘renewal’ of icons, the spread of ‘holy’ letters, the carrying out of prayer services in fields by wells, various prophesyings, and also agitation about the persecution of religion and the church in the USSR.’ Noting the ineffectiveness of violent measures, since ‘believers seek for the satisfaction of their religious demands in the undergrounds, constructing ‘forest’, ‘cave’ and ‘catacomb’ churches,’ General Karpov makes a Jesuitical suggestion for the struggle with, and establishing control over, the believers: ‘... With the aim of struggling against the illegal church groups where they have assumed large proportions, [I suggest that we] proceed to broaden the net of functioning churches up to two or three per region, not refraining from increasing the opening of churches also in the provinces, and in areas with a significant number of functioning churches, and in those regions where there are none,’ he says in his report.

“Having a vivid example in Nazi Germany, which obtained loyal attitudes and a lowering of the resistance of the local population on the occupied territories, the Soviet regime, besides convening a council and electing a patriarch, decided on a temporary weakening of repressions and offered significant freedom to religious (external-ritual) activity. Striving, as has already been noted, to keep under its control the activity of believers and to weaken the activity of the alternative underground Orthodox communities that had grown in number by the middle of the 40s, in many regions of the country they began again to open churches, whose clergy were obliged to inform the local departments of the Council for the Affairs of the ROC or the NKVD, which had been transformed in March, 1946 into the MGB, about all the details of church-parish life.

“Only in this context can we explain the sharp rise across the country in the opening of churches that had been recently closed by the Soviets. Therefore, if in the first years of its existence (1943-1944) the Council for the Affairs of the ROC unwillingly permitted the opening of churches – which we can see in the one example of Gorky (Nizhni-Novgorod) province, where out of 212
petitions by 1945 only 14 had been satisfied (moreover, in January, 1945 only 22 churches were functioning in the whole of the province, while 1011 were not functioning) – then already in 1946-1948 the picture changes sharply. As is noted in the protocols of the Council for the Affairs of the ROC on March 17, 1947, all 64 of the petitions reviewed were satisfied, while in the protocol for May 20, 1947 62 petitions reviewed on that day are said to have been satisfied. Thus from 1944 to 1947 inclusive, 1270 churches were handed over to the MP on the territory of the RSFSR.  

“As was to be expected, thanks to the massive arrests of priest and active parishioners of the Catacomb Church and the opening of churches for the MP, the government succeeded in obtaining a reduction in the number of ‘headless underground groups’, the passive members of which began to turn to the legal clergy, while the ‘stubborn fanatics’ ‘isolated themselves’ from the external world. Besides this, for the more successful ferreting out of the illegal communities of the Catacomb Church the MP, too, was drawn in, beginning a ‘struggle with sectarianism’ with the cooperation of the MGB and the Council for the Affairs of the ROC. Many instances are known in which monks or priests of the MP, recruited by the MGB, were sent into catacomb communities and informed against their members, in connection with which the most active among them were arrested. The creation of such a system of informing was not slow in producing the results that the regime needed: already by the middle of the 50s Soviet state security had succeeded in revealing and ‘dissolving’ more than 50% of the Catacomb communities and monasteries in the USSR, thereby stopping both the growth in numbers and the influence of the Catacomb Church on the population.”

Only in the central regions of Tambov, Lipetsk, Tula, Ryazan and Voronezh was there a certain increase in catacomb activity; many young people took leading positions in the movement. And in the 1950s there were still quite a few wandering catacomb priests and a few holy bishops, such as Anthony (Galynsky), Peter (Ladygin) and Barnabas (Belyaev).  

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591 According to figures of the Council for the Affairs of the ROC, on June 1, 1945, there were 10342 functioning churches in the MP, including 6072 in Ukraine and 2297 in Russian. In the same year 104 monasteries were functioning, including 22 in Transcarpathia, in which there lived 4632 monastics (M. Shkarovsky, in Monk Benjamin, op. cit., vol. 3, pp. 87-88).

592 Shumilo, op. cit. As Archbishop Lazarus (Zhurbenko) said: “The catacomb believers feared the Moscow Patriarchate priests even more than the police. Whenever a priest came for some reason or other, he was met by a feeling of dread. The catacomb people would say, ‘A red detective has come.’ He was sent deliberately, and he was obliged to report everything to the authorities. Not infrequently, hierarchs and priests told the people outright, directly from the ambon, ‘Look around, Orthodox people. There are those who do not come to church. Find out who they are and report to us; these are enemies of the Soviet regime who stand in the way of the building of Socialism.’ We were very much afraid of these sergianist-oriented priests.” (“Out from the Catacombs”, Orthodox America, vol. X, № 10 (100), June, 1990, pp. 5-6)

593 Shkvarovsky, Iosiflianstvo, op. cit., pp. 192-197.

594 On Bishop Peter, see “Kratkoe opisanie biografii menia nedostojnago skhiepiskopa Petra Ladygina” (A Short Description of the Biography of Me, the Unworthy Schema-Bishop Peter
numbers were increased by Khruschev’s 1956 amnesty, which released many “catacombniks”. However, these numbers steadily decreased until the fall of Soviet power in 1991. The existence of the True Church inside Russia was then saved by the intervention of the Russian Church Abroad…

The Triumph of the Moscow Patriarchate: (2) Outside the USSR

“Soon after the council [of January, 1945], on April 10, 1945, Stalin personally met [Patriarch Alexis]. At the meeting, besides Stalin, there took part the people’s commissar for foreign affairs V.M. Molotov, and from the MP [NKVD agent] Metropolitan Nicholas (Yarushevich), who soon became president of the newly created Department of External (i.e. international) Church Affairs (OVTsS), and Protopriest N. Kolchitsky – chancellor of the MP, in charge of questions of international relations. This is how Patriarch Alexis later recalled this meeting: ‘… Full of happiness at seeing face to face him whose name alone is pronounced with love not only in every corner of our country, but also in all the freedom-loving and peace-loving countries, we expressed our gratitude to Joseph Vissarionovich… The discussion was a completely unforced conversation of a father with his children.’ As V. Alexeev affirms, citing the correspondence between [Patriarch Alexis] Simansky and G. Karpov, at the meeting ‘besides discussing intra-ecclesiastical problems, the conversation first of all concerned the tasks of the Russian Orthodox Church in the field of international relations… The Church, according to Stalin’s conception, had to play a significant role in facilitating the international contacts of the USSR, using its own channels’. Soon after this meeting, on May 28, 1945, Patriarch Alexis unexpectedly set off on a ‘pilgrimage’ to the Middle East, where he met not only prominent religious personalities, but also the heads of governments and other influential politicians…”

During his trip to the Middle East, Patriarch Alexis intervened in the Greek civil war by calling on the Greek people to support the Communists and reject the Royalists and British Imperialists (Stalin adopted a more neutral stance). In Jerusalem he tried to persuade the ROCOR communities to come under his omophorion. But the head of ROCOR’s Spiritual Mission, Archimandrite Anthony (the future Archbishop of Los Angeles) firmly rejected his advances. With the agreement of the Patriarch of Jerusalem, the patriarch was allowed to visit the convents on Eleon and Gethsemane. The hierarchs, surrounded by English police and Russian KGB agents, entered the church on Eleon just as the nuns were singing: “Blessed is the man walketh not in the counsel [soviet in Slavonic] of the ungodly”. None of the nuns in either of the convents asked

595 Shumilo, op.cit.
Three years later, the Soviets, supported by the new Israeli government, forcibly seized some ROCOR churches, injuring some monastics. On December 1, 1948, the military governor of Jerusalem presented to Hierodeacon Methodius, the representative of Archimandrite Anthony, a demand that he hand over the keys of the Mission’s properties to the representatives of the MP who had arrived from Moscow. “This note was presented to Fr. Methodius by the representatives of the MP, who were accompanied by a group of strong young men in uniform from the Soviet embassy and several observers from the Israeli government. Fr. Methodius refused outright to hand over the keys of the church that had been entrusted to him. Then the young men in uniform surrounded the clergyman and began to beat him. The Israeli observers did not take part in the beating, but did not defend him either. Might took its toll: beaten to the point of unconsciousness, Fr. Methodius was thrown into a ditch, the keys were taken from his belt, and the ‘transfer of property’ took place. It should be noted that a significant part of the property handed over by the Israeli authorities supposedly into the possession of the Russian Orthodox Church in 1948 was later sold to the Israeli government by the Soviet authorities in 1964.”

“After visiting the countries of the Middle East, Metropolitan Nicholas, who had accompanied the Soviet patriarch, set off at the end of June for England, where he was received at Buckingham palace by King George VI. Metropolitan Nicholas made a successful attempt to exert political influence on the king with the aim of forming a ‘democratic image’ for the totalitarian regime of Stalin in British government circles…”

Metropolitan Nicholas “sounded out the ground for the organization of parishes of the Moscow Patriarchate in London and the participation of the Anglicans in the planned World Conference of Christian Churches in Moscow. In the course of the visit the archbishop of York issued some anti-catholic declarations, calling the Vatican the common enemy of Orthodoxy and Anglicanism. This gave G. Karpov an excuse, in his report to the Central Committee of the All-Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) to draw the conclusion that ‘the Anglican church, like the Russian Orthodox church, has a negative attitude towards the Vatican and is ready to take part in

596 N. Talberg, “Svetaia Rus’ na Sviatoj Zemle” (Holy Rus’ on the Holy Land), Pravoslavnaya Rus’ (Orthodox Russia), № 16, 1958, p. 8; Monk Benjamin, op. cit., vol. 3, p. 87.
597 Protopriest Victor Potapov; “RPZTs i sud’by russkoj Palestiny” (ROCOR and the Destinies of Russian Palestine); “How ROCOR lost Jerusalem”, Vertograd-Inform, № 20, October, 2000, pp. 23-36 ®.
598 Shumilo, op. cit. The MP took complete control of ROCOR’s properties in Israel in 1997.
undertakings directed against the Vatican, although it has so far adopted a passive position in this matter’ (RTsKhIDNI, f.17, op. 125, d. 407, l. 37)."

Metropolitan Nicholas then went to Paris, where his propaganda was so successful that a law on Soviet passports was passed (on June 14, 1946), after which more than 3000 Russians living in France hurried to the Soviet embassy to take their passports.

After the victory of the Soviets, many Russian émigrés were swept up by a feeling of nostalgia for what they thought was their homeland. In the words of the writer Vladimir Nabokov, they began to “fraternize with the Soviets because they sense in the Soviet Union the Soviet Union of the Russian people.” Typical of the feelings of many at the time were the words of Metropolitan Eulogius of Paris, full of emotion but with no spiritual, ecclesiastical content: “The holy Mother Russian Church is calling us to return to her bosom. Shall we decline this maternal call? Our soul has suffered enough in exile abroad. It is time to go home. The higher ecclesiastical authorities promise us a peaceful development of church life. I want to kiss my native Russian land. We want peace in the bosom of our native Mother Church – both us old men, in order to find a final peace, and the young and the middle-aged, in order to work on the regeneration of the Homeland, and to heal her yawning wounds. Without fear or doubt, and without disturbance, let us go to our native land: it is so good, so beautiful...”

And so in September, 1945 75 Eulogian parishes were united with the MP. The question of Eulogius’ ban, placed on him by the MP fifteen years earlier for his refusal to submit to it, was not even discussed, and Nicholas and Eulogius concelebrated in the church of St. Alexander Nevsky. On September 11 the MP decreed that Metropolitan Eulogius should be exarch of these parishes. However, Eulogius was still under the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople. So he asked him for permission to return to the MP, but no reply ensued, and he remained dependent on Constantinople, by whom he was also named exarch.

His successor, Archbishop Vladimir (Tikhonitsky), supported by his flock, decided in October, 1946 to remain with the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

599 Monk Benjamin, op. cit., vol. 3, pp. 86, 97. However, the Russian community in London remained unitedly loyal to ROCOR for time being. It was only when the French-Russian monk Anthony (Bloom) arrived as Orthodox chaplain for the Fellowship of SS. Alban and Sergius that a division began. In 1950 Fr. Anthony was made vicar of the newly created MP parish. In 1957 he was consecrated to the episcopate. In 1963 he was appointed Exarch of the MP in Western Europe, and in 1966 – Metropolitan.
602 Eulogius, Puti moei zhizni (The Ways of My Life), p. 613; in Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 3, p. 81. Eulogius did not return in the end, as we shall see below.
603 Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 3, p. 94.
604 Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 3, pp. 114-115. On December 25, 1945 the Soviet deputy foreign minister V. Dekanozov wrote to G. Karpov: “The successes of Nicholas of Krutitsa have not been established and could easily be destroyed. Comrade Bogomolov (the
In September, 1945 ROCOR’s Metropolitan Seraphim (Lukyanov) of Western Europe joined the MP, and after the death of Metropolitan Eulogius was raised to the rank of exarch. However, his Paris flock did not accept him, so he returned to ROCOR, but then again returned to the MP, where he died as metropolitan of Odessa. In one of his letters abroad Metropolitan Seraphim wrote that he was constantly watched by a “nanny”.

In view of these facts Shumilo is quite justified in writing: “It was precisely thanks to the lying pro-Soviet propaganda of the hierarchy of the Moscow Patriarchate that tens of thousands of émigrés, among whom were quite a few clergy and even bishops, believing in the spectre of freedom, began to return to the USSR at the end of the Second World War, where the Soviet concentration camps and prisons were waiting for them... These tragic pages of the history of our Fatherland have been sealed by rivers of innocent blood on all succeeding generations. And to a great degree the blame for this, for the tens of thousands of destroyed lives and crippled destinies, lies on the first Soviet patriarch Sergius Stragorodsky and his church, who by deed and word served the God-fighting Soviet totalitarian system...”

On October 18, 1945 Metropolitan Gregory of Leningrad visited Finland, and received the Konevets and Valaamo monasteries together with two parishes in Helsinki into his jurisdiction. He also received written assurances from the hierarchs of the Finnish Orthodox Church that they would soon return from Constantinople to Moscow. However, as Timo Siukonen writes, the MP finally had to admit defeat in its struggle to gain control over the Finnish Church. “The Winter War (1939-1940) and the Continuation War (1941-1944) decisively changed the position of the Finnish Orthodox Church. The loss of the ceded territories of Karelia meant that the church had to give up 90 per cent of its property, and 70 per cent of its members were settled in different parts of Finland as displaced persons. According to Juha Riikonen’s thesis, the Moscow Patriarchate tried to dictate to Finland, as it did to other churches in the Soviet sphere of power. The Russian Orthodox Church was a part of the foreign relations apparatus of the Soviet Union.

“Initially the linkage was proposed by Moscow Patriarch Alexis after Victory Day celebrations in May 1945. Gregory, the Metropolitan of Leningrad and Novgorod, was sent to Kuopio for discussions. In the talks Gregory demanded that the Finnish Orthodox Church put an end to its ambassador in France) thinks that the sending of constant representatives of the MP to Paris should be speeded up and the first successes of Nicholas confirmed, otherwise the Anglo-Americans will seize the foreign Orthodox organizations into their hands and turn them into a weapon against us” (GARF, f. 6991, op. 1, d. 65, l. 452).

605 Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 3, pp. 94-95.
606 Shumilo, op. cit.
607 M.V. Shkarovsky; Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 3, p. 95.
isolation, and that the lost daughter should come back to its true father.

“In December 1945 Herman asked Alexis if the Finnish church would be allowed to keep the new calendar that it had adopted, as well as an autonomy that would be as extensive as what it enjoyed under Constantinople. Alexis gave a negative answer to both questions. After that, Herman suspended preparations for an extraordinary synod.

“A survey of church members in 1946 reinforced the negative view of a linkage, and the matter was not discussed for years at meetings of the ecclesiastical executive. ‘The pressure from Moscow was too direct, and dismissive of Finland’s legal decision-making system’, Riikonen believes.

“According to the thesis, two different administrative cultures clashed in the handling of the matter. Moscow's style clearly indicated a totalitarian way of dealing with issues.

“The Finnish national government felt that choosing which patriarchate to be a part of was a matter for the Finnish Orthodox Church to decide on its own.

“ ‘The Security Police saw the situation as problematic. It felt that the arrival of Bishop Michael in Finland in 1954 was a clear sign of attempts to turn Orthodox congregations into a cover for Soviet espionage’, Riikonen notes.”

“The Finnish Orthodox Church was in a tight corner for more than ten years, as the Moscow Patriarchate tried to coddle, connive, and command it to come back to its fold - away from the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople.

“The plans came to nothing. Archbishop Herman managed to steer the church in very difficult waters, and it was not until the spring of 1957 that the Finnish Orthodox Church was able to claim final victory in its struggle to remain independent.”

However, the Soviet church had successes elsewhere, including the defection of the ROCOR Bishop John of Urmia (Iran) to Moscow – but he later rejoined ROCOR when he moved to America. This tug-of-war between the Soviet and American spheres of influence was felt everywhere. Its influence was felt even on Mount Athos, where Archimandrite Justin of the Russian monastery of St. Panteleimon petitioned to come under the MP.

609 Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 3, pp. 102-103.
One of the few defeats suffered by the Soviets in the ecclesiastical arena at this time was in Japan. On March 27, 1946 Bishop Nicholas (Ono) and his consistory petitioned to be received into the MP, and on April 3 Patriarch Alexis agreed. However, Japan was at that time under the military occupation of the American General MacArthur, one of whose advisors, Colonel Boris Pasch, was the son of Metropolitan Theophilus (Pashkovsky), head of the American Metropolia, who advised his son to hinder the union of the Japanese Church with Moscow. The son heeded his father, and the union did not take place at this time. Two bishops sent by Moscow to further the union arrived at Vladivostok, but were not allowed to sail to Japan by the American authorities. The MP would have to wait until 1970 before it regained control of the Japanese Church...

In the conditions of the Cold War, which began immediately after the World War, the Soviets were especially interested in the United States of America and in the possibility of infiltrating American life through its pocket Soviet church.

“On October 26-27 [1944] the hierarchs of the Church Abroad in North America Archbishop Vitaly, Bishop Jerome and Bishop Joasaph took part in the Hierarchical Council of North America, in which the election of Metropolitan Sergius to the Russian patriarchal throne was discussed. A resolution was passed recognizing the election and indicating that the Patriarch Sergius of Moscow should be commemorated at Divine services – without, however, removing the commemoration of [ROCOR] Metropolitans Anastasy and Metropolitan Theophilus of North America. Following this conciliar decision, Metropolitan Theophilus issued an ukaz on the commemoration of all three hierarchs in all the parishes of North America. This resolution was signed also by the ROCOR hierarchs Vitaly (Maximenko), Tikhon (Troitsky), Joasaph and Jerome.”

On May 31, after the death of Sergius, a Council of the Bishops of North America under the presidency of Metropolitan Theophilus and with the participation of Archbishop Vitaly issued an ukaz on the commemoration of the patriarchal locum tenens, Metropolitan Alexis, in all the churches. Meanwhile, two bishops, Alexis of Alaska and Macarius of Boston, joined Moscow. Then, in November, 1946, at a clergy-laity council in Cleveland, with the agreement of Metropolitan Theophilus but without the agreement of the other bishops, the council was recognized to be the supreme legislative and administrative organ of the American metropolia – an act which reduced the power of the bishops to almost nothing. The council decided – against the protests of five out of the nine bishops – to return to the MP. Metropolitan

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611 Protopriest Alexander Lebedev. Pora uzhe nam znat’ svoiu istoriu (It’s time we knew our history); Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 3, p. 65.
612 Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 3, p. 75.
Theophilus then wrote to the five dissenting bishops that they were excluded from his metropolia, and ordered that their names be removed from commemoration from the parishes before Pascha. The five dissenters returned into submission to ROCOR.

“In preparation for the council,” writes Andreyev, “it was very interesting and characteristic that the same persons who fought for the Moscow jurisdiction and the split from the [ROCOR] Synod and ‘helped’ Metropolitan Eulogius in Europe, moved from Paris to America and began to ‘help’ Metropolitan Theophilus [the leader of the American Metropolia]. With unusual knowledge of church matters, these professors of engineering and other fine arts began to state authoritatively that ‘the Moscow Patriarchate has not deviated from the dogmas, canons and rites of Orthodoxy in any way, and the politics conducted by its head, even though it is condemned today by many, cannot have a decisive influence on its canonical position.’ In this way the Cleveland council prepared itself by only a formal cooperation with the Synod Abroad, and then, completely backing down from its position, pronounced this resolution: ‘We are passing the resolution to request His Holiness, the Patriarch of Moscow, to reunite us to his bosom and be our spiritual father, under the stipulation that we preserve our full autonomy, which exists at the present time. Since the hierarchical authority of the patriarchate is incompatible with the hierarchical authority of the Synod Abroad of the Russian Orthodox Church, the American Church is discontinuing any administrative subordination to the Synod Abroad.”

In 1947 Metropolitan Gregory, Patriarch Alexis’ ambassador, brought a draft Statute of “the autonomous administration” of the Russian Orthodox Church in North American and Canada. In it, as Alexander Bogolepov writes, “the Moscow Patriarch attempted to make subject to his own confirmation the election of any American Metropolitan, as well as the elections of the diocesan bishops. Patriarch Alexis, in his Ukase of February 16, 1945, recommended two candidates of his own (Metropolitan Benjamin and Archbishop Alexis) to the All-American Sobor for election as Metropolitan. The Patriarch’s Ukase went on to say that this imposed no limitation on the right of the All-American Sobor to nominate and elect its own candidate, but at the same time it was pointed out that the Moscow Patriarchate had the canonical right to refuse to confirm the candidate so elected for any reason whatsoever. According to Metropolitan Gregory’s Draft Statute, the Metropolitan and the Bishops of the American Church were subject to approval by the Moscow Patriarch and could be deposed by him. This would make possible the gradual replacement of the entire episcopate; diocesan bishops would all be replaced by bishops agreeable to Moscow. According to the same draft, the

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613 Archbishop Vitaly (Maximenko), Motivy noej zhizni (Motifs of my Life), 1955; Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 3, pp. 117-118.
decrees of the All-American Sobor would be subject to confirmation by the Bishops’ Sobor, and, by the same token, its entire activity would be subordinated to an episcopate faithful to Moscow.”

Such a degree of subordination to Moscow proved unacceptable to the American Metropolia, and the union did not take place for the time being. However, neither did the Metropolia return to ROCOR, remaining in an indeterminate autonomous condition until 1970...

Archbishop John of Shanghai

A particularly absorbing struggle took place for the Church in China. All the Russian bishops except one – the renowned wonderworker John (Maximovich) of Shanghai – accepted Soviet passports and returned to the MP. This is an eye-witness account of what took place: “The pressure on Bishop John of Shanghai from the Soviets began even before the end of the Second World War, when the hierarchs of the Church Abroad in Manchuria – Metropolitan Meletius, Archbishops Nestor and Demetrius and Bishop Juvenaly sent letters to the Ruling Archbishop of Peking and China Victor and to Bishop John of Shanghai informing them that on July 26, 1945 they had recognized Patriarch Alexis of Moscow and All Russia, and suggesting that Archbishop Victor and Bishop John follow their example and submit to the new Moscow Patriarch as to the lawful head of the Russian Orthodox Church.

“Not having any communication with the Synod Abroad beyond the bounds of China because of the military actions, and not knowing the true situation of things in Europe, Bishop John wrote about the letter he had received from the hierarchs in Harbin to his superior, Archbishop Victor in Peking, advising him to do nothing with regard to recognizing the Patriarch before the re-establishment of links with the Synod Abroad, while for the sake of clarifying the question of the legality and canonical correctness or incorrectness of the choices of Patriarch Alexis Bishop John advised Archbishop Victor to send him a short greeting on the occasion of his consecration and wait to see what the result would be. In this way he aimed to clarify whether the new Patriarch was a successor in God of the reposed and always recognized by the Church Abroad Patriarch Tikhon and the locum tenens of the Patriarchal Throne Metropolitan Peter (of Krutitsa), or simply a continuer of the politics of the dead Soviet Patriarch Sergius.

“In expectation of a clarification of this question and for the sake of calming that part of the Russian colony in Shanghai that had become pro-Soviet and demanded the recognition of the Moscow Patriarch, Bishop John issued a resolution (ukaz № 650 dated September 6 / August 24, 1945) on the temporary commemoration of Patriarch Alexis during the Divine services

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instead of the until-then-existing commemoration of ‘the Orthodox Episcopate of the Russian Church’.”

A little earlier, on July 31, Bishop John had written to Archbishop Victor that he considered that “the raising of the name of the President of the Synod Abroad should be kept for the time being, since according to the 14th canon of the First-and-Second Canon of the Local Council [of Constantinople in 861] it is wrong wilfully to cease commemorating the name of one’s metropolitan. But the raising of the name of the Patriarch… should necessarily, in accordance with your ukaz, be introduced throughout the diocese… At the given time no conditions of an ideological character have yet been imposed that would serve as a reason for any change in our ecclesiastical administration abroad. If unacceptable conditions are again imposed in the future, the preservation of the present order of ecclesiastical administration will become the task of that ecclesiastical authority which will manage to be created in dependence on external conditions.”

This form of expression indicated that Bishop John was “hedging his bets”, ready to revoke his commemoration of the Moscow Patriarch if “unacceptable conditions of an ideological character” were to be imposed. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that in this letter he temporarily recognized the canonicity of the Moscow Patriarch, declaring: “There is no canonical basis for such independence, since the lawfulness of the recognized – both by his own Local Church and by all the other Local Churches – Patriarch is not in doubt; and since communication with said ecclesiastical authority (i.e., the Patriarch) has now become possible, therefore the ukaz (of Patriarch Tikhon) of November 7, 1920 is not applicable.” In any case, in August Archbishop Victor sent a telegram to Patriarch Alexis asking for him and Bishop John to be received into his jurisdiction; and from that time Bishop John and his priests started to commemorate the patriarch.

However, Bishop John now began to be opposed by his flock. Thus when his priest, Fr. Peter tried to introduce the commemoration of the patriarch in the convent ruled by Abbess Adriana (later of San Francisco), she forbade him, and told him to go back to Bishop John and tell him that this was wrong. At about this time, on September 28, Bishop John received a telegram from

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616 “Declaration”, sworn under oath on the Cross and the Holy Gospel by members of the Russian Emigration Association of Shanghai: G.K. Bolotov, P.I. Alexeenko, V.V. Krasovsky, N.N. Pleshanov, B.M. Krain, B.L. Kuper, M.A. Moshkin, 9 May, 1963, San Francisco. See also Monk Benjamin, “Arkhipioskop Ioann (Maksimovich) kak okhranitel’ tserkovnago imushchestva v Shankahe” (Archbishop John (Maximovich) as the Preserver of Church Property in Shanghai), Pravoslavnaya Rus’ (Orthodox Russia), № 2 (16), 1999, p. 34.

617 Archive of the Department of External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate, d. № 24; Monk Benjamin, op. cit., vol. 3, pp. 88-89; Archbishop Ambrose (von Sievers), “Proslavlen li u Boga Arkhipioskop Ioann (Maksimovich)?” (Has Archbishop John (Maximovich) been Glorified by God?), Russkoe Prawoslavie (Russian Orthodoxy), № 2 (16), 1999, p. 34.
Metropolitan Anastasy in Geneva telling him that the Synod Abroad was functioning, that the parents of Vladyka John were alive and living in Germany, and that he, the metropolitan, asked him to tell him about the situation of the Church in China. Bishop John immediately stopped commemorating the Soviet patriarch, and on September 29 he telegraphed Archbishop Victor that he had re-established contact with the Synod.

One of Bishop John’s spiritual children tells how he repented of his brief commemoration of the Soviet patriarch every time he met another bishop, even down to the time he lived in the U.S.

“The next telegram came in the month of November from the United States from Archbishop Tikhon of Western America and San Francisco, in which Vladyka Tikhon informed him that Metropolitan Anastasy, Archbishops Vitaly, Josaph, Jerome and he had come into contact with each other and asked Bishop John to be with them and not to recognize the Moscow Patriarchate.

“This was all that Bishop John had to know, and when, at the beginning of December, 1945 there arrived a letter from Archbishop Victor informing him that he recognized Patriarch Alexis, Bishop John categorically refused to accept the new Patriarch, in spite of terrible pressure, exhortations and threats.”

“One the evening of January 15, 1946 Archbishop Victor flew into Shanghai on an aeroplane from Peking and declared that he not only recognized the Patriarch, but had also become a Soviet citizen, having taken a passport of the USSR.”

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618 “Declaration”, op. cit. According to the oral tradition of the brotherhood of the community of St. Job, the telegram was sent by the superior of the community, Archimandrite Seraphim (Ivanov) in the name of the metropolitan, since contact with the latter had been lost because of the movement of the front line and the moving of the Synod from Belgrade to Munich and then to Geneva. They say that on hearing of this ‘arbitrariness’, the metropolitan thanked Fr. Seraphim, but told him not to use his name again (Monk Benjamin, op. cit., vol. 3, p. 95).


620 “Declaration”, op. cit. As an American publication put it: “By ukaz of Patriarch Alexis of Moscow, dated 27 December, 1945, the Mission in China was re-united to the Russian Mother Church and the break caused by the schismatic activities of the Karlovitz Synod was healed. But the perspectives for church work were somewhat clouded by the schism in 1946 of the vicar bishop of Shanghai, John Maximovitch, who took the lead in an opposition movement against the Patriarch and his ruling bishop at Peking” (One Church, vol. 12, №№ 9-10, September-October, 1958, p. 228).

621 “Declaration”, op. cit. Protopresbyter Elias Wen writes: “After World War II, many Russian émigrés in Shanghai, including some clergy, took Soviet passports. The head of the mission, Archbishop Victor, was among those who did so, as was the senior rector of our
“Archbishop Victor in vain tried to persuade, demanded and ordered Bishop John to submit and recognize the Patriarch. Finally he came to the regular weekly meeting of the clergy, where he officially informed them of his move to the Soviet church, and demanded that the church servers follow his example, and, having left Bishop John to preside, left the session. After a word from Bishop John calling on the clergy to remain faithful to the Russian Church Abroad, the meeting passed a resolution suggested by him: to report to Metropolitan Anastasy on the faithfulness of the clergy to the Synod Abroad and ask for instructions.

“There was no reply from the Synod for a very long time, and in this period of about seven weeks terrible pressure was exerted on Bishop John from the Soviet authorities, Archbishop Victor, Metropolitan Nestor from Manchuria, from a large part of Russian society which had applied for Soviet passports, from clergy who had moved to that side, and from others. In writing and orally, in the press, in clubs and at meetings the Soviet side tried to prove that the election of the patriarch had been completely legal, in accordance with all the ecclesiastical canons, and suggested as proof the showing of a documentary film on the election of the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia.

“Bishop John agreed to see this film, so as personally to see and check the whole procedure of the election, on condition that the film would be shown, not in the Soviet club, where all the Soviet pictures were being shown at the time, but in the hall of a certain theatre.

“Most of the Shanghai clergy came to the showing, including Mitre-bearing Protopriest N. Kolchev, who is now living in San Francisco, Fr. I. Wen and others.

(cathedral, Protopresbyter Michael Rogozhin. We, together with Vladyka John, did not follow this example. I remember that Vladyka John received an announcement from the Soviet consulate that Archbishop Victor was coming to Shanghai. Vladyka John gathered together all of the clergy and announced that he would not meet with Vladyka Victor. We supported him in this.

“When Archbishop Victor arrived in Shanghai from Peking, eight Komsomol youths accompanied him as he walked towards the cathedral, where Father Michael had just finished a moleben. We watched these events from the church house. The next day, it happened I had to meet with Archbishop Victor. He called us ‘Johnnites’. ‘Yes, and do you know why we favor Vladyka John?’ I asked him. ‘If you want to know, I will tell you. Who brought Vladyka John here? You brought him to us. After Vladyka John’s arrival you yourself came here many times and said to him: ‘Vladyka John, I respect you, I recognize your high standards in life, and you are a good leader. Continue in this way. And if the clergy don’t listen to you, don’t hesitate to chastise them. Vladyka, didn’t you say these things?’ ‘Yes, I did,’ admitted Vladyka Victor. ‘That’s why we listen to him. And now you are against Vladyka John. You are now a Soviet citizen, and it is impossible to have any interaction with you. I am Chinese; our clergy remained White, but you are Soviet ‘Red’. Do as you like…’” (Archpriest Peter Perekrestov, Man of God – Archbishop John of Shanghai and San Francisco, Redding, Ca.: Nikodemos Orthodox Publication Society, 1994, pp. 64-65)
“Before the beginning of the film, and without any warning, the orchestra began to play the Soviet hymn, and Bishop John immediately left the hall. The arrangers of the showing immediately rushed after the hierarch, and, having stopped him in the foyer, began to apologise and tried to persuade him to stay. Bishop John returned to the hall after the end of the hymn, and, having seen the film, declared that in the so-called election of the Patriarch that had been shown there was absolutely no legality, that the election had been conducted in accordance with the classic Soviet model, in which only one candidate was put forward, for whom the representative of every diocese without exception voted identically, reading out a stereotyped phrase, and in which there was nothing spiritual or canonical.

“This declaration by Bishop John still more enraged the Bolshevized circles, and the persecution of Vladyka and the clergy faithful to him intensified still more.

“On March 20, on the day of the patronal feast, Vladyka John was brought a telegram during the Liturgy. Since he never paid attention to anything extraneous whatsoever during the Divine services, Bishop John hid the telegram in his pocket without reading it, and opened it only after the service. In the telegram, which was signed by Metropolitan Anastasy, was written:

“’I recognize the resolution of the clergy under your presidency as correct.’

“This moral support received from the head of the Russian Church Abroad gave fresh strength to the clergy that remained faithful in order to continue their defence of the Orthodox churches from the claims and encroachment of the Bolsheviks.

“In the struggle Vladyka John had no rest, he literally flew from church to church, visiting schools and social organizations and giving sermons in defence of the Synod Abroad, calling on Russian people to be faithful, driving out Soviet agitators from the Orthodox churches and White Russian organizations.

“In this period Vladyka John was subjected to especially strong pressure and threats from both Archbishop Victor and from Metropolitan Nestor, who was to be appointed Exarch of Patriarch Alexis in the Far East.

“Finally, on May 15, there arrived a telegram from Metropolitan Anastasy in Munich raising Bishop John to the rank of Archbishop with his immediate subjection to the Hierarchical Synod. However, it was impossible to publicise this until the official decree was received from the Synod.
“On Friday, May 31, 1946, Archbishop Victor again flew into Shanghai, but this time, on his arrival, he was met by Soviet consular officials, and not by clergy and parishioners. On the same evening, Archbishop Victor proceeded in state to the cathedral surrounded by consular officials and newly enlisted komsomol members and occupied part of the cathedral residence with his suite. That evening the Soviets staged a demonstration, trying to drive Bishop John out of the cathedral and the cathedral residence.

“The next day, June 1, 1946, there arrived the long-awaited official decree [№ 108] on the raising of Bishop John to the rank of ruling Archbishop with immediate submission to the Synod.

“The new ruling archbishop told Archbishop Victor of his appointment and suggested that he leave the Cathedral House and leave the bounds of the Shanghai diocese.

“Archbishop Victor, in his turn, gave Archbishop John on June 15 a decree of the Moscow Patriarchate (№ 15 of June 13, 1946) on the appointment of Bishop Juvenal from Manchuria at the disposal of Archbishop Victor ‘to take the place of the see of Bishop John of Shanghai, who does not recognize the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate.’

“On June 16, 1946 this decree was published in the Soviet newspapers, and there came the time of open battle for the physical possession of the Cathedral, for the right to celebrate Divine services in it. Archbishop Victor banned our clergy (Fr. Hieromonk Modest, Fr. Medvedev, Fr. K. Zanevsky) from serving in the cathedral, while Vladyka John himself served daily and ordered them to serve with him, forbidding the Soviet priests from giving sermons and himself speaking for them, explaining to the worshippers why the Orthodox Church Abroad did not recognize the Moscow Patriarchate.”

On June 16, 1946 Archbishop John declared to the worshippers that he had received the ukaz removing him from administration of the Shanghai diocese, but would not be obeying it: “I will submit to this ukaz only if they prove to me from the Holy Scriptures and the law of any country that the breaking of oaths is a virtue while faithfulness to one’s oath is a serious sin.”

“Feeling that the balance was all the time shifting towards Archbishop John [four Shanghai priests join the MP, but 12 remained with Archbishop John], the Soviet side began to resort to threats, bringing in komsomol members and debauchees, and once there was a serious threat that Archbishop John and other anti-communist leaders of the White Russian colony would be kidnapped and taken away by them onto a Soviet ship. The

622 “Declaration”, op. cit.
representatives of our youth, without the knowledge of Vladyka, organized a guard which always followed in his footsteps without him knowing it and guarded him.

“When Archbishop Victor ‘removed’ Archbishop John with his decree and banned him from serving, Vladyka John, instead of leaving the cathedral, went onto the ambon and told the worshippers that he was being removed by Archbishop Victor because he remained faithful to the oath he had given to the Synod Abroad, which they had both sworn. And he went on to serve the whole Liturgy in full!..."

“In August, 1946 the Soviet clergy and Soviet citizens ceased to frequent the cathedral church, and the Chinese National Government and the city authorities recognized Archbishop John as the head of the Shanghai Diocese of the Orthodox Church Abroad.”624

On October 19, 1946 Archbishop Victor was imprisoned in Peking on charges of participating in the anti-comintern union of North Korea and the Russian Fascist organizations, and also of cooperating with the Japanese occupation authorities. However, on October 24, through the intervention of Soviet diplomats, he was released.

On November 26, 1947, in defiance of the Soviets, the Chinese government in Nanking confirmed Bishop John as head of the Russian Spiritual Mission in China.625 But in 1948, as the communists came closer to power, Archbishop John evacuated his flock of 6000 to the Philippines, and then to the United States. He himself left Shanghai on May 4, 1949. His refusal to join the Soviets undoubtedly saved both the physical and the spiritual lives of himself and his flock. Those 10,000 Russian Orthodox in Shanghai who accepted Soviet passports and returned to the “Fatherland” were not so fortunate...626

624 “Declaration”, op. cit. Jonah Seraphimovich Ma, a close disciple of Archbishop John who worked for the Chinese Nationalist government, testifies: “I advised Archbishop John to apply for Chinese citizenship; finally he agreed. After processing all of the necessary documents for the Archbishop, I personally delivered to Archbishop John the government’s approval. Only after the Archbishop acquired Chinese citizenship did the Soviets abandon their plans to capture Archbishop John and take over the cathedral in Shanghai. Our beloved Archbishop John and the cathedral were saved.” (in Protopresbyter Valery Lukianov, “The Truth concerning Vladyka John of Shanghai, the Wonderworkers: An Historical Inquiry”).

625 Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 3, p. 116. “Only in 2003, in a book devoted to the niece of Vladyka Victor (Sviatin), Xenia Keping, were we given quite definitely to understand that Archbishop Victor had been killed in the Soviet ‘fatherland’. The reason for this was said to have been his unwillingness to be reconciled with the pilfering of Russian Church property in China by Soviet officials, both state and patriarchal” (T.A. Bogdanova, A.K. Klementiev, “Put’ Khailarskago Sviatitelia” (The Path of the Bishop of Hailar), Pravoslavnij Put’ (The Orthodox Way), 2005, p. 62 ®).

626 Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 3, p. 116. Metropolitan Valentine of Suzdal writes: “I remember the year 1956, the Dormition men’s monastery in Odessa, where I was an
On June 14, 1948, the MP’s Metropolitan Nestor of Manchuria and Harbin was arrested – at the request of Soviet representatives. After being tortured by Chinese interrogators, he was transferred to the Lubianka in Moscow. On December 25 he was sentenced to 10 years in the camps for spying, for writing *The Shooting of the Moscow Kremlin* and for carrying out pannikhidas for the Royal Martyrs killed in Alapaevsk. He was released in 1956. 627

*The Triumph of Evil*

The greatest tragedy of the war, apart from the vast numbers killed (20 million on the Soviet side), was that it produced neither the fall of communism nor a lasting anti-communist movement. Partly because of the Germans’ cruelty to the Russians (about 3 million Russian POWs died in Nazi labour camps, and many civilians were shot inside Russia), and partly because of the ferocious discipline imposed on the country by the NKVD, the majority of the people returned to obedience to their Soviet masters. The Nazis were checked, first in front of Moscow and Leningrad, then turned back at Stalingrad and Kursk in some of the biggest battles in history.

Finally, in 1945, the Red Army forced its way into a ruined Berlin, leaving behind an unparalleled path of destruction, murder and rape. For, as Richard Evans, Regius Professor of Modern History at Cambridge University, writes: “Women and girls were subjected to serial rape wherever they were encountered. Rape was often accompanied by torture and mutilation and frequently ended in the victim being shot or bludgeoned to death. The raging violence was undiscriminating. Often, especially in Berlin, women were deliberately raped in the presence of their menfolk, to underline the humiliation. The men were usually killed if they tried to intervene. In East Prussia, Pomerania and Silesia it is thought that around 1,400,000 women were raped, a good number of them several times. Gang-rapes were the norm rather than the exception. The two largest Berlin hospitals estimated that at least 100,000 women had been raped in the German capital. Many caught a sexually transmitted disease, and not a few fell pregnant; the vast majority of unwilling witness as there returned from the camps and prisons, having served their terms, those hierarchs who returned to Russia after the war so as to unite with the ‘Mother Church’ at the call of Stalin’s government and the Moscow patriarchate: ‘the Homeland has forgiven you, the Homeland calls you!’ In 1946 they trustingly entered the USSR, and were all immediately captured and incarcerated for 10 years, while the ‘Mother Church’ was silent, not raising her voice in defence of those whom she had beckoned into the trap. In order to be ‘re-established’ in their hierarchical rank, they had to accept and chant hymns to Sergianism, and accept the Soviet patriarch. And what then? Some of them ended their lives under house arrest, others in monastery prisons, while others soon departed for eternity.” (Nativity Epistle, 2000/2001).

the latter obtained an abortion, or, if they did give birth, abandoned their baby in hospital. The sexual violence went on for many weeks, even after the war formally came to an end. German women learned to hide, especially after dark; or, if they were young, to take a Soviet soldier, preferably an officer, as a lover and protector…”628

So the head of the beast that had been wounded, was healed. And then “all the world marvelled and followed the beast” (Revelation 13.3)...

The Soviet beast, being a hater of all men, spared nobody – not even its own soldiers. Thus in accordance with the agreement made between Stalin and the Western Allies in Yalta, vast numbers of Russians, many of them fiercely anti-communist, were deported back to the USSR. “From 1945 to 1947, 2,272,000 people were handed over by the Allies to the USSR. Of these more than 600,000 had served in the ‘eastern forces’ of the German army. About 200,000 managed to remain in the West.”629 According to Shumilo, however, “more than 6 million ‘Soviet’ prisoners of war, ‘Osty’ workers, refugees and émigrés were forcibly repatriated to the U.S.S.R. up to 1948. The majority of them perished within the walls of Stalin’s NKVD.”630

The largest category of those forcibly repatriated was composed of those who had fought in the Soviet army. Protopriest Michael Ardov writes: “I remember quite well the years right after the war, 1945, 1946, and how Moscow was literally flooded with cripples, soldiers who were missing arms and legs, returning from the war, and then, suddenly, they all disappeared. Only later did I learn that they were all picked up and packed off to die on the island of Valaam, in order not to spoil the view in the capital. There was no monastery there then. You can just imagine for yourselves the conditions that they had to endure there while living out their last days. They were so poor, and were reduced to begging in order to survive. This is how they were treated, just so that the capital should not be spoiled by their presence! This I remember quite well. Besides this, as we all know that, because of Stalin and his military leaders, an enormous number of Soviet citizens were taken out of the country as prisoners. The government immediately disowned them; they were immediately branded traitors. And the consequences of this were that when they, for some reason or another, came back to our country, most of them were whisked off to Stalin’s labour camps. This is how they treated the veterans then…”631

629 Soldatov, op. cit., p. 11, footnote 6.
630 Shumilo, op. cit.
631 Ardov, “Avoiding participation in the Great Victory Services”, sermon given on May 8, 2005, Vertograd, May 18, 2005; translated in The Hoffman Wire, May 18, 2005. Shumilo writes: “Under the pretext of restoring ‘socialist legality’ whole families, and even settlements, were sent to Siberia, mainly from Western Ukraine, Belorussia and the Baltic region. By the end of the 40s, Soviet Marshal Zhukov had ordered the forcible removal from Western Ukraine to Siberia, Kazakhstan and other regions of more than 600,000 people” (op. cit.). Alexander
Another category was composed of the soldiers (about one million in all) who fought on the German side in General A.A. Vlasov’s “Russian Liberation Army”. In May, 1945, in Lienz in Austria, “the English occupying authorities handed over to Stalin to certain death some tens of thousands of Cossacks who had fought in the last months of the war on the side of Germany. Eye-witnesses of this drama recall that the hand-over began right during the time of the final liturgy, which Smersh did not allow to finish. Many Cossacks tried to hurl themselves into the abyss so as not to be delivered to the communists, and the first shots were heard from the Soviet occupational zone already a few minutes after the hand-over. It is interesting that the then head of ROCOR, Metropolitan Anastasy, blessed the Cossacks who had formally ended their lives through suicide because they did not want to fall into the hands of the Reds, to be given a church burial. ‘Their actions,’ he wrote, ‘are closer to the exploit of St. Pelagia of Antioch, who hurled herself from a tall tower so as escape desecration [rape].’”

A. Soldatov writes: “The memory of the ‘Vlasovtsy’ is dear to many children of the Russian Church Abroad (ROCOR)... In the memorial cemetery of ROCOR in Novo Diveyevo near New York there stands an obelisk which perpetuates the memory of all the officers and soldiers of the Russian Army of Liberation, who perished ‘in the name of the idea of a Russia free from communism and fascism’...”

The relevance of such a slogan, “Russia free from communism and fascism” is as relevant now as it was in 1945...

A similar tragedy took place in Kempten in Germany. On August 25, 1945, Metropolitan Anastasy wrote to General Eisenhower from Munich, where ROCOR had just moved its headquarters: “After seven years of terrible war, the sun of peace has arisen over the suffering earth. This peace was won by the heroism of the Allied Armies and by the wisdom, courage and self-sacrifical valour of these leaders. Among these names yours stands in the first place. These names will be blessed by those people to whom the victory of the Allied Armies returned freedom. It was with a feeling of profound satisfaction that this victory was greeted by émigrés from various countries who now live in Germany... Only the Russians, of whom there were more in Germany than the representatives of any other nation, were deprived of this joy. They were forced to remain in a foreign land because between them and their Home was a wall which their conscience and common sense did not

Yakovlev writes that during the war the authorities executed 157,000 Red Army soldiers (the equivalent of fifteen divisions) and almost a million were arrested (A Century of Russian Violence in Soviet Russia, Yale University Press, 2003).


Soldatov, “Radosti Paskhi i Skorb’ Pobedy” (The Joys of Pascha and the Sorrow of Victory), Moskovskie Novosti (Moscow News) and Vertograd, № 520, May 14, 2005 ®.
allow them to cross... The Russians, of course, love their homeland no less than the French, the Belgians or the Italians love theirs. The Russians are nostalgic for their homeland. If, in spite of this, they still prefer to remain in a foreign land, having no domicile, often hungry and with no juridical defence, this is only for one reason: they want to preserve the greatest value on earth – freedom: freedom of conscience, freedom of the word, the right to property and personal security. Many of them have already grown old and would like to die in their homeland, but this is impossible as long as there reigns there a power which is based on terror and the suppression of the human personality... It is a remarkable fact that not only intelligentsia, but also peasants and simple workers, who left Russia after 1941, when it entered into war, and who were brought up in the conditions of Soviet life, do not want to return to Soviet Russia. When attempts were made to deport them, they cried out in despair and prayed for mercy. Sometimes they even committed suicide, preferring death in a foreign land to returning to a homeland where only sufferings await them. Such a tragic event took place on August 12 in Kempten. In the this place, in the DP camp, there was a large concentration of Russian émigrés, that is, people who had left Russia after the revolution, and also former Soviet citizens who a little later expressed their desire to remain abroad. When the American soldiers appeared at the camp with the aim of dividing these émigrés into two categories and hand over the former Soviet citizens into the hands of the Soviets, they found all the émigrés in church ardently praying to God that He save them from deportation. Being completely defenceless and abandoned, they considered the church to be their last and only refuge. They offered no active resistance. The people only kneeled and prayed for mercy, trying, in complete despair, to kiss the hands and even the feet of the officers. In spite of this, they were forcibly expelled from the church. The soldiers dragged women and children by the hair and beat them. Even the priests were not left in peace. The priests tried by all means to defend their flock, but without success. One of them, an old and respected priest, was dragged away by the beard. Another spat blood out of his mouth after one of the soldiers, trying to pull the cross out of his hands, struck him in the face. The soldiers rushed into the altar in pursuit of the people. The iconostasis, which separates the sanctuary from the church, was broken in two places, the altar was overthrown and several icons were hurled to the ground. Several people were wounded, two tried to poison themselves. One woman tried to save her child by throwing it through the window, but the man outside who caught this child in his arms was wounded by a bullet in the stomach. You can imagine what a huge impression this made on all the witnesses. It especially shocked the Russians, who were in now way expecting such behaviour from American soldiers. Up to that point they had seen in them only help and support. The American authorities have always shown respect and goodwill to Russian churches and church organizations. Many Russians strove to get into the American zone of occupation because of their hope of being defended by the valorous American army... The Russian people consider the tragedy in Kempten to be an isolated case, which took
place because of a misunderstanding. They firmly believe that nothing like this will ever happen again. They hope that benevolent help will be given to them as before. They are convinced that the victorious American Army, the Army of a country which is glorified by its love for freedom and humanity, will understand their desire to defend their finest national and religious ideals, for the sake of which they have been suffering for more than 25 years. We joyfully note that we, Russian émigrés in Europe, are not alone in this respect. We have recently received news from the bishops of our Church in the United States that they have not agreed to recognize the newly elected patriarch in Russia. They consider that it would be incompatible with their feeling of dignity and with their priestly conscience to be in subjection to an institution that is under the complete control of the Soviet government, which is trying to use it for its own ends. The voice of our brothers speaks about the convictions of their numerous flock in the USA...

“We are strengthened in the belief that we stand on the right path in defending our independence from the Muscovite ecclesiastical and political authorities until the establishment of a new order in our country that is based on the principle of true democracy, that is, freedom, brotherhood and justice. In obtaining a glorious victory together with its allies, and in pushing its frontiers forward, Russia could become the happiest of countries, if only if returned to a healthy political and social life. Being convinced that the victory of eternal truth will finally triumph, we continually pray that better days come for her, for Russia, and that peace and prosperity may be established throughout the world after the days of war have passed. May the blessing of the Lord be upon you.”

A few years later, Metropolitan Anastasy moved the headquarters of ROCOR to the United States, there to continue the struggle of the True Russian Church against Communism...

The examples of Lientz and Kempten show how this war defiled everybody who was touched by it. Even the western democracies, who came into the war in order to defend themselves against the evil of Nazism, were defiled by their alliance with the still greater evil of Communism. Even Churchill, the greatest anti-Communist politician of the West, forgetting the English proverb that when supping with the devil one must use a very long spoon, found himself toasting the devil in the form of Stalin and doing his dirty work. And so Poland, for whose freedom Britain had entered the war, was handed over to the Communists. And after backing the Orthodox Monarchist Chetniks in Yugoslavia, the British changed sides and backed Tito’s murderous Communist partisans...

By the end the Western allies, too, were carrying out atrocities: not only the handing over of innocent Russians to Stalin’s death camps, but also the mass killing of civilians from the air (Hamburg, Dresden, Tokyo, Hiroshima). The Morgenthau plan of reducing Germany to a de-industrialized, pastoral region after the war was nearly adopted. The inhuman policy of unconditional surrender was adopted. The moral humiliation of the West, though less than that of the Soviets or Germans, still illustrated the truth of the Biblical maxim: “Be ye not unequally yoked with unbelievers” (II Corinthians 6.14). And: “The path to hell is paved with good intentions”…
CONCLUSION: BEYOND NIHILISM

When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?

Revelation 6.9-10.

“In October 1917,” writes Archpriest Lev Lebedev, “a satanic sect came to power in Russia that formed a secret conspiracy within the communist party (of the Bolsheviks). The threads leading to the centre of this sect’s administration went far beyond the ocean... At the base of this organization there lay the Masonic principle of many-levelled initiation. Thus ordinary communists knew absolutely nothing about the real aims of their leaders, while those, in their turn, did not know the aims of the ‘high-ups’... Thus the RCP(B)-CPSU was a party-werewolf from the beginning: it was one thing in its words, its slogans, its declarations and its official teaching of Marxism-Leninism, but in fact it was completely the opposite. This party created a state-werewolf in its image and likeness: according to the constitution, the law and its official decrees it was one thing, but in essence, in spirit and in its works it was something completely different!

“There has never been any such thing in the history of humanity! There have been cruel, unjust or lying rulers, whose works did not accord with their words. But never have there been rulers, or governments, which set as their aim the annihilation of a people and a people’s economy that came into their possession! But this is precisely what they began to do in Russia.

“There are now various estimates of the victims of the Bolshevik regime (higher and lower). It goes without saying that it is impossible to establish exact figures. We have tried to take a middle course. And according to such middling estimates, from 1917 to 1945 in one way or another (through shooting, camps and prisons, the two famines of the beginning of the 1920s and 1930s, the deliberately ‘Pyrrhic’ victories in the Second World War) up to 80 million Great Russians only were annihilated (not counting Ukrainians, Belorussians and other nationalities of the former Russian empire). In all, up to 100 million. From 1917 to 1926 20 million were simply shot. We must think that from 1927 to 1937 not less than 10 million. Under ‘collectivization’ 4 million were immediately shot. So that out of the 80 million who perished by 1945 about 30-40 million were simply executed. These figures could not have been made up of political enemies, representatives of the ‘former ones’ (landowners and capitalists), nor of ‘their own’, that is, those communists who for some reason or other became unsuitable. All these together constituted only a small percentage of those who perished. The main mass – tens of millions – were the ‘simple’ Russian People, that is, all the firmly
believing Orthodox people who, even if they did not oppose the new power, could not be re-educated and re-persuaded... These were simple peasants and town-dwellers, who in spite of everything kept the Orthodox faith. And these were the overwhelming majority of the Russian People. Among them, of course, there perished the overwhelming majority of the clergy and monastics (by 1941 100,000 clergy and 205 bishops had been annihilated).

“At the same time, from 1917 to 1945, from the offspring of the off-scourings of the people, but also from unfortunate fellow-travellers for whom self-preservation was higher than all truths and principles, a new people grew up – the ‘Soviet’ people, or ‘Sovki’, as we now call ourselves. From 1918 children in schools no longer learned the Law of God, but learned atheist filthy thinking (and it is like that to the present day [1999]). After 1945 it was mainly this new, ‘Soviet’ people that remained alive. Individual representatives of the former Russian, that is, Orthodox People who survived by chance constituted such a tiny number that one could ignore them, since they could no longer become the basis of the regeneration of the true, real Rus’…”

One can quarrel with some details of this analysis. Thus Lebedev’s figures for those killed count among the higher rather than the middling estimates. Official figures for those condemned for counter-revolution and other serious political crimes between 1921 and 1953 come to only a little more than four million, of whom only about 800,000 were shot. This, of course, excludes those killed in the Civil War and other armed uprisings, and in the great famines in Ukraine and elsewhere. Again, already in the 1920s and 1930s a larger proportion of the population was probably genuinely Soviet and anti-Orthodox than Lebedev admits, while more genuinely Russian and Orthodox people survived into the post-war period than he admits.

Nevertheless, his words have been quoted here because their main message about the significance and horror of the Russian revolution is true. Too often commentators in both East and West have tried to push the Russian revolution into the frame of “ordinary” history, grossly underestimating the unprecedented scale of the tragedy and equally grossly overestimating the continuity of the Russian revolution with “the true, real Rus’” that preceded it. The fact is that the Russian revolution brought to an end the Christian period of history, characterized by mainly monarchical governments ruling – or, at any rate, claiming to rule – by Christian principles, and ushered in the Age of the Antichrist...

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636 GARF, Kollektia dokumentov; Popov, V.P. Gosudarstvennyj terror v sovetskoj Rossii. 1923-1953 gg.; istochniki i ikh interpretatsia, Otechestvennie arkhivy, 1992, № 2. p. 28 ©. For commentaries on these figures, see http://mitr.livejournal.com/227089.html; http://community.livejournal.com/idu_shagayu/2052449.html (R).
The terms “Antichrist” and “The Age of the Antichrist” need to be defined. St. John of Damascus writes: “Everyone who confesses not that the Son of God came in the flesh and is perfect God, and became perfect man after being God, is Antichrist (I John 2.18, 22; 4.3). But in a peculiar and special sense he who comes at the consummation of the age is called Antichrist. First, then, it is requisite that the Gospel should be preached among all nations, as the Lord said (Matthew 24.14), and then he will come to refute the impious Jews.” 637

Archimandrite Justin (Popovich) writes: “The Antichrist will be, as it were, an incarnation of the devil, for Christ is the incarnation of God. The Antichrist will be the personification of evil, hatred, lying, pride and unrighteousness, for Christ is the personification of goodness, love, truth, humility and righteousness. Such will be the chief Antichrist, who will appear before the Second Coming of the Lord Christ, and will stand in the place of God and proclaim himself to be God (whom He will destroy at His glorious Second Coming with the breath of His mouth (II Thessalonians 2.4)). But before him there will be forerunners, innumerable antichrists. For an antichrist is every one who wishes to take the place of Christ; an antichrist is every one who wishes, in place of the truth of Christ, to place his own truth, in place of the righteousness of Christ – his own righteousness, in place of the love of Christ – his own love, in place of the Goodness of Christ – his own goodness, in place of the Gospel of Christ – his own gospel…

“In what does his main lie consist? In the rejection of the God-Man Christ, in the affirmation that Jesus is not God, not the Messiah=Christ, not the Saviour. Therefore this is the work of the Antichrist. The main deceiver in the world is the devil, and with him – the Antichrist. It goes without saying that a deceiver is every one who in anyway rejects that Jesus is God, the Messiah, the Saviour. This is the main lie in the world, and all the rest either proceeds from it, or is on the way to it.”638

So anyone who rejects the Divinity of Christ is an antichrist, while the Antichrist, or the chief Antichrist, will appear as an evil world-ruler towards the end of the world. In the first sense, of course, there have been multitudes of antichrists long before 1917. As the Holy Apostle John said already in the first century: “Children, it is the last times, and as you have heard that the Antichrist will come, so even now there are many antichrists” (I John 2.18). As for the Antichrist, he has not appeared yet. So in what sense could the Antichrist be said to have appeared in the period surveyed in this book?

In order to answer this question we need to turn to a prophecy of the Holy Apostle Paul concerning the Antichrist: “You know what is restraining his appearance in his time. The mystery of iniquity is already at work: only he

637 St. Damascene, Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith, IV, 26.
638 Popovich, Interpretation of the Epistles of St. John the Theologian, Munich, 2000, pp. 36, 38 ®.
who restrains will continue to restrain until he is removed from the midst. And then the lawless one will be revealed” (II Thessalonians 2.6-8). Now the unanimous teaching of the Early Church, as of more recent commentators such as St. Theophan the Recluse, is that “he who restrains” is the Roman emperor, or, more generally, all legitimate State power on the Roman model. In the pre-revolutionary period this legitimate State power was incarnated especially in the Russian Tsar, the last Orthodox Christian Emperor, whose empire was known as “the Third Rome”. Thus his “removal from the midst” would be followed, according to the prophecy, by the appearance of the Antichrist.

Now in 1905 the Tsar’s October Manifesto, which significantly limited his autocratic power and therefore his ability to restrain “the mystery of iniquity”, or the revolution, was followed immediately by the appearance of the St. Petersburg Soviet led by Lev Trotsky. In 1917, when the Tsar abdicated, the Soviets again appeared, and in October won supreme power in the country. The Church had existed without a Christian Emperor in the first centuries of her existence, and she would continue to do so after 1917. Nevertheless, “from the day of his abdication,” as St. John Maximovich writes, “everything began to collapse. It could not have been otherwise. The one who united everything, who stood guard for the truth, was overthrown.” So if we expect the Antichrist to appear after the removal of “him who restrains”, the Orthodox emperor, then the significance of the appearance of Soviet power under the leadership of Lenin immediately after the removal of the tsar is obvious.

Of course, it is obvious that neither Lenin not Stalin was the Antichrist for the simple reason that the Antichrist, according to all the prophecies, will be a Jewish king who claims to be the Messiah and God, whereas Lenin was not only not mainly Jewish (although most of his leading followers were Jewish), but also an atheist and an enemy of all religions, including the Jewish one. Moreover, the Soviet Antichrist was not the only Beast in this period. Whether in imitation of him, or in reaction to him, but using essentially the same methods, a number of Antichrist tyrants appeared around the world. This phenomenon has been called “totalitarianism”, a term that has received criticism but which seems to us to be a more or less accurate characterization. For what all these Antichrists had in common was a desire to possess the totality of man. For those living under one of the totalitarian dictators of the twentieth century there was no private space they could retreat to in order to get away from the pressure of public politics. Everything – politics, religion, science, art, even personal relationships – came under the scrutiny of the totalitarianism in question, and was subject to its extremely harsh judgement.

If we define totalitarianism as a form of political power that seeks to abolish (i) private property, (ii) the family and (iii) religion (except the cult of the god-king or vozhd or Führer himself), then Ancient Egypt and Babylon were totalitarian regimes, as Igor Shafarevich has demonstrated. But since the rise of Christianity with its characteristic distinction between the things of God and the things of Caesar, truly totalitarian regimes have been rare and short-lived. Perhaps the only significant exception is the Papacy – hence the link which Dostoyevsky traced between the Papacy and the revolution.

It is only with the triumph of Soviet power in 1917 that we find totalitarianism established for more or less lengthy periods over very large populations. The Second World War established this power over a vast territory from Berlin to Vladivostok; the Chinese revolution of 1949 brought the world’s most populous nation into the net; and the power of totalitarianism continued to spread throughout the world for the next forty years. In all these lands, moreover, we find the characteristic traits of Soviet Communism: terror, atheism and mass murder.

It is sometimes argued that totalitarianism came to an end in 1991 with the triumph of democracy over Soviet Communism. However, totalitarian regimes still flourish in China, North Korea, Burma, Cuba and Zimbabwe. Moreover, the democracies of North America, the European Union and the neo-Soviet Russian Federation are steadily increasing their control over their citizens in a more subtle, less violent, but essentially no less totalitarian way.

Paradoxically, the major powers that escaped totalitarianism in 1945, such as the United States, Britain and France, were both more tolerant of traditional religion and less inclined to mix religion with politics. But in the second half of the twentieth century the democracies have carried on the antichristian revolution with hardly less success than the anti-democratic totalitarian regimes of the first half, albeit in less violent ways. Thus the Nihilist dreams of Nechaev and Nietzsche, which became nightmarish reality in the era of Stalin and Hitler, have given way to more peaceful visions of life without God (at least in any form recognizable to traditional monotheism) but with education and clean water, human rights and computer games.

The aim of this continuation of the revolution by non-violent means – the “positive”, “creative” phase of the revolution, as opposed to its “negative”, “destructive” phase up to 1945 – is the same as before: to reconcile a renewed mankind to a completely this-worldly faith and hope. The first, violent, nihilist phase of the revolution was regrettably necessary in order to root out the old, other-worldly faith. In Lenin’s famous phrase, “you can’t make an

But now mankind can proceed to a new age of universal prosperity and happiness from which all sorrow and pain will have fled away and in which, consequently, the “opium” of traditional religion will no longer be necessary, being replaced by more this-worldly (but still “spiritual”) opiates...

“The new age,” wrote Fr. Seraphim Rose in the 1960s, “which many call a ‘post-Christian’ age, is at the same time the age ‘beyond Nihilism’ – a phrase that expresses at once a fact and a hope. The fact this phrase expresses is that Nihilism, being negative in essence even if positive in aspiration, owing its whole energy to its passion to destroy Christian Truth, comes to the end of its program in the production of a mechanized ‘new earth’ and a dehumanized ‘new man’: Christian influence over man and over society having been effectively obliterated, Nihilism must retire and give way to another, more ‘constructive’ movement capable of acting from autonomous and positive motives. This movement... takes up the Revolution at the point where Nihilism leaves off and attempts to bring the movement which Nihilism began to its logical conclusion.”

For two generations, until the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, the negative and positive, Nihilist and post-Nihilist, phases of the revolution coexisted in a state of cold war. Finally, the Homeland of the Revolution, defeated in the race for economic and military predominance, decided to accept that she was no longer in the vanguard of History, but a step behind. The Communists retired hurt, the Masons moved back into Russia, and Jewish oligarchs returned to control of the means of production from which Stalin had almost banished them... To the architects of the new age, it looked as if the Soviet

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641 However, as Vladimir Bukovsky notes: “We have seen the eggs. But where is the omelette?”

642 Rose, Platina, Ca.: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 2001, *Nihilism*, p. 88. Again, he wrote: “The Nihilism of Hitler was too pure, too unbalanced, to have more than a negative, preliminary role to play in the whole Nihilist program. Its role, like the role of the purely negative first phase of Bolshevism, is now finished, and the next stage belongs to a power possessing a more complete view of the whole Revolution, the Soviet power upon which Hitler bestowed, in effect, his inheritance in the words, ‘the future belongs solely to the stronger Eastern nation.’...” (p. 77).

643 It was as New Hieroconfessor Theodore (Rafanovsky, +1975) had prophesied: “The communists have been hurled at the Church like a crazy dog. Their Soviet emblem - the hammer and sickle - corresponds to their mission. With the hammer they beat people over the head, and with the sickle they mow down the churches. But then the Masons will remove the communists and take control of Russia.” In January, 1992 the first of several affiliates of the Grand Lodge Nationale Française was founded in Moscow (Richard Rhoda, “Russian Freemasonry: A New Dawn”, paper read at Orient Lodge № 15 on June 29, 1996, http://members.aol.com/houltonme/rus.htm.). Boris Yeltsin became a Mason in 1992. Vladimir Putin became one in Germany.

644 Jews continued to occupy prominent positions in post-war Communist Eastern Europe, especially in Poland and Romania (see Michael Hoffman, “Pope John Paul II: The Judas Iscariot of Our Time”, *The Hoffman Wire*, April 4, 2005, revisionisthistory.org). However, their
Union, so necessary in the first, violent phase of the revolution, but so cumbersome and obstructive now, was to be consigned to the dustbin of history. Russia was about to join “the international community” of free nations “capable of acting from autonomous and positive motives”...

The Yeltsin era (1991-2000) produced important gains. The most important of these was freedom of religion: open opposition to the Moscow Patriarchate was permitted, the Russian Church Abroad was permitted to open parishes in Russia, and the remnants of the Catacomb Christians poured into it. Also important was freedom of the press: the horrific scale of the crimes of the Stalin era became public knowledge, the MP hierarchs were exposed as KGB agents who had consciously obeyed the God-hating communist state for generations, and even the Communist Party was put on trial (but acquitted). However, repentance for the Soviet past was intermittent and superficial; the KGB, though humbled, was not destroyed; many of the worst aspects of Western Capitalism were allowed to develop unchecked; and the official church, after an initial fright, regained the initiative. “Sergianism” was justified as a “wise” move, and the most serious fruit of Sergianism – the MP’s participation in the heretical ecumenical movement – intensified.

As the liberal era of the 1990s came to an end, a kind of pseudo-Russian patriotism came to the fore. However, as Protopriest Lev Lebedev wrote, “fatherland”, “Russia”, “the State” had become idols, more important that the true Faith, without which they are worthless: “The ideological idol under the name of ‘fatherland’ (‘Russia’, ‘the state’) has been completely preserved. We have already many times noted that these concepts are, in essence, pagan ideological idols not because they are in themselves bad, but because they have been torn out from the trinitarian unity of co-subjected concepts: Faith, Tsar, Fatherland (Orthodoxy, Autocracy, People)...

“Everything that one might wish to be recognized and positive, even the regeneration of the faith, is done under the slogan of ‘the regeneration of the Fatherland (Russia)! But nothing is being regenerated. Even among the monarchists the regeneration of the Orthodox Autocratic Monarchy is mainly represented as no more than the means for the regeneration of the Fatherland. We may note that if any of the constituent parts of the triad – Orthodoxy, Autocracy, People – is torn away from the others and becomes the only one, it loses its power. Only together and in the indicated hierarchical order did they constitute, and do they constitute now, the spiritual (and all the other) strength and significance of Great Russia. But for the time being it is the ideological idol ‘fatherland’ that holds sway…”645

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645 Lebedev, Velikoerossia (Great Russia), St. Petersburg, 1999, p. 655 ©.
This spirit, which seeks to justify and even glorify the Soviet past, was illustrated by an article entitled “The Religion of Victory” in which a new Russian religio-political bloc, “For Victory!” presented its programme. The victory in question was that of the Soviet forces over Germany in 1945. Their blood was considered to have “a mystical, sacred meaning”, being “the main emblem of the Russian historical consciousness”.  

Similarly, an article on an MP web-site produced this astonishing blasphemy: “The ‘atheist’ USSR, trampling down death by death, resurrected and saved the world. Only because ‘godly’ and ‘ungodly’ soldiers died in their millions do we live today and the whole population of the world, the whole of humanity, is alive. It would be no exaggeration to think that that terrible and great war and great Victory in that Great war caused the first sociologically large-scale micro-resurrection, a reproduction by the peoples of the USSR of the exploit of Christ. May 9, 1945 became the most convincing witness of the fact that 2000 years ago Christ was resurrected. Therefore our Great Victory is the feast of feasts, it is Pascha…”

This extraordinary mixture of Orthodoxy, Nationalism and Communism – or “Ecclesiastical Stalinism”, as it is known - was the most horrific sign of the lack of repentance of the MP even now that it was free from Soviet oppression. It was supported by, among others, the former idol of ROCOR’s liberals, Fr. Demetrius Dudko. “Now the time has come,” he wrote, “to rehabilitate Stalin. And yet not him himself, but the concept of statehood. Today we can see for ourselves what a crime non-statehood is and what a blessing statehood is! No matter how many cry that in Soviet times many perished in the camps – how many are perishing now, without trials or investigations… If Stalin were here, there would be no such collapse…. Stalin, an atheist from the external point of view, was actually a believer, and this could be proved by facts if it were not for the spatial limitations of this article. It is not without reason that in the Russian Orthodox Church, when he died, ‘eternal memory’ was sung to him… The main thing is that Stalin looked after people in a fatherly manner. Stalin legitimately stands next to Suvorov!”

According to a 2005 survey, 42% of the Russian people, and 60% of those over sixty, wanted the return of “a leader like Stalin.” Their wish was granted… On January 1, 2000 KGB Colonel Putin came to power.

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649 Orlando Figes, “Vlad the Great”, New Statesman, 3 December, 2007, p. 34.
With Putin the Russian revolution has entered what may well be its culminating phase. His regime, which claims to be the successor both of the RSFSR and the USSR, may be described as neo-Soviet without Marxism but with “Orthodoxy” – and all under the control of the KGB/FSB. It draws support from a heady mixture of conflicting constituencies: nationalists and democrats and monarchists, conservative Orthodox and pagan mystics and atheists, westerners and capitalists and Slavophiles. Putin aims to find a place for all the Russias of the last century. Only one condition is attached: that Putin’s regime is accepted as the lawful successor of all previous Russian regimes...

Putin’s propagandist Yegor Khholmogorov has written: “Putin’s power was, from the very beginning, non-electoral in origin, it was not a matter of being ‘appointed by Yeltsin’, but of what the Chinese call ‘the mandate of heaven’, an unquestioned right to power... As a politician, Putin has already for a long time been above politics...” 650 Putin was indeed resembling a Chinese emperor more than a democratic politician. Also in his fabulous personal wealth...

“For those who claim,” writes Professor Olga Ackerly, “that the ‘CIS is different from the USSR’ and Putin is a ‘practising Orthodox Christian’, here are some sobering facts. The first days and months Putin’s presidency were highlighted by the reestablishment of a memorial plaque on Kutuzovsky Prospect where Andropov used to live. The plaque was a symbol of communist despotism missing since the 1991 putsch, bearing Andropov’s name - a former head of the KGB, especially known for his viciousness in the use of force and psychiatric clinics for dissidents. On May 9, 2000, Putin proposed a toast to the ‘genius commander’ Iosif Stalin and promoted many former KGB officers to the highest state positions...

“Important to note is that the Eurasian movement, with ties to occultism, ecumenism, etc. was recently revived by Putin, and a Congress entitled ‘The All-Russian Political Social Movement’, held in Moscow in April of 2001, was ‘created on the basis of the Eurasist ideology and inter-confessional [sic!] harmony in support of the reforms of President Vladimir Putin.’ The movement is led by Alexander Dugin, a sexual mystic, National Bolshevik Party member, son of a Cheka cadre, personally familiar with the so-called ‘Black International’, advisor to the State Duma, and participant in Putin’s ‘Unity’ movement.”652

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650 Khholmogorov, “Kremlevskij Mechtatel’” (Kremlin Dreamer), Spetnaz Rossii (Russia’s Special Forces), 2000/2 ®.


From 2003 Putin moved to reverse the main gains of the liberal 1990s – religious freedom, and a more open and honest attitude to the Soviet past. Churches were seized from True Orthodox Christians and their websites hacked; elections were rigged, independent journalists were killed, and independent businessmen imprisoned on trumped-up charges; and new history books justifying Stalinism were introduced into the classrooms. The red flag and hammer and sickle were restored to the armed services, as well as the melody (if not the words) of the Soviet national anthem. Youth organizations similar to the Hitler Youth were created. And in general Putin’s Russia began to resemble Nazi Germany in the 1930s.

Banking on the high price of Russian oil, Putin began to rebuild Russia’s economic and military might – but the corruption and imbalances within the Russian economy, have hindered the diversification of the economy that he needs. (State-)organized crime has flourished under his patronage. The MP has shown complete loyalty to Putinism, and takes an enthusiastic part in the criminal economy, as is illustrated by the activities of the recently elected patriarch, Cyril Gundiaev, who imports tobacco and alcohol duty-free and is now one of the richest men in Russia.

In 2007, Putin brokered a union between the majority of the Russian Church Abroad and the Moscow Patriarchate, which owed more than a little to the resurgent influence of the KGB/FSB. This is the most serious blow to the True Church and Holy Russia since Metropolitan Sergius’ declaration of 1927. Even in the darkest days of Stalinism the voice of the Russian Church Abroad told the truth about Russia; but now that voice is much weaker...

However, as the poet Fyodor Tiutchev said many years ago, you cannot measure Russia by a conventional yardstick. Great reversals, as took place in 1612, are possible in her as in no other nation. And many of the holy prophets and elders of Russia prophesied that the Russian people will repent, the revolution will be destroyed and Holy Russia resurrected through the prayers of the Holy New Martyrs and Confessors.

Let us end with one of those prophecies, of the Holy Nun-Martyr and Grand Duchess Elizabeth Fyodorovna. In April, 1918 she said: “If we look deep into the life of every human being, we discover that it is full of miracles.

654 “After the fall of the Soviet Union, the church received official privileges including the right to import duty-free alcohol and tobacco. In 1995, the Nikolo-Ugreshky Monastery, which is directly subordinated to the patriarchate, earned $350 million from the sale of alcohol. The patriarchate’s department of foreign church relations, which Kirill ran, earned $75 million from the sale of tobacco. But the patriarchate reported an annual budget in 1995-1996 of only $2 million. Kirill’s personal wealth was estimated in Moscow news in 2006 to be $4 billion.” (http://news-nftu.blogspot.com, February, 2009).
You will say, 'Of terror and death, as well.' Yes, that also. But we do not clearly see why the blood of these victims must flow. There, in the heavens, they understand everything and, no doubt, have found calm and the True Homeland - a Heavenly Homeland. We on this earth must look to that Heavenly Homeland with understanding and say with resignation, 'Thy will be done.' Great Russia is completely destroyed, but Holy Russia and the Orthodox Church, which ‘the gates of hell cannot overcome’, exists and exists more than ever. And those who believe and who do not doubt for one moment will see ‘the inner sun’ which enlightens the darkness during the thundering storm… I am only convinced that the Lord Who punishes is also the same Lord Who loves…

“Even though all the powers of hell may be set loose, Holy Russia and the Orthodox Church will remain unconquered. Some day, in this ghastly struggle, Virtue will triumph over Evil. Those who keep their faith will see the Powers of Light vanquish the powers of darkness. God both punishes and pardons…”