THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION:
A SPIRITUAL HISTORY

Part 1: The Threshold of Heaven (1881-1917)

Vladimir Moss
INTRODUCTION ........................................................................................................................................... 4

PART I. THE THRESHOLD OF HEAVEN (1881-1917) .................................................................................. 14
The Murder of Tsar Alexander II ........................................................................................................... 15
The Mystery of Iniquity .......................................................................................................................... 17
The Jewish Question .................................................................................................................................. 23
Soloviev on Russia ...................................................................................................................................... 34
Pobedonostsev on Church-State Relations .............................................................................................. 41
The Volga Famine ..................................................................................................................................... 49
Tsar Nicholas II .......................................................................................................................................... 53
The Lure of the East ................................................................................................................................... 60
Students, Workers and Priests ................................................................................................................... 70
Ferment in the Russian Church ................................................................................................................. 74
St. John of Kronstadt and Lev Tolstoy ....................................................................................................... 77
Monasticism and Ecumenism .................................................................................................................... 79
The New Theology .................................................................................................................................... 85
The Nationalities Policy .............................................................................................................................. 88
The Liberation Movement ....................................................................................................................... 101
The Sarov Days ......................................................................................................................................... 106
Peasant Russia ........................................................................................................................................... 110
Unrest in the Army .................................................................................................................................. 120
Kishinev, 1903 .......................................................................................................................................... 123
The Russo-Japanese War .......................................................................................................................... 126
The Role of the Press ............................................................................................................................... 133
Bloody Sunday .......................................................................................................................................... 135
Towards the Reestablishment of Symphony ......................................................................................... 139
The October Manifesto ........................................................................................................................... 145
The 1905 Revolution ............................................................................................................................... 148
The Pre-Conciliar Convention ................................................................................................................ 160
Georgian Autocephaly .............................................................................................................................. 162
The Stolypin Reforms ............................................................................................................................. 164
The Counter-Revolution .......................................................................................................................... 168
Archbishop Anthony of Volhynia .......................................................................................................... 173
The Roots of the Revolution .................................................................................................................... 182
The Struggle against Rasputin ................................................................................................................ 186
The Name-Worshipping Heresy ............................................................................................................ 196
Symbolism and Futurism ......................................................................................................................... 201
The Beilis Trial ......................................................................................................................................... 203
Russia and the Balkans ............................................................................................................................. 205
German Nationalism ............................................................................................................................... 210
The Young Turks ...................................................................................................................................... 212
The Balkan Wars ..................................................................................................................................... 216
Sarajevo, 1914 .......................................................................................................................................... 223
The First World War ............................................................................................................................... 234
On the Eve of Victory .............................................................................................................................. 241
The Actors in the Revolution: (1) The Jews ............................................................................................ 245
The Actors in the Revolution: (2) The Freemasons ............................................................................... 248
INTRODUCTION

We have no king, because we feared not the Lord.
Hosea 10.3.

“Terrible and mysterious,” wrote Metropolitan Anastasy, second leader of the Russian Church Abroad, “is the dark visage of the revolution. Viewed from the vantage point of its inner essence, it is not contained within the framework of history and cannot be studied on the same level as other historical facts. In its deepest roots it transcends the boundaries of space and time, as was determined by Gustave le Bon, who considered it an irrational phenomenon in which certain mystical, supernatural powers were at work. But what before may have been considered dubious became completely obvious after the Russian Revolution. In it everyone sensed, as one contemporary writer expressed himself, the critical incarnation of absolute evil in the temper of man; in other words, the participation of the devil – that father of lies and ancient enemy of God, who tries to make man his obedient weapon against God – was clearly revealed.”

“The critical incarnation of absolute evil in the temper of man”, “not contained within the framework of history”: such a description of the Russian revolution indicates that in order to understand it we need to look beyond conventional political, social and economic categories. We need to put it into the wider and deeper context of Divine Providence, and the struggle between God and Satan for the souls of men. The left-wing historian E.H. Carr once wrote that history could either be “a study of human achievement” or “relapse into theology – that is to say, a study… of the divine purpose”. This book does not aim to “relapse” into theology; and, like all histories, it is a study of human achievement and failure. But it proceeds from a profound conviction that merely explicating the motivations and deeds of men without placing them in the wider and deeper context of Divine Providence will only result, in the words of Macbeth, in “a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing”. The Marxist understanding of history as a process fully and exclusively determined by impersonal material and economic forces has been sufficiently discredited – although the excessive attention devoted to economics in many histories of the revolution appears to indicate that its influence is with us still. It is time now to go a step further and recognize that in all human history, and especially in such gigantic cataclysms as the Russian revolution, it is not only the impersonal forces of nature and the personal wills of men that matter, but also the all-good Will of God and the all-evil will of the devil.

Such a complex and profound event as the revolution needs a multi-dimensional approach. The approach favoured by western historians – that is, the study of the political, economic and social antecedents of the catastrophe – certainly has its place and has produced much valuable work; and I shall be citing liberally from the works of western historians such as Richard Pipes, Oliver Figes and Dominic Lieven. But even western writers have begun to sense the inadequacy of their approach when applied to the revolution.

Thus Martin Malia, in his foreword to The Black Book of Communism, writes that “a basic problem remains: the conceptual poverty of the Western empirical effort.

“This poverty flows from the premise that Communism can be understood in an aseptic and value-free mode, as the pure product of social process. Accordingly, researchers have endlessly insisted that the October Revolution was a workers’ revolt and not a Party coup d’état, when it was obviously the latter riding piggyback on the former. Besides, the central issue in Communist history is not the Party’s ephemeral worker ‘base’; it is what the intelligentsia victors of October later did with their permanent coup d’état, and so far this has scarcely been explored.

“More exactly, the matter has been obscured by two fantasies holding out the promise of a better Soviet socialism than the one the Bolsheviks actually built. The first is the ‘Bukharin alternative’ to Stalin, a thesis that purports to offer a non-violent, market road to socialism – that is, Marx’s integral socialism, which necessitates the full suppression of private property, profit, and the market. The second fantasy purports to find the impetus behind Stalin’s ‘revolution from above’ of 1929-1933 in a ‘cultural revolution’ from below by Party activists and workers against the ‘bourgeois’ specialists dear to Bukharin, a revolution ultimately leading to massive upward mobility from the factory bench.

“With such foibles now consigned to what Trotsky called ‘the ash heap of history’ perhaps a moral, rather than a social approach to the Communist phenomenon can yield a truer understanding – for the much-investigated Soviet social process claimed victims on a scale that has never aroused a scholarly curiosity at all proportionate to the magnitude of the disaster... For it was in truth a ‘tragedy of planetary dimensions’..., with a grand total of victims variously estimated by contributors to the volume at between 85 million and 100 million... The Communist record offers the most colossal case of political carnage in history...”

Faced with this now indisputable fact of “the most colossal case of political carnage in history”, western historians have been strangely coy in delivering moral verdicts. Nor is this because they never deliver damning verdicts: when it comes to the Nazi Holocaust – which, however terrible it was, destroyed far fewer lives, directly and indirectly, than Communism - such verdicts are frequent, almost obligatory. But when it comes to Soviet Communism, the tendency has been to refrain from “judgementalism”. This was especially true when the Soviet Union was still in existence, and a very large proportion of western intellectuals were ideologically sympathetic to it. But even since the fall of Soviet Communism in 1989-91, when the opening of the Soviet archives left even the most faithful leftists in no doubt about the enormity of its crimes and the falseness of its ideology, the level of the condemnation of Communism has never reached the level of the condemnation of Nazism.

It is important to understand the reasons for this. One reason undoubtedly lies in a besetting weakness of almost all men: even when we have seen through the falseness of our former beliefs, we nevertheless seek excuses for ourselves, excuses that make our errors “understandable” and perhaps not really that bad after all. And yet former Nazis or Nazi sympathizers are never given this grace: their views remain inexcusable and unforgiveable, and the hounding of Nazis, even minor ones, continues without mercy and without end. On the other hand, no Communist has ever been put on trial or punished for his views in the post-Cold War period in Russia, and the Soviet Communist Party itself was “acquitted” in a trial in 1992. And so Vladimir Putin, for example, can even boast of his membership of the KGB, saying that “once a chekist, always a chekist” – and still get to have tea with the Queen of England, whose relative, Tsar Nicholas II, was murdered by the Cheka...

A deeper reason lies in the fact that the ideologies of Communism, on the one hand, and Liberalism, on the other, are in fact closely related, being both derived, in their modern forms, from the eighteenth-century Enlightenment. They both offer a utopian vision for mankind based on rationalism, science and education, in which religious belief has no place. Liberalism is relatively more individualistic than Communism, gives more place to individual initiative in economic and social life, and is more tolerant of individual differences and idiosyncracies, such as religion. But the similarities between them are more striking than their differences. And from the point of view of traditional Christianity, the main difference is that the one destroys faith slowly, and the other quickly. Thus Stuart Reed writes: “In the Cold War, an unworkable revolutionary creed, communism, yielded to a workable revolutionary creed, liberal capitalism. Now liberal capitalism has replaced communism as the chief threat to the customs, traditions and decencies of Christendom…”

4 See Vladimir Bukovsky, Moskovskij Protsess (Moscow Trial), Moscow, 1996 ®.
5 Reed, “Confessions of a Fellow-Traveller”, The Spectator, 23 September, 2000, p. 45. Cf. Paul Dukes: “The USA and the USSR were the embodiments of two universal ideologies first
In view of the inner spiritual kinship between Liberalism and Communism, western intellectuals who adhere to Liberalism feel compelled to be not too hard on the sister ideology. It is a different matter with anti-Enlightenment political ideologies such as Nazism or Orthodox Christian Autocracy, in spite of the fact that, as Jonathan Glover writes, “opponents of the Enlightenment can seem to grasp truths which elude its followers, and repudiation of the Enlightenment is now fashionable among philosophers”.

And so Soviet Communism, whatever its horrors, is felt to be “justified” at any rate to this extent: that the “evil” autocracy of “Bloody” Nicholas had to be replaced. And, after all, as Lenin said, you can’t make an omelette without breaking eggs. Of course, it was regrettable that the revolution could not have stopped during its liberal phase, between February and October, 1917. But the intention was good: it was only the execution that was poor...

One of the purposes of this book is to show that the exact opposite of this was true: the intention was evil from the beginning, and the execution of this thoroughly evil intention was, tragically, all too effective. To that end I have started the book over a generation before 1917, showing the development of the revolutionary movement from the murder of Tsar Alexander II. This will show that if some of the followers of the revolution naively thought that they were advancing the cause of human happiness, and so were acting out of a kind of misguided compassion, this could in no way be said of the leaders, such as Lenin, Trotsky and Stalin. Thus during the famine of 1891, when the leaders of liberal society, headed by the Tsarevich Nicholas, were rushing to help the starving, the young Vladimir Ulyanov, though living right in the middle of the famine-struck region, ostentatiously declared himself against helping the poor in any way because it would distract from the main aim: the destruction of the hated tsarist regime. Therefore of the revolutionary movement we have to conclude, contrary to the western liberals, in the words of the Lord: “A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits shall ye know them…” (Matthew 7.20).

The corollary of this is that the tsarist regime was nothing like as bad as it has been painted in Soviet and western histories. “True,” as Bishop Dionysius (Alferov) of Novgorod writes, “now they no longer repeat the Soviet clichés about an ‘extremely backward country’ and ‘the prison of the peoples’.


7“Vladimir Bukovsky retorted that he had seen the broken eggs, but no one he knew had ever tasted the omelet!” (Stephane Courtois, in The Black Book of Communism, op. cit., p. 19).
“They speak more about social injustice, which, supposedly, was liquidated by the revolution.

“Social injustice is inevitable in any state. It existed also in Tsarist Russia, but in the last reign of Emperor Nicholas II it was less than in the whole history of the country: no more than 5-7% of the population lived below the poverty line. The greatest social injustice was established precisely by the communist regime, which liquidated the people in whole classes, estates and social groups.”

Of course, mistakes were made; and of course, the regime could not have fallen if it and the country as a whole were not infected by disease from within. But that disease was precisely western liberalism and its more radical socialist “sister”.

As for Tsar Nicholas himself, even now western historians – with some honourable exceptions, such as Dominic Lieven - trot out the old clichés about his supposed weakness of will, obstinacy, etc. So another purpose of this book is to show that the tsar actually defended Christian civilization against the ultimate barbarism with great skill and courage, and was overwhelmed at the last only because all the leaders in the army and society, as well as his western allies, were against him. Of course, he, too, made mistakes - the Far Eastern policy, Rasputin, perhaps his abdication (although this is debatable, as we shall see, and was in any case forced); but these pale into insignificance beside his positive achievements, which were crowned, in the end, with the crown of martyrdom and the recognition of his sanctity even by some of the leaders of today’s neo-Soviet Russia.

This brings me to the question of my Russian sources and my attitude to the approach favoured by many contemporary Russian historians – that is, the understanding of the Russian revolution as the product of a Judaeo-Masonic conspiracy. Now this approach is largely shunned by western historians for reasons of political correctness. But the fact is that conspiracies do exist, and in 1917 there certainly was a conspiracy to overthrow the Tsar that was initiated and successfully executed mainly by Jews and Freemasons from both Russia and abroad.

However, while accepting the basic thesis of nationalist Russian historians that there was a Judaeo-Masonic conspiracy to overthrow the tsar, I have not given it the centrality and almost exclusive importance that these historians attribute to it. For neither political and economic factors, as western and westernizing historians assert, nor the presence of conspirators within and without the body politic, as Russian nationalist historians emphasize, are sufficient to explain how such a mighty organism as the Russian Empire not

---

8 Alferov, “О Nashem Preemstve s Istoricheskoj Rossii” (On Our Succession from Historical Russia), Nasha Strana (Our Country), no. 2886, February 23, 2010, p. 2 ©.
only fell, but fell so resoundingly, with such bitter and long-term consequences both for Russia and the whole world. In order to understand this fall we also need a third dimension, the spiritual or religious dimension of explanation: only in that way can we understand the revolution in its full breadth and depth.

And in order to acquire this dimension of understanding we need to concentrate on a factor which western historians have tended to ignore, or pass over very superficially, and which Russian historians have tended to distort through the prism of Soviet and neo-Soviet reality: the Orthodox Church. Few historians of the Middle East today would claim that it is possible to acquire a deep understanding of their subject without acquiring a more than superficial understanding of Islam. And yet it remains the case that most historians of Russia have a minimal understanding of that faith which inspired the great majority of the inhabitants of Russia both before and for a long time after the revolution.

One of the exceptions to this rule is Richard Pipes, who writes: “In histories of the Russian Revolution, religion receives little if any attention. W.H. Chamberlin devotes to this subject fewer than five pages in a book of nearly one thousand. Other scholars (for instance, Sheila Fitzpatrick and Leonard Schapiro) ignore it altogether. Such lack of interest can only be explained by the secularism of modern historians. And yet, even if historians are secular, the people with whom they deal were in the overwhelming majority religious: in this respect, the inhabitants of what became the Soviet Union – Christians, Jews, and Muslims alike – may be said to have lived in the Middle Ages. For then, culture meant religion – religious belief, but especially religious rituals and festivals: baptism, circumcision, confirmation, confession, burial, Christmas and Easter, Passover and Yom Kippur, Ramadan. Their lives revolved around the ceremonies of the religious calendar, because these not only glorified their hard and humdrum existences but gave even the humblest of them a sense of dignity in the eyes of God, for whom all human beings are equal. The Communists attacked religious beliefs and practices with a vehemence not seen since the days of the Roman Empire. Their aggressive atheism affected the mass of citizens far more painfully than the suppression of political dissent or the imposition of censorship. Next to the economic hardships, no action of Lenin’s government brought greater suffering to the population at large, the so-called ‘masses’, than the profanation of its religious beliefs, the closing of the houses of worship, and the mistreatment of the clergy…”

---

Although Pipes’ point is well taken, his own treatment of religion is one of the weaker aspects of his work, containing some startling mistakes. A new approach is needed, one that makes the struggle between the Church and the State – and that between Orthodoxy and the renovationist elements within the Church - the central aspect of the revolution. My aim in this book, therefore, has been to provide a spiritual-ecclesiastical history of the Russian revolution, somewhat on the model of the Venerable Bede’s Ecclesiastical History of the English People. I describe the main political events, but from the point of view, primarily, of the Orthodox Church and the Orthodox Christians, who, after all, constituted the majority of the population for most of the period under review. My thesis is that the Orthodox Church was not only the heart and soul of pre-revolutionary Russia, but also the last pre-revolutionary institution to fall to the Bolsheviks, and that even after the official church became pro-Soviet in 1927 a large minority – known as the Catacomb or True Orthodox Church - continued to struggle heroically against Soviet power.

This book, therefore, is in essence a study of the revolution from a spiritual point of view – the point of view of Orthodox Christianity. While not ignoring the political, economic and social dimensions of the struggle it seeks to place these within the context of this fourth, “super-dimension”. As such, it attempts to place the revolution within a very wide eschatological framework whose basic presuppositions can be summarized as follows:-

God wishes that all men should come to a knowledge of the truth and be saved. His instrument in bringing men to this knowledge and this salvation is the One, Holy, Orthodox-Catholic and Apostolic Church. Now the Church can exist and even flourish without any political support, as was clearly demonstrated during the first three centuries of the Church’s existence under the pagan Roman emperors. However, the conversion of the Roman Empire itself during the reign of St. Constantine the Great gave the Church a wonderful opportunity to extend her influence throughout the oikoumene and even into the most recalcitrant sphere of human life – politics - by entering into a “symphonic” relation with the Christian emperor whereby the emperor was in charge of political matters while the Church was in charge of spiritual matters. Of course, together with this opportunity came temptation: the temptation of subduing the Kingdom of God, which is not of this world, to the categories of the kingdom of this world, which lies in evil. But temptation exists in order to be overcome: there is no inevitability in succumbing to it. And so while Western Europe succumbed to the temptation of secular power and secular political philosophy, making the Church first

---

10 For example, he writes that Lenin “postponed an all-out assault on religion until 1922, when he was in unchallenged control of the country” (p. 339). On the contrary, the twin peaks of persecution were the Civil War period (1918-21) and the 1930s.

11 On the Catacomb Church, see my lives of the Holy New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia composed on the basis of recently revealed archival evidence and to be found on my website, www.orthodoxchristianbooks.com.
into a form of absolutist monarchy under the Pope and then a kind of confederation of independent democracies under the Protestant Reformers, in the East the “symphonic” ideal of Christian Rome remained: that is, the idea that the State can serve the Church, not by engulfing her or being engulfed by her, and still less by separating itself completely from her sanctifying influence in a rigid separation of powers, but by protecting her against her external enemies as “the guardian of the ark”, by helping to enforce her decrees in public life through godly legislation, and by providing, in the person of the Christian Emperor, a focus of unity for Christendom as a whole.

The Christian Roman Empire, with its capital in the “New Rome” of Constantinople, carried out this task for over a thousand years before it fell to the Muslims in 1453. The Empire failed because, while emperor and patriarch remained in harmony to the end, this harmony was not true "symphony", but an agreement to put the interests of the nation-state above those of the Ecumenical Church. As an 8th or 9th Greek prophecy recently found in St. Sabbas’ monastery near Jerusalem says: “The sceptre of the Orthodox kingdom will fall from the weakening hands of the Byzantine emperors, since they will not have proved able to achieve the symphony of Church and State. Therefore the Lord in His Providence will send a third God-chosen people to take the place of the chosen, but spiritually decrepid people of the Greeks.”

That third God-chosen people was the Russians, and in time Russia became “the Third Rome”, the main protector of Orthodoxy throughout the world. At the beginning of the period studied in this book Russia had grown to become the largest and most diverse land empire in world history. It protected not only the 100 million Orthodox Christians within the empire: it also worked actively on behalf of the millions more Orthodox Christians in Eastern Europe and the Middle East, and in its missions in Persia, China, Japan and North America. Moreover, Russia, as Marx and Engels recognized, was the main fortress against the revolution that threatened every government, and every Christian community, throughout the world. The tragedy of the Russian revolution is the tragedy of how the main earthly protector of Christianity and legitimate government was destroyed and transformed into its greatest persecutor because of the sins of its people – and in particular the sin of not valuing their Russian Homeland as “the threshold of the Heavenly Fatherland”, in St. John of Kronstadt’s words...

“And so,” as Archbishop Averky of Syracuse and Jordanville wrote, “there appeared the third, most important stage in the ‘apostasy’ which is now developing so quickly in front of our eyes – the bloody catastrophe which came upon our unfortunate homeland of Russia in 1917. Carried out in accordance with the example of ‘the Great French Revolution’ of 1789, our

---

Russian revolution can, with all justice, be looked upon as the greatest achievement of the servants of the coming Antichrist. In the person of Orthodox Russia, the chief obstacle on the path of the victoriously progressing, God-permitted ‘apostasy’ was destroyed: there remained no strong fortress of the true Orthodox Faith and Church in the world, and the Antichrist, in the person of his servants, began, according to the expression of our native interpreter of the apostolic epistles, the holy hierarch Theophan the recluse of Vishna, ‘to expand his operations’.

“Since then, as we see now, the apostasy has gone forward by gigantic strides, without meeting any serious impediments.”

Indeed, as recently as May, 2008 Maoist revolutionaries overthrew the King of Nepal. This shows how far we are still from “the end of history”, as liberal commentators understand it – that is, the end of totalitarian tyranny and its replacement by liberal capitalism. Communism still lives, and it lives largely because the lessons of the Russian revolution have still not been learned. For how can we go forward to a better future if we have not learned the lessons of the past? Hence the vital importance of a thorough and deep study of the event that gave totalitarian evil its decisive breakthrough – the Russian revolution.

Works that study the revolution in this very broad spiritual dimension while not ignoring the political, economic and social data analyzed in more conventional studies are few and far between. The best I have found is Archpriest Lev Lebedev’s Velikorossia (Great Russia), published in St. Petersburg in 1999. One of the purposes of my book is to bring Fr. Lev’s great work to the attention of English-speaking readers, and to this end I have quoted large sections of his work, especially his superlative account of the events of February and March, 1917. And if I have ventured to disagree with some of his emphases – for example, on the extent to which the social elites, as opposed to the broad masses of the Russian population, were responsible for the revolution – this in no way diminishes my admiration for, and indebtedness to, his work as a whole. I will be happy if my own work is considered to follow in his tradition of historiography.

This book covers the period from the murder of Tsar Alexander II in 1881 to the triumph of the Red Army over Nazi Germany in 1945, which sealed the triumph of the revolution for generations to come. It is divided into two parts, the first part covering the period before, and the second part the period after, the abdication of the Tsar in March, 1917. Of course, the roots of the revolution go much further back than 1881, and it continued to develop and afflict the world long after 1945. However, all the essential traits of the

---

revolution were revealed in all their massively satanic significance in this period; and so for the post-1945 period I reserve only an epilogue, in which I briefly summarize the “progress” of the revolution to the present day.

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

The Murder of Tsar Paul of Russia.
PART I. THE THRESHOLD OF HEAVEN (1881-1917)

Thus saith the Lord God: Remove the turban, and take off the crown; things shall not remain as they are; exalt that which is low, and abase that which is high. A ruin, ruin, ruin I will make it; there shall not be even a trace of it until he comes whose right it is; and to him I will give it.

Ezekiel 21.26-27

The mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains it will do so until he is taken out of the way.

II Thessalonians 2.7.

And unto the angel of the Church in Sardis write:

These things saith He that hath the seven spirits of God, and the seven stars:
I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.

Be watchful, and strengthen the things that remain, that are ready to die.
For I have not found thy works perfect before God.

Revelation 3.1-2.

The best and most stable changes are those which proceed solely from an improvement in morals, without any violent political convulsions that are terrible for humanity…

Alexander Pushkin (1834).

Communism abolishes eternal truths, it abolishes all religion and morality, instead of constituting them on a new basis; it therefore acts in contradiction to all past historical experience.

Marx and Engels (1848).

The earthly fatherland with its Church is the threshold of the Heavenly Fatherland. Therefore love it fervently and be ready to lay down your life for it here, so as to inherit eternal life there.

St. John of Kronstadt (1905).
The Murder of Tsar Alexander II

On March 1, 1881, in broad daylight, a bomb was thrown at the Tsar’s carriage. It injured some of the guards but left him unhurt. Disregarding his personal safety, he left his carriage and was attending to the injured when a second bomb was thrown, fatally wounding him and many others. He was rushed to the Winter Palace where he died in the presence of his grief-stricken family. Both his son and heir, the future Tsar Alexander III, and his grandson, the future Tsar Nicholas II, were present. A magnificent church dedicated to the Resurrection of Christ, "Upon the Blood", was built on the place of the murder, which later became the stronghold of the Catacomb Church...

“The murder of Alexander II,” writes G.P. Izmestieva, “was seen by monarchical Russia as the culmination of the liberal ‘inebriation’ of earlier years, as the shame and guilt of all, God’s judgement and a warning.”14 As St. Ambrose of Optina wrote on March 14: “I don’t know what to write to you about the terrible present times and the pitiful state of affairs in Russia. There is one consolation in the prophetic words of St. David: ‘The Lord scattereth the plans of the heathens, He setteth aside the devices of the peoples, and He bringeth to nought the plans of princes’ (Psalm 32.10). The Lord allowed Alexander II to die a martyric death, but He is powerful to give help from on high to Alexander III to catch the evildoers, who are infected with the spirit of the Antichrist. Since apostolic times the spirit of the Antichrist has worked through his forerunners, as the apostle writes: ‘The mystery of iniquity is already working, only it is held back now, until it is removed from the midst’ (II Thessalonians 2.7). The apostolic words ‘is held back now’ refer to the powers that be and the ecclesiastical authorities, against which the forerunners of the Antichrist rise up in order to abolish and annihilate them upon the earth. Because the Antichrist, according to the explanation of the interpreters of Holy Scripture, must come during a time of anarchy on earth. But until then he sits in the bottom of hell, and acts through his forerunners. First he acted through various heretics who disturbed the Orthodox Church, and especially through the evil Arians, educated men and courtiers; and then he acted cunningly through the educated Masons; and finally, now, through the educated nihilists, he has begun to act blatantly and crudely, beyond measure. But their illness will turn back upon their heads, as it is written in the Scriptures. Is it not the most extreme madness to work with all one’s might, not sparing one’s own life, in order to be hung on the gallows, and in the future life to fall into the bottom of hell to be tormented forever in Tartarus? But desperate pride pays no attention, but desires in every way to express its irrational boldness. Lord, have mercy on us!”15

“Alexander II’s murder,” wrote St. John Maximovich, “unleashed a storm of indignation in Russia, which helped strengthen the moral fibre of the people, as became evident during the reign of Alexander III…”

This strengthening was influenced by the personal strength of the new Tsar himself. Thus the conservative views of such men as Pobedonostsev were protected and nurtured during the 1880s by the Tsar, who quietly reversed the main direction of his father’s reforms. Once he received a letter from the executive committee of “The People’s Will”, in which they called on him to give “a general amnesty for all political crimes of the past”, and “to summon representatives from the whole of the Russian people to review the existing forms of state and social life and reconstruct them in accordance with the people’s desires”. As if in answer to this letter, the tsar, in his manifesto, “On the Unshakeableness of the Autocracy” of April 29, 1881, declared: “We call on all our faithful subjects to serve us and the state in faith and righteousness, to the uprooting of the abominable rebellion that is devastating the Russian land, to the confirmation of faith and morality, to the good education of children, to the destruction of unrighteousness and theft, to the instilling of order and righteousness in the acts of the institutions given to Russia by her benefactor, our beloved parent.” Although the new tsar promised to work within the institutions created by his father, there was no promise of any new ones, let alone a constitution - the project of Leris-Melikov, which Alexander II was about to sign at the time of his death, was quietly dropped. And when his new minister of the interior, Count N.P. Ignatiev, proposed convening a Zemsky Sobor before his coronation, the tsar said that he was “too convinced of the ugliness of the electoral representative principle to allow it at any time in Russia in that form in which it exists throughout Europe”.

His world-view was expressed in the advice he gave his heir, the Tsarevich Nicholas Alexandrovich: “You are destined to take from my shoulders the heavy burden of State power and bear it to the grave exactly as I have borne it and our ancestors bore it. I hand over to you the kingdom entrusted by God to me. I received it thirteen years ago from my blood-drenched father… Your grandfather from the height of the throne introduced many important reforms directed to the good of the Russian people. As a reward for all this he received a bomb and death from the Russian revolutionaries… On that tragic day the question arose before me: on what path am I to proceed? On that onto which I was being pushed by ‘progressive society’, infected with the liberal ideas of the West, or that which my own conviction, my higher sacred duty as Sovereign and my conscience indicated to me? I chose my path. The liberals dubbed it reactionary. I was interested only in the good of my people and the

---

greatness of Russia. I strove to introduce internal and external peace, so that the State could freely and peacefully develop, become stronger in a normal way, become richer and prosper. The Autocracy created the historical individuality of Russia. If – God forbid! – the Autocracy should fall, then Russia will fall with it. The fall of the age-old Russian power will open up an endless era of troubles and bloody civil conflicts. My covenant to you is to love everything that serves for the good, the honour and the dignity of Russia. Preserve the Autocracy, remembering that you bear responsibility for the destiny of your subjects before the Throne of the Most High. May faith in God and the holiness of your royal duty be for you the foundation of your life. Be firm and courageous, never show weakness. Hear out everybody, there is nothing shameful in that, but obey only yourself and your conscience. In external politics adopt an independent position. Remember: Russia has no friends. They fear our enormous size. Avoid wars. In internal politics protect the Church first of all. She has saved Russia more than once in times of trouble. Strengthen the family, because it is the foundation of every State.”

Tsar Alexander succeeded in most of the tasks he set himself. He avoided war, while gaining the respect of the European rulers. He suppressed the revolution, giving emergency powers to local governors in troubled areas, and checked the power of the zemstva and the press. He increased the prosperity of all classes. And he strengthened the Church, the tsardom and the family.

**The Mystery of Iniquity**

It is no exaggeration, therefore, to say that by strengthening the power of the Autocracy and the people’s respect for it, Tsar Alexander III saved Russia. For one of the causes of the revolutionary fervour was a general weakening and softening of the power of the Orthodox Autocracy, and of authority in general, which the new tsar checked. Thus Constantine Leontiev, a disciple of Elder Ambrose, wrote: “One great spiritual elder said: ‘It is true that morals have become much softer. But on the other hand most people’s self-opinion has grown, and pride has increased. They no longer like to submit to any authorities, whether spiritual or secular: they just don’t want to. The gradual weakening and abolition of the authorities is a sign of the approach of the kingdom of the antichrist and the end of the world. It is impossible to substitute only a softening of morals for Christianity.’”

---

18 Alexander III, in Fomin, S. & Fomin, T. op. cit., 1998, vol. 1, p. 354. Prince Sergius Trubetskov illustrated the link between family feeling and feeling for the monarchy during his childhood under the same Tsar Alexander: “Father and mother, grandfathers and grandmothers were for us in childhood not only sources and centres of love and unquestioned authority; they were enveloped in our eyes by a kind of aura which the modern generation does not know... Our fathers and grandfathers were in our children’s eyes both patriarchs and family monarchs, while our mothers and grandmothers were family tsaritsas.”

In 1871 the Over-Procurator of the Russian Holy Synod, Count Alexander Petrovich Tolstoy, had a vision which he recounted to Elder Ambrose of Optina: "It was as if I were in my own house standing in the entrance-hall. Beyond was a room in which on the ledge between the windows there was a large icon of the God of Sabaoth that gave out such blinding light that from the other room (the entrance-hall) it was impossible to look at it. Still further in was a room in which there were Protopriest Matthew Alexandrovich Konstantinovskiy and the reposed Metropolitan Philaret. And this room was full of books; along the walls from ceiling to floor there were books; on the long tables there were piles of books; and while I certainly had to go into this room, I was held back by fear, and in terror, covering my face with my hand, I passed through the first room and, on entering the next room, I saw Protopriest Matthew Alexandrovich dressed in a simple black cassock; on his head was a skull-cap; in his hands was an unbent book, and he motioned me with his head to find a similar book and open it. At the same time the metropolitan, turning the pages of this book said: 'Rome, Troy, Egypt, Russia, the Bible.' I saw that in my book 'Bible' was written in very heavy lettering. Suddenly there was a noise and I woke up in great fear. I thought a lot about what it could all mean. My dream seemed terrible to me - it would have been better to have seen nothing. Could I not ask those experienced in the spiritual life concerning the meaning of this vision in sleep? But an inner voice explained the dream even to me myself. However, the explanation was so terrible that I did not want to agree with it."

St. Ambrose gave the following interpretation of this vision: "He who was shown this remarkable vision in sleep, and who then heard the very significant words, very probably received the explanation of what he had seen and heard through his guardian angel, since he himself recognized that an inner voice explained the meaning of the dream to him. However, since we have been asked, we also shall give our opinion...

"...The words 'Rome, Troy, Egypt' may have the following signification. Rome at the time of the Nativity of Christ was the capital of the world, and, from the beginning of the patriarchate, had the primacy of honour; but because of love of power and deviation from the truth she was later rejected and humiliated. Ancient Troy and Egypt were notable for the fact that they were punished for their pride and impiety - the first by destruction, and the second by various punishments and the drowning of Pharaoh with his army in the Red Sea. But in Christian times, in the countries where Troy was located there were founded the Christian patriarchates of Antioch and Constantinople, which flourished for a long time, embellishing the Orthodox Church with their piety and right dogmas; but later, according to the inscrutable destinies of God, they were conquered by barbarians - the Muslims, and up to now have borne this heavy slavery, which restricts the freedom of Christian piety and right belief. And in Egypt, together with the ancient impiety, there was from the first times of Christianity such a
flowering of piety that the deserts were populated by tens of thousands of monastics, not to speak of the great numbers of pious laity from whom they came. But then, by reason of moral licentiousness, there followed such an impoverishment of Christian piety in that country that at a certain time in Alexandria the patriarch remained with only one priest.

"... After the three portentous names 'Rome, Troy, Egypt', the name of 'Russia' was also mentioned - Russia, which at the present time is counted as an independent Orthodox state, but where the elements of foreign heterodoxy and impiety have already penetrated and taken root among us and threaten us with the same sufferings as the above-mentioned countries have undergone.

"Then there comes the word 'Bible'. No other state is mentioned. This may signify that if in Russia, too, because of the disdain of God's commandments and the weakening of the canons and decrees of the Orthodox Church and for other reasons, piety is impoverished, then there must immediately follow the final fulfilment of that which is written at the end of the Bible, in the Apocalypse of St. John the Theologian.

"He who saw this vision correctly observed that the explanation given him by an inner voice was terrible. Terrible will be the Second Coming of Christ and terrible the last judgement of the world. But not without terrors will also be the period before that when the Antichrist will reign, as it is said in the Apocalypse: 'And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and death shall flee from them' (9.6). The Antichrist will come during a period of anarchy, as the apostle says: 'until he that restraineth be taken away from the midst' (II Thessalonians 2.7), that is, when the powers that be no longer exist."\(^{(20)}\)

St. Ambrose's identification of "him that restraineth" the coming of the Antichrist with the State had long roots in the patristic writings. St. John Chrysostom, Blessed Theophylact and others identified him with the Roman emperor, whose successor, as being the emperor of "the Third Rome", Russia, was the Russian Tsar. Metropolitan Philaret had restated the political teaching of Orthodoxy with exceptional eloquence in the previous reign. And now Bishop Theophan the Recluse wrote: "The Tsar's authority, having in its hands the means of restraining the movements of the people and relying on Christian principles itself, does not allow the people to fall away from them, but will restrain it. And since the main work of the Antichrist will be to turn everyone away from Christ, he will not appear as long as the Tsar is in power. The latter's authority will not let him show himself, but will prevent him from acting in his own spirit. That is what he that restraineth is. When the Tsar's authority falls, and the peoples everywhere acquire self-government (republics, democracies), then the Antichrist will have room to manoeuvre. It will not be difficult for Satan to train voices urging apostasy from Christ, as experience showed in the time of the French revolution. Nobody will give a

---

20 St. Ambrose of Optina, *Pis'ma (Letters)*, Sergiev Posad, 1908, part 1, pp. 21-22 ®.
powerful ‘veto’ to this. A humble declaration of faith will not be tolerated. And so, when these arrangements have been made everywhere, arrangements which are favourable to the exposure of antichristian aims, then the Antichrist will also appear. Until that time he waits, and is restrained."

Not only the holy elders, but also the revolutionaries, saw in Russia the main obstacle to the triumph of “the mystery of iniquity”. “The same withholding role in Russia,” writes Mikhail Nazarov, “was seen by the founders of Marxism: ‘… It is clear to us that the revolution has only one truly terrible enemy – Russia’; the role of Russia is ‘the role predestined from on high by the saviour of order’.

“In those years Marx wrote in the New Rhine Newspaper (the organ of the ‘League of Communists’): ‘Russia has become a colossus which does not cease to elicit amazement. Russia is the one phenomenon of its kind in history: the terrible power of this huge Empire... on a world scale’. ‘In Russia, in this despotic government, in this barbaric race, there is such energy and activity as one would look for in vain in the monarchies of the older States’. ‘The Slavic barbarians are innate counter-revolutionaries’, ‘particular enemies of democracy’.

“Engels echoed Marx: what was necessary was ‘a pitiless struggle to the death with Slavdom, which has betrayed and has a turncoat attitude towards the revolution... a war of destruction and unrestrained terror’. ‘A general war will pay back the Slavic barbarians with a bloody revenge.’ ‘Yes, the world war that is to come will sweep off the face of the earth not only the reactionary classes and dynasties, but also whole reactionary peoples – and this will be progress’.”21

So what was the doctrine of socialism?

Richard Pipes writes: “Socialism is commonly thought of as a theory which aims at a fairer distribution of wealth for the ultimate purpose of creating a free and just society. Indisputably this is the stated program of socialists. But behind this program lurks an even more ambitious goal, which is creating a new type of human being. The underlying premise is the idea of Helvétius that by establishing an environment which makes social behaviour a natural instinct, socialism will enable man to realize his potential to the fullest. This, in turn, will make it possible, ultimately, to dispense with the state and the compulsion which is said to be its principal attribute. All socialist doctrines, from the most moderate to the most extreme, assume that human beings are infinitely malleable because their personality is the product of the economic

environment: a change in that environment must, therefore, alter them as well as their behaviour.

“Marx pursued philosophical studies mainly in his youth. When, as a twenty-six-year-old émigré in Paris, he immersed himself in philosophy, he at once grasped the political implications of the ideas of Helvétius and his French contemporaries. In The Holy Family (1844-45), the book which marked his and Engels’s break with idealistic radicalism, he took his philosophical and psychological premises directly from Locke and Helvétius: ‘The whole development of man…,’ he wrote, ‘depends on education and environment.’ ‘If man draws all his knowledge, sensations, etc., from the world of the senses and the experience gained from it, the empirical world must be arranged so that in it man experiences and gets used to what is really human… If man is shaped by his surroundings, his surroundings must be made human.’

“This, the locus classicus of Marxist philosophy, justifies a total change in the way society is organized – that is, revolution. According to this way of thinking, which indeed inexorably flows from the philosophical premises of Locke and Helvétius, man and society do not come into existence by a natural process but are ‘made’. This ‘radical behaviorism’, as it has been called, inspired Marx in 1845 to coin what is probably his most celebrated aphorism: ‘The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways: the point, however, is to change it.’ Of course, the moment a thinker begins to conceive his mission to be not ‘only’ observing the world and adapting to it, but changing it, he ceases to be a philosopher and turns into a politician with his own political agenda and interests.

“Now, the world can conceivably be ‘changed’ gradually, by means of education and legislation. And such a gradual change is, indeed, what all intellectuals would advocate if their exclusive concern were with improving the human condition, since evolution allows for trial and error, the only proven road to progress. But many of those who want to change the world regard human discontent as something not to be remedied but exploited. Exploitation of resentment, not its satisfaction, has been at the center of socialist politics since the 1840s: it is what distinguished the self-styled ‘scientific’ socialists from their ‘utopian’ forerunners. This attitude has led to the emergence of what Anatole Leroy-Beaulieu called in 1902, in a remarkably prescient book, the ‘politics of hatred’. Socialism, he noted, elevates ‘hatred to the heights of principle’, sharing with its mortal enemies, nationalism and anti-Semitism, the need ‘chirurgically’ to isolate and destroy the alleged enemy.’ Committed radicals fear reform because it deprives them of leverage and establishes the ruling elite more solidly in power: they prefer the most savage repression. The slogan of Russian revolutionaries – ‘chem khuzhe, tem luchshe’ (‘the worse, the better’) spelled out this kind of thinking…”

---

The Tsar was helped by the fact that “the public reacted with horror,” as Pipes continues, to the murder of his father, “and the radical cause lost a great deal of popular support. The government responded with a variety of repressive measures and counter-intelligence operations which made it increasingly difficult for the revolutionaries to function. And the ‘people’ did not stir, unshaken in the belief that the land which they desired would be given them by the next Tsar.

“There followed a decade of revolutionary quiescence. Russians who wanted to work for the common good now adopted the doctrine of ‘small deeds’ – that is, pragmatic, unspectacular activities to raise the cultural and material level of the population through the zemstva and private philanthropic organizations.

“Radicalism began to stir again in the early 1890s in connection with the spurt of Russian industrialization and a severe famine. The Socialists-Revolutionaries of the 1870s had believed that Russia would follow a path of economic development different from the Western because she had neither the domestic nor the foreign markets that capitalism required. The Russian peasantry, being poor and heavily dependent on income from cottage industries (estimated at one-third of the peasant total income), would be ruined by competition from the mechanized factories and lose that little purchasing power it still possessed. As for foreign markets, these had been pre-empted by the advanced countries of the West. Russia had to combine communal agriculture with rural (cottage) industry. From these premises Socialist-Revolutionary theoreticians developed a ‘separate path’ doctrine according to which Russian would proceed directly from ‘feudalism’ to ‘socialism’ without passing through a capitalist phase.

“This thesis was advanced with the help of arguments drawn from the writings of Marx and Engels. Marx and Engels initially disowned such an interpretation of their doctrine, but they eventually changed their minds, conceding that there might be more than one model of economic development. In 1877, in an exchange with a Russian, Marx rejected the notion that every country had to repeat the economic experience of Western Europe. Should Russia enter the path of capitalist development, he wrote, then, indeed, nothing could save her from its ‘iron laws’, but this did not mean that Russian could not avoid this path and the misfortunes it brought. A few years later Marx stated that the ‘historical inevitability’ of capitalism was confined to Western Europe, and that because Russia had managed to preserve the peasant commune into the era of capitalism, the commune could well become the ‘fulcrum of Russia’s social rejuvenation’. Marx and Engels admired the terrorists of the People’s Will, and, as an exception to their general theory, Engels allowed that in Russia the revolution could be made by a ‘handful of people’.
“Thus, before a formal ‘Marxist’ or Social-Democratic movement had emerged in Russia, the theories of its founders were interpreted, with their sanction, when applied to an autocratic regime in an agrarian country, to mean a revolution brought about, not by the inevitable social consequences of matured capitalism, but by terror and coup d’état.

“A few Russians, led by George Plekhanov, dissented from this version of Marxism. They broke with the People’s Will, moved to Switzerland, and there immersed themselves in German Social-Democratic literature. From it they concluded that Russia had no alternative but to go through full-blown capitalism. They rejected terrorism and a coup d’état on the grounds that even in the unlikely event that such violence succeeded in bringing down the tsarist regime, the outcome would not be socialism, for which backward Russia lacked both the economic and cultural preconditions, but a ‘revived tsarism on a Communist base’.

“From the premises adopted by the Russian Social-Democrats there followed certain political consequences. Capitalist development meant the rise of a bourgeoisie committed, from economic self-interest, to liberalization. It further meant the growth of the industrial ‘proletariat’, which would be driven by its deteriorating economic situation to socialism, furnishing the socialist movement with revolutionary cadres. The fact that Russian capitalism developed in a country with a pre-capitalist political system, however, called for a particular revolutionary strategy. Socialism could not flourish in a country held in the iron grip of a police-bureaucratic regime: it required freedom of speech to propagate its ideas and freedom of association to organize its followers. In other words, unlike the German Social-Democrats, who, since 1890, were able to function in the open and run in national elections, Russian Social-Democrats confronted the prior task of overthrowing autocracy.

“The theory of a two-stage revolution, as formulated by Plekhanov’s associate, Paul Akselrod, provided for the ‘proletariat’ (read: socialist intellectuals) collaborating with the bourgeoisie for the common objective of bringing to Russia ‘bourgeois democracy’. As soon as that objective had been attained, the socialists would rally the working class for the second, socialist phase of the revolution. From the point of view of this strategy, everything that promoted in Russia the growth of capitalism and the interests of the bourgeoisie was – up to a point – progressive and favourable to the cause of socialism.”

The Jewish Question

Now the murder of the Tsar was carried out by a revolutionary organization called “The People’s Will”, which consisted mainly of atheist

---

Jews. This fact, in the words of Bishop Anthony (Khrapovitsky), “clarified for people who were capable of at any rate some thought that these murders and blasphemies were not at all the expression of the people’s will, but on the contrary, a shameful spitting at that will. Moreover, they proceeded not so much from an honourable predilection for false theories as from the hands of the natural enemies of the fatherland – people of another race and nation, who were being rewarded with a corresponding financial payment.”

Two years before the murder, in 1879 the future procurator of the Holy Synod, Constantine Petrovich Pobedonostev, had written to the novelist Fyodor Dostoyevsky: “They [the Jews] are at the root of the revolutionary socialist movement and of regicide, they own the periodical press, they have in their hands the financial markets; the people as a whole fall into financial slavery to them; they even control the principles of contemporary science and strive to place it outside of Christianity.” And Dostoyevsky himself had written: “Jewry is thriving precisely where the people are still ignorant, or not free, or economically backward. It is there that Jewry has a champ libre! And instead of raising, by its influence, the level of education, instead of increasing knowledge, generating economic fitness in the native population, - instead of this, the Jew, wherever he has settled, has still more humiliated and debauched the people; there humaneness was still more debased and the educational level fell still lower; there inescapable, inhuman misery, and with it despair, spread still more disgustingly. Ask the native populations in our [western] border regions: What is propelling the Jew – has been propelling him for centuries? You will receive a unanimous answer: mercilessness. ‘He has been prompted so many centuries only by pitilessness for us, only the thirst for our sweat and blood’…”

Of course, the “anti-Semitic” views of Dostoyevsky, Khrapovitsky, Pobedonostsev and others are profoundly unfashionable today, mainly because most contemporary critiques of Russian anti-Semitism simply ignore the facts about the Jews in Russia cited above. However, a more intelligent and interesting critique has been presented by Sir Geoffrey Hosking, who takes up a hint given by Dostoyevsky that the Jewish idea took the place of Christianity because the latter “did not succeed”. According to Hosking, “Anti-Semitism was a kind of frustrated Slavophilism, conceived in awareness of the ways in which Russians had failed to fulfil their potential nationhood. In the interests of great-power status, the Russians had spurned their myth of the chosen people and the empire of truth and justice. The Jews, by contrast, continued to believe that they were a chosen people and to hold

---

to their messianic prophecies. Where Slavophiles dreamed of a peasant commune based on Orthodox principles, the Jews seemed still to have successful communities ruled over by their religious leaders. They had succeeded where the Russians had failed: in making a messianic religion the essence of their national identity.”

We may concede a degree of psychological truth in this analysis: the Russians were failing “to fulfil their potential nationhood”, if that nationhood was perceived as being the mission of the Third Rome, that is, of being the bearer of “light from the East”, the universal truth of Orthodox Christianity, to the benighted nations of Europe and Asia. Far from converting the Europeans to Orthodoxy, the Russians were being converted in large numbers to various westernist ideologies – liberalism, ecumenism and (a little later) Marxism. Nor, in spite of flourishing missions in Alaska and (a little later) Japan, were they much more successful in Asia, where the very earthly motivations of great-power politics, little different from those of their great rivals, the British, prevailed.

Now a sense of failure can be treated in two ways: in the Orthodox way, by repentance and the confession of sin, and in the fallen way, by exaggerated self-assertion and the blaming of others. Slavophilism at its best, as we find it in Khomiakov or Kireevsky, implicitly contained a message of repentance: that Russia was falling away from her vocation as God’s people, and she should return to the traditions of the pre-Petrine period, when she had been more faithful to her heavenly calling. But in its later varieties, Slavophilism degenerated (as Vladimir Soloviev was soon to argue) into mere nationalist self-assertion. Russia, the later Slavophiles maintained, was great not only, or even primarily, because she was the bearer of the one truth to all nations (the messianic idea), but also in a purely secular, material sense. But this, according to Constantine Leontiev, was simply a form of liberal nationalism – that is, of westernism. As for Dostoyevsky, he was in essence a universalist Christian thinker of genius, and his Slavophilism was simply the conviction that Russia possessed the fullness of the truth that the West had lost, and that it was Russia that would bring the universal message of the Gospel to the heretical nations of the West, that “graveyard of holy miracles”.28

28 Some people assert that in some parts of his work he gave grounds for the opinion that he was simply a frenzied chauvinist. However, Bishop Anthony (Khropovitsky) (perhaps the model for Alyosha in The Brothers Karamazov) demonstrated how inseparable Dostoyevsky’s Slavophilism was from Orthodox Christianity, and how far from any narrow nationalism: “If you take Orthodoxy from our Russian people and our Russian life, as Dostoyevsky justly observed, nothing specifically Russian will remain. In vain have people begun to talk about some kind of national Russian Church: such a Church does not exist, only an ecclesiastical nationality exists, our ecclesiastical people (and to some extent even our ecclesiastical society), which is recognized as our own and native only to the extent that it is in agreement with the Church and her teaching, and which does not recognize the Russian Stundists as Russian, but sees no difference between itself and foreign Orthodox - Greeks, Arabs and Serbs. Tell our peasant: ‘Do not curse the Jews, you know - the All-Holy Mother of God and
The Jews were no threat (yet) to Russia in purely political terms, but a direct threat in terms of messianic mission. For the Jews, like the Russians, claimed to be the nation that knows the truth. But the Jewish God was definitely not the Russians’ God – not Jesus Christ. And the whole of the Jewish religion, the religion of the Talmud, was aimed at protecting it against the influence of this Russian God, Who happened to be a Jew by race, but Whom the Jews had crucified and continued to anathematize together with all Christians. So in religious terms – and Russia’s national “myth”, to use Hosking’s word, was nothing if not religious – there could be no compromise, no living together in amity between these two most religious of peoples. It was a matter of kto kogo?, to use Lenin’s phrase: who would rule whom? – and the constant strife between Jews and Russians in the Western Borderlands was therefore both wholly predictable and essentially unavoidable. Moreover, as Hosking rightly points out, the relative success of the Jews in maintaining their religious identity was an implicit rebuke to the Russians, who were losing theirs. In fact, it was hardly a coincidence that the appearance of the Jews in large numbers in the Russian lands towards the end of the eighteenth century had coincided almost exactly with the nadir of Russian religious consciousness in the reign of Catherine II. It was as if God had introduced the Jews into Russia to remind the Russians: “Just as the Jews fell away from Me when they chose national self-assertion instead of Me, so you can fall away if you pursue great-power wealth and status at the expense of faithfulness to My commandments. And just as they fell from being My People to being My fiercest enemies, so it can happen to you…”

Paradoxically, however, the Jews who joined the revolutionary movement and killed the Tsar were not religious Jews who believed in the Talmud, but atheists – and their atheism had been taught them in Russian schools by Russian teachers who had abandoned their own, Orthodox faith and adopted the faith of the revolutionary thinkers of the West.

But this distinction was lost on the ordinary people, who suffered in their everyday life from (religious) Jews that exploited and deceived them, and believed that the (atheist) Jews who killed the Tsar must be of the same kind. Moreover, the violence of the act profoundly shocked them; for, as Alexander Solzhenitsyn explains, “that the deaths of the heirs or tsars of the previous century – Alexis Petrovich, Ivan Antonovich, Peter III, Paul – were violent remained unknown to the people. The murder of March 1, 1881 shocked the all the Apostles were Jews’. And what will he reply? ‘That’s not true,’ he will say. ‘They lived at a time when the Jews were Russians.’ He knows very well that the Apostles did not speak Russian, that the Russians did not exist at that time, but he wants to express a true thought, namely, that at that time the Jews who believed in Christ were of that same faith and Church with which the Russian people has now been merged and from which the contemporary Jews and their ancestors who were disobedient to the Lord have fallen away.” (‘Chej dolzhen byt’ Konstantinopol’” (Whose must Constantinople Become”), 1916, quoted in S. Fomin, Rossia pered Vtorym Prishestviem (Russia before the Second Coming), Sergiev Posad, 1994, p. 203)

26
minds of the whole people. For the masses of the simple people, and especially the peasants, it was as if the foundations of their life were being shaken. But again, as the narodovoltsy had calculated, this could not fail to be reflected in some kind of explosion. And it was. But in an unpredictable way: in pogroms against the Jews in New Russia and Ukraine.”

On April 15 the first pogrom broke out in Elizavettgrad. It spread to Kiev and Kishinev and Odessa. The government reacted energetically: in Kiev 1400 people were arrested. However, there were not enough policemen for the scale of the disturbances, and “the government recognised that it had been insufficiently active. An official declaration proclaimed that in the Kiev pogrom ‘measures to rein in the crowd had not been undertaken quickly and energetically enough’. In June, 1881 the director of the department of police, V.K. Plehve, in his report to the sovereign on the situation in Kiev province named ‘as one of the reasons “for the development of the disturbances and their not very speedy suppression” the fact that the military court “was very condescending to the accused, and very superficial in approaching the affair’. Alexander III commented on the report: ‘This is unforgivable’.”

Many western historians have accused the Tsarist government of complicity in the pogroms. But in fact, as David Vital admits, “Alexander did display genuine dismay and dissatisfaction when reports of the weak and ineffective conduct of the security forces were brought to him; and fury when he learned of cases of military officers and men having actually joined the mob. His instructions were to deal firmly with rioters, to see to it that their leaders were severely flogged; and to make clear to the civil and military authorities alike that their business was to restore and maintain order before all else…. All in all then, while much was murky in official Russia at this time, the grounds for positing a momentarily disoriented, intrinsically inefficacious government not so much stimulating as failing to cope with simmering, popular, generalized discontent seem solid enough.”

Again, Dominic Lieven writes: “… The pogroms were terrible but they were a long way from the systematic ethnic cleansing, let alone genocide, of whole peoples which were to be the strategies of supposedly more civilized European people towards the Jews. Moreover, all recent research emphasizes that the tsarist central government itself did not organize or instigate pogroms, though local authorities sometimes winked at them and more often were slow to stamp on them. Tsarist ministers did not connive in murder and were in any case deeply uneasy at outbreaks of mass violence and very scared that the ‘dark people’s’ uncontrollable propensity for anarchic settling of

29 Solzhenitsyn, Dvesti let vmeste (Two Hundred Years Together), Moscow, 2001, part 1, p. 185 ®.
30 Solzhenitsyn, op. cit., p. 189.
scores might easily target the ruling classes themselves. On the other hand, it is the case that knowledge of their superiors’ frequent antipathy to the Jews could encourage junior officials to believe that failure to stop pogroms could go unpunished…”

“The reasons for the pogroms were earnestly investigated and discussed by contemporaries. Already in 1872, after the Odessa pogrom, the governor-general of the South-Western region had warned in a report that such an event could happen again in his region, for ‘here hatred and enmity towards the Jews is rooted in history and only the material dependence of the peasants on them at the present, together with the administration’s measures, holds back an explosion of discontent in the Russian population against the Jewish race’. The governor-general reduced the essence of the matter to economics: ‘I have counted and estimated the commercial-industrial property belonging to the Jews in the South-Western region, and at the same time have pointed to the fact that the Jews, having taken eagerly to the renting of landowners’ lands, have leased them out again to the peasants on very onerous terms’. And this causal nexus ‘was generally recognised in the pogrom year of 1881’. 

“In the spring of 1881 Loris-Melikov had also reported to the Sovereign: ‘At the root of the present disturbances lies the profound hatred of the local population for the Jews who have enslaved them. But this has undoubtedly been used by evil-minded people.’

This was true: the revolutionaries, both Russian and Jewish, used the hatred to their own end. And yet it is little wonder that conservative opinion, while deploring the pogroms, saw the root cause of the Jews’ problems in the Jews themselves, in their economic exploitation of the peasants. When Loris-Melikov was succeeded in 1881 by Count N.P. Ignatiev, the latter, on the instructions of the emperor, sent him a memorandum on the causes of the pogroms. In it, writes Geoffrey Hosking, he outlined “his fears about domination by ‘alien forces’. In it he linked the whole Westernizing trend with the Jews and the Poles… ‘In Petersburg there exists a powerful Polish-Jewish group in whose hands are directly concentrated, the stock exchange, the advokatura, a good part of the press and other public affairs. In many legal and illegal ways they enjoy immense influence on officialdom and on the course of affairs in general.’ They used this influence to mould public opinion in the interests of their favourite schemes: ‘the broadest possible rights for Poles and Jews, and representative institutions on the western model. Every honest voice from the Russian land is drowned out by Polish-Jewish clamours that one must only listen to the ‘intelligentsia’ and that Russian demands should be rejected as old-fashioned and unenlightened.’”

---

33 Solzhenitsyn, op. cit., p. 192.
34 Hosking, op. cit., p. 390.
Among the most important causes of the pogroms, write M. and Yu. Krivoshein, were “the changed economic condition of the peasants after the reform of 1861: having become personally free, but unskilled in financial operations, the peasants gradually fell into dependence on the local Jewish usurers and, in this way, peasant gardens, lands, cattle, etc. began to pass over to the latter. Explosions of popular anger followed.

“In his turn the very prominent banker Baron G.O. Ginzburg interceded before the emperor for the usurers who had been beaten up by the peasants, imploring him not to allow repressions against his co-religionists. The banker’s reply was Count N.P. Ignatiev’s speech in the name of Alexander III before a deputation of Jewish society:

“... ‘Your situation is not comforting, but it depends to a great extent on you to correct it. Living amidst a population that is foreign to you, you have drawn upon yourselves such hatred that for several months I was forced to apply force merely to protect you. Investigations have by no means confirmed your favourite ploy, that they are attacking you as proprietors. Still less can what has happened in the south be ascribed to religious intolerance. The Russian people, like the state, is very tolerant in matters of faith – it takes a lot to draw it out of its tolerance. In the East there live many people of other races amidst the Russian population who are not Christians. However, it is not necessary to employ armies there in order to defend them.

“’While being profoundly sorrowful over the disorders that have taken place, and doing everything that depends on me to prevent them in the future, I warn you that I will not act in a one-sided manner. On reviewing the causes of the disorders, and having studied their details, it is impossible not to recognize that in many cases they have been elicited by the Jews themselves; lengthy cohabitation with the Jews has rooted the conviction in the local population that there is no law which the Jew would not be able to bypass.

“’One can rely on the bayonet, but one cannot sit on it. Remember that you are being protected, but that it is impossible to tolerate a situation in which it is constantly necessary to protect the Jews from the consequences of popular anger. Try to search out for yourselves productive occupations, labouring with your own hands, abandon tavern-keeping and usury... I am willing and ready to assist you in everything that can accelerate your transition to agricultural, craft and factory work, but of course you will find in me a very powerful opponent if you, under the guise of crafts and other productive occupations, develop throughout the provinces of Russia the trades that you usually practise now.

“’I will end the way I began: as long as you keep your kahal organization, your cohesion and your striving to take everything into your hands, while
violating the laws of the country, you will in no way be able to count on privileges and a broadening of your rights or places of settlement, which will create fresh complications...”

Ignatiev’s reference to the kahal organization was especially emphasized by religious leaders, such as Archbishop Nicanor of Odessa and Kherson, who said in 1890: “Religion is the basis of the powerful Jewish spirit. The more or less secret-open religious organisation of the kahal is that mighty, many-cylindred machine which moves the millions of Jews to secretly planned ends. Only a blind man could not see how terrible and threatening is this power! It is striving for nothing less than the enslavement of the world!... In the last century it has had horrific successes by relying on European liberalism, on equality before the law, etc. It is mixing up people of other faiths more and more closely, while it rules its own people like a machine. All the Jews are in essence like one man. We reason in a liberal way whether it is useful or harmful to ban bazaars on feast-days. But the secret Jewish power says to its own people: ‘Don’t you dare! Honour the Sabbath! Honour the law of your fathers! The law gives life and power to Jewry!’ And look: not a single Jew dares to go out on Saturday from Nikolaev to Kherson or Odessa. The railway trains are empty, while the steamer services between these great cities stop completely. It is strange and offensive for the Christian people and such a great Kingdom as ours! But what a foreign power! And how bold and decisive it is. This is a religious power coming from the religious organisation of the kahal.”

Of course, the kahal, that “state within a state”, was supposed to have been abolished in the reign of Nicholas I. Evidently here, as in many other cases, the Jews had managed to get round the law...

In May, 1882 the government issued new “temporary rules” which “forbade Jews to resettle or acquire property in rural areas, even within the Pale, while outside it the police were instructed to enforce restrictions on Jewish residence which had previously been widely flouted. In the following years Jews were barred from entering the advokatura and the military-medical professions, while a numerus clausus was imposed on their admission to secondary and higher education in general. They were also denied the vote in zemstvo and municipal elections. In 1891, at Passover, there was a mass expulsion of illegal resident Jews from Moscow, which deprived the city of two-thirds of its Jewish population.”

The Jewish radicals of the previous reign had seen themselves as joining Russian culture, whose famous writers had been their idols. Unfortunately, however, the pogroms served to radicalize Jewish youth still further and in an

---

37 Hosking, op. cit., pp. 392-393.
opposite direction, so that their radicalism was now nationalist rather than internationalist, and anti-Russian rather than pro-Russian. As Solzhenitsyn writes: “The general turning-point in Jewish consciousness in Russia after 1881-82 could not fail, of course, to be reflected to some extent also in the consciousness of the Jewish revolutionaries in Russia. These youths had first left Jewry, but afterwards many returned, ‘the departure from “Jew street” and return to the people’, ‘our historical destiny is bound up with the Jewish ghetto, and from it comes our national essence’. Until the pogroms of 1881-82 ‘it absolutely never entered the head of any of us revolutionaries to think about the necessity’ of publicly explaining the role of the Jews in the revolutionary movement. But the pogroms elicited ‘amongst… the majority of my compatriots an explosion of discontent’. And so ‘not only the intelligent Jews in general, but also some revolutionary Jews, who previously had felt not the slightest bond with their nationality… suddenly recognised themselves as obliged to devote their strength and abilities to their unjustly persecuted compatriots’. ‘The pogroms brought out previously hidden feelings and made the youth more sensitive to the sufferings of their people, and the people more receptive to revolutionary ideas.’

And yet there is reason to believe that the great wave of Jewish emigration from Russia to the West in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries – about two million Jews emigrated to America alone before 191439 - was not elicited primarily by the pogroms. A more important factor, probably, was the introduction of a state monopoly on the sale of alcohol in 1896. Solzhenitsyn writes: “There is no doubt about it: the introduction of the state wine monopoly turned out to be a very powerful blow at the economy of Russian Jewry. And right up to the World War itself, when it more or less came to an end, the state wine monopoly continued to be a favourite target of public displeasure – although only it introduced strict control over the quality of the spirits sold in the country and their purity. And although the state monopoly also removed the livelihood of Christian publicans… it was nevertheless made out to be primarily an anti-Jewish measure: ‘The introduction of the state sale of wines in the Pale of Settlement at the end of the 90s deprived more than 100,000 Jews of their livelihood’, ‘the authorities counted on pushing the Jews out of their village localities’, and from that time ‘trade in alcohol did not have its former significance for the Jews’.

“And it is precisely from the end of the 19th century that the emigration of Jews from Russia intensified. Its statistical link with the introduction of the state sale of wines has not been established, but these 100,000 lost livelihoods point to it. In any case, the Jewish emigration (to America) did not increase substantially until 1886-87, jumped for a short time in 1891-92, and its long and massive rise began in 1897…”40

38 Solzhenitsyn, op. cit., p. 192.
However, other means of exploiting the Christian peasantry remained. 18% of the Jews before the revolution, about one million people, were occupied in the sale of bread. And sometimes they would hoard the harvest and refuse to sell it so that the prices should fall. “It is not by accident that in the 90s of the nineteenth century agricultural cooperatives (under the leadership of Count Haydn and Bekhteev) arose for the first time in Russia, forestalling Europe, in the southern provinces. [This was envisaged] as a counter-measure to this essentially completely monopolistic hoarding of peasant bread.”\textsuperscript{41}

The Jews were also heavily involved in the lumber, sugar, gold, oil and banking industries. And by 1900 they controlled one-third of the trade of Russia. With such a heavy involvement in the country’s economy, it is not surprising to learn that, of those Jews who emigrated between 1899 and 1907, only one per cent were educated.\textsuperscript{42} The educated had no reason to leave: there were plenty of opportunities for them in Tsarist Russia. We might also have expected that those who remained would be gradually assimilated. But no: the Jews chose emancipation (education), but not assimilation. They fought for equality of rights, but without the loss of their Jewishness.\textsuperscript{43}

“From the beginning of the century a ‘Bureau for the Defence’ of the Jews in Russia was organized from prominent lawyers and publicists…”

“In these years ‘the Jewish spirit was roused to struggle’, and in many Jews there was ‘a rapid growth in social and national self-consciousness’ – but national self-consciousness no longer in a religious form: with the ‘impoverishment at the local level, the flight of the more prosperous elements… among the youth into the cities… and the tendency to urbanization’, religion was undermined ‘among the broad masses of Jewry’ from the 90s, the authority of the rabbinate fell, and even the yeshbotniks were drawn into secularization. (But in spite of that, in many biographies in the Russian Jewish Encyclopaedia we read about the generation that grew up on the cusp of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: ‘he received a traditional Jewish religious education’.)

“However, as we have seen, \textit{Palestinophilia} began to develop in an unexpected form and with a strength that was unexpected for many…”\textsuperscript{44}

“Anti-Jewish manifestations - both abroad and in Russia - were being passionately discussed already in 1884 by Vladimir Soloviev, who was disturbed by them: ‘The Jews have always treated us in a Jewish way; but we Christians, by contrast, have not yet learned to treat Judaism in a Christian

\textsuperscript{41} Solzhenitsyn, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 299.
\textsuperscript{42} Solzhenitsyn, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 311.
\textsuperscript{43} Solzhenitsyn, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 313-314.
\textsuperscript{44} Solzhenitsyn, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 314.
way’; ‘with regard to Judaism the Christian world in its majority has so far displayed either zeal not according to reason or a decrepit and powerless indifferentism’. No, ‘Christian Europe does not tolerate the Jews – unbelieving Europe does’.

“Russian society felt the growing importance of the Jewish question for Russia as much as half a century after the government. Only after the Crimean war did ‘embryonic Russian public opinion begin to become conscious of the presence of the Jewish problem in Russia’. But several decades would have to pass before the primary importance of this question was recognized. ‘Providence implanted the largest and strongest part of Jewry in our fatherland,’ wrote Vladimir Soloviev in 1891.

“But a year earlier, in 1890, Soloviev, finding incitement and support in a circle of sympathizers, composed the text of a ‘Protest’. [He wrote] that ‘the only reason for the so-called Jewish question’ was ‘forgetfulness of justice and love of man’, ‘a mindless attraction to blind national egoism’. – ‘The incitement of tribal and religious enmity, which is so counter to the spirit of Christianity... radically corrupts society and can lead to moral savagery...’ – ‘It is necessary decisively to condemn the anti-Semitic movement’ – ‘already from the single feeling of national self-preservation’.

“S.M. Dubnov recounts how Soloviev collected more than a hundred signatures, including those of Lev Tolstoy and Korolenko. But the editors of all the newspapers received a warning: don’t publish this protest. Soloviev ‘addressed Alexander III with an ardent letter’. However, he was warned through the police that if he insisted he would be administratively persecuted. And he abandoned the idea.

“As in Europe, the many-faceted growth of Jewish strivings could not fail to elicit in Russian society – alarm in some, sharp opposition in others, but sympathy in yet others...

“And in others – a political calculation. Just as in 1881 the People’s Will revolutionaries had thought of the usefulness of playing on the Jewish question..., so, some time later, the Russian liberal-radical circles, the left wing of society, appropriated for a long time the usefulness of using the Jewish question as a weighty political card in the struggle with the autocracy: they tried in every way to reiterate the idea that it was impossible to attain equality of rights for the Jews in Russia in any other way than by the complete overthrow of the autocracy. Everyone, from the liberals to the SRs and Bolsheviks, brought in the Jews again and again – some with sincere sympathy, but all as a useful card in the anti-autocratic front. And this card, without a twinge of conscience, was never let out of the hands of the revolutionaries, but was used right up to 1917...”

Soloviev on Russia

It was not only in relation to the Jewish question that the philosopher Vladimir Soloviev found himself expressing typically liberal viewpoints in the distinctly conservative 1880s. He was also a critic of the regime’s turn towards Russian nationalism. And he was an early “prophet” of ecumenism.

A generation earlier, Bishop Ignatius Brianchaninov had criticized the vaguely ecumenical Christianity that prevailed among the educated classes, and their admiration of western forms of Christianity. This admiration soon began to express itself in actual conversions. Thus a convert to English Evangelical Protestantism was Count V.A. Pashkov46, and among the converts to Catholicism was Soloviev himself, although it is thought that he received communion from an Orthodox priest on his deathbed.

Soloviev was, for good and for ill, the most influential thinker in Russia until his death in 1900, and for some time after. In 1874, at the age of 23, he defended his master’s thesis, “The Crisis of Western Philosophy”, at the Moscow Theological Academy. Coming at a time when the influence of western positivism was at its peak, this bold philosophical vindication of the Christian faith drew the attention of many; and his lectures on Godmanhood in St. Petersburg were attended by Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky. Unfortunately, his philosophy of “pan-unity” contained pantheistic elements; there is evidence that his lectures on Godmanhood were plagiarized from the works of Schelling47; and his theory of Sophia, the Wisdom of God, was both heretical in itself and gave birth to other heresies.48

Turning from his metaphysics to his social and political teaching, we find in Soloviev a mixture of East and West, Slavophilism and Westernism. On the one hand, he believed fervently, with the Slavophiles, in the Divine mission of Russia. But on the other, he was fiercely critical of the nationalism of the later Slavophiles, he admired Peter the Great and did not admire Byzantium, and felt drawn to the universalism of the Roman Catholics, becoming an early “prophet” of Orthodox-Roman Catholic ecumenism.

Now the later Slavophiles, by contrast with the earlier Khomiakov and Kireyevsky, had tended to stress the unique value of Russian or Slavic culture simply because it was unique and su generis, not because it scored highly on

---

47 Archbishop Nicon (Rklitsky), Zhizneopisanie Blazhenneishago Antonia, Metropolita Kievskago i Galitskago (Biography of his Beatitude Anthony, Metropolitan of Kiev and Galich), New York, 1971, volume 1, pp. 103-104 ®.
48 For Soloviev Sophia was the feminine principle of God, His ‘other’. For some of his heretical followers, such as Protopriest Sergius Bulgakov, it was the Mother of God. See A.F. Losev, *Vladimir Soloviev i ego Vremia* (Vladimir Soloviev and his Time), Moscow, 2009 ®.
a universal scale of values. As Fr. Georges Florovsky writes, speaking of the later Slavophiles in general, “Significance is ascribed to this or that cultural achievement or discovery of the Slavic nationality not because we see in it the manifestation of the highest values, values which surpass those that inspired ‘European’ culture, but simply because they are the organic offshoots of the Slavic national genius. And so not because they are good, but because they are ours…

“The ideals and concrete tasks for action are inspired not by autonomous seeking and ‘the re-evaluation of all values’, but solely by ‘the milieu’ and ‘circumstances’ of one’s ‘chance’ belonging to the given ‘cultural-historical type’, to the given ‘ethnic group of peoples’. This nationalism should be given the epithet ‘anthropological’, as opposed to the ethnic nationalism of the ‘older Slavophiles’, [since] the basis for ‘idiosyncracy’ is sociological or anthropological particularity, not originality of cultural content. There [among the older Slavophiles] individual variations are allowed on universal and eternal motifs: here they are taken to be various unshakeable and unmixed relative melodies…”

“It was on this plane, “continues Florovsky, “that the annihilating criticism to which Vladimir Soloviev subjected the imitative nationalism of the later Slavophiles lay. His words had the greater weight in that, even though he was not conscious of it, he stood squarely on the ground of the old, classical Slavophile principles. True, his criticism suffered from wordiness and ‘personalities’. Too often a harsh phrase took the place of subtle argumentation. But the basic fault of ‘false’ nationalism was sensed by him and illumined completely correctly. Only on the soil of universal principles that are absolutely significant to all is genuine culture possible, and the national task of Slavdom can lie only in actively converting itself to the service of values that will be chosen for their supreme good in the free exercise of thought and faith… But the denial of the ‘universal-historical’ path is a step towards nihilism, to the complete dissolution of values,… in the final analysis, the abolition of the category of values altogether…”

Generally speaking, Soloviev was most convincing and Orthodox in his earlier articles. Thus in “Three Forces” (1877), he identified three basic forces as having determined the whole of world history, which were at present incarnate especially in Islam, Democracy and the Orthodox Autocracy. Soloviev characterized Islam as being under the dominating influence of what he called the first force, which he defined as “the striving to subject humanity in all its spheres and at every level of its life to one supreme principle which in its exclusive unity strives to mix and confuse the whole variety of private forms, to suppress the independence of the person and the freedom of private

life." Democracy he characterized as being under the dominating influence of the second force, which he defined as "the striving to destroy the stronghold of dead unity, to give freedom everywhere to private forms of life, freedom to the person and his activity; ... the extreme expression of this force is general egoism and anarchy and a multitude of separate individuals without an inner bond." The third force, which Soloviev believed was incarnate especially in the Slavic world, is defined as "giving a positive content to the two other forces, freeing them from their exclusivity, and reconciling the unity of the higher principle with the free multiplicity of private forms and elements."

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

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

---

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

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

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

“But that is not the point, they will tell us: the true aim of our national politics is Constantinople. Apparently, they have already ceased to take the Greeks into account - after all, they also have their ‘great idea’ of panhellenism. But the most important thing would to know: with what, and in

52 Soloviev, V. “Golos Moskvy” (The Voice of Moscow), 14 March, 1885; quoted in S. Fomin, Rossia pered Vtorym Prishestviem (Russia before the Second Coming), Sergiev Posad, 1993 (in Russian).
the name of what can we enter into Constantinople? What can we bring there except the pagan idea of the absolute state and the principles of caesaropapism, which were borrowed by us from the Greeks and which have already destroyed Byzantium? In the history of the world there are mysterious events, but there are no senseless ones. No! It is not this Russia which we see now, the Russia which has betrayed its best memories, the lessons of Vladimir and Peter the Great, the Russia which is possessed by blind nationalism and unfettered obscurantism, it is not this Russia that will one day conquer the second Rome and put an end to the fateful eastern question…”\(^{53}\)

In 1889, in his work *Russia and the Universal Church*\(^{54}\), Soloviev tried to argue in favour of a union between the Russian empire and the Roman papacy (he himself became a Catholic, but returned to Orthodoxy on his deathbed). The Roman papacy was to be preferred above the Orthodox Church as the partner to the Russian empire because, in Soloviev’s opinion, the Orthodox Church had become a group of national Churches, rather than the Universal Church, and had therefore lost the right to represent Christ.

The Orthodox Church had a wealth of mystical contemplation, which must be preserved. “In Eastern Christendom for the last thousand years religion has been identified with personal piety, and prayer has been regarded as the one and only religious activity. The Western church, without disparaging individual piety as the true germ of all religion, seeks the development of this germ and its blossoming into a social activity organized for the glory of God and the universal good of mankind. The Eastern prays, the Western prays and labours.”

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

“Were she not one and universal, she could not serve as the foundation of the positive unity of all peoples, which is her chief mission. Were she not infallible, she could not guide mankind in the true way; she would be a blind leader of the blind. Finally were she not independent, she could not fulfil her

---


\(^{54}\) Published in French as *La Russie et l’Eglise universelle.*
duty towards society; she would become the instrument of the powers of this world and would completely fail in her mission...

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

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

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

“Soloviev’s Slavophil messianism never degenerated into a narrow nationalism. In the nineties he was looked upon as having joined the camp of the Westernizers. In a series of articles he violently denounced the epigons of Slavophilism who had perverted its original conception. In the article ‘Idols and Ideals’, written in 1891, he speaks of ‘the transformation of the lofty and all-embracing Christian ideals into the coarse and limited idols of our modern paganism... National messianism was the main idea of the old Slavophils; this idea, in some form of other, was shared by many peoples; it assumed a pre-eminently religious and mystical character with the Poles (Towianski) and with some French dreamers of the thirties and forties (Michel, Ventra, etc.). What is the relation of such national messianism to the true Christian idea? We will not say that there is a contradiction of principle between them. The true Christian ideal can assume this national messianic form, but it becomes then very easily pervertible (to use an expression of ecclesiastical writers); i.e., it can easily change into the corresponding idol of anti-Christian nationalism, which did happen in fact.’…
“Soloviev struggled in his works against every distortion of the Christian ideal of general harmony; he also struggled against all the attempts made by man to satisfy his selfishness under the false pretence of serving a noble cause. Such are for instance the aims of chauvinistic nationalism. Many persons believe, Soloviev tells us, that in order to serve the imaginary interests of their people, ‘everything is permitted, the aim justifies the means, black turns white, lies are preferable to truth and violence is glorified and considered as valor… This is first of all an insult to that very nationality which we desire to serve.’ In reality, ‘peoples flourished and were exalted only when they did not serve their own interests as a goal in itself, but pursued higher, general ideal goods.’ Trusting the highly sensitive conscience of the Russian people, Soloviev wrote in his article, ‘What is Demanded of a Russian Party?’ ‘If instead of doping themselves with Indian opium, our Chinese neighbors suddenly took a liking to the poisonous mushrooms which abound in the Siberian woods, we would be sure to find Russian jingos, who in their ardent interest in Russian trade, would want Russia to induce the Chinese government to permit the free entry of poisonous mushrooms into the Celestial empire… Nevertheless, every plain Russian will say that no matter how vital an interest may be, Russia’s honor is also worth something; and, according to Russian standards, this honor definitely forbids a shady deal to become an issue of national politics.’

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

Dostoyevsky disagreed with his friend on this point, considering the papacy to be, not so much a Church as a State. Nor did he agree with the doctrine of papal infallibility, which Soloviev also supported. As Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky) wrote in 1890, in his review of Soloviev’s book: “If a sinful man cannot be accepted as the supreme head of the Universal Church without this bride of Christ being completely dethroned, accepting the compatibility of the infallibility of religious edicts with a life of sin, with a wicked will, would amount to blasphemy against the Holy Spirit of wisdom by admitting His compatibility with a sinful mind. Khomiakov very justly says that besides the holy inspiration of the apostles and prophets, Scripture tells us of only one inspiration – inspiration of the obsessed. But if this sort of inspiration was going on in Rome, the Church would not be the Church of Christ, but the Church of His enemy. And this is exactly how Dostoyevsky defines it in his ‘Grand Inquisitor’ who says to Christ: ‘We are not with Thee,

55 Lossky, op. cit., pp. 115-117.
but with him’... Dostoyevsky in his ‘Grand Inquisitor’ characterised the Papacy as a doctrine which is attractive exactly because of its worldly power, but devoid of the spirit of Christian communion with God and of contempt for the evil of the world…”

As a warning against the dangers of a Russian nationalism lacking the universalist dimension of the early Slavophiles and Dostoyevsky, Soloviev’s critique had value. But his attempt to tear Russia away from Constantinople and towards Rome was misguided. And it had an unhealthy influence on other writers, such as D.S. Merezhkovsky. Thus Merezhkovsky, according to Sergius Firsov, “found it completely normal to compare Roman Catholicism headed by the Pope and the Russian kingdom headed by the Autocrat. Calling these theocracies (that is, attempts to realise the City of God in the city of man) false, Merezhkovsky pointed out that they came by different paths to the same result: the western – to turning the Church into a State, and the eastern – to engulfing the Church in the State. ‘Autocracy and Orthodoxy are two halves of one religious whole,’ wrote Merezhkovsky, ‘just as the papacy and Catholicism are. The Tsar is not just the Tsar, the head of the State, but also the head of the Church, the first priest, the anointed of God, that is, in the final, if historically not yet realised, yet mystically necessary extent of his power – ‘the Vicar of Christ’, the same Pope, Caesar and Pope in one.’”

**Pobedonostsev on Church-State Relations**

Merezhkovsky’s comparison of the Pope and the Tsar, though greatly exaggerated, had a certain basis in fact; in the fact, namely, that the relationship between Church and State in Russia since Peter the Great had not been canonical, but leaned in a caesaropapist direction, with the Tsar having too great a control over the decisions of the Church hierarchy. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, this question became increasingly topical, with general agreement on the nature of the problem, but much less on its solution...

The debate centred especially on the personality and policies of Constantine Petrovich Pobedonostsev, who from April 24, 1880 to October 19, 1905 occupied the post of over-procurator of the Russian Holy Synod and whose policy of Orthodox conservative nationalism was dominant in Russia until the publication of the October manifesto in 1905. Since Pobednostsev personified this policy of the supremacy of the Orthodox Autocracy perhaps even more than the tsars whom he served, and since his influence extended far beyond his role as over-procurator, he was reviled more than any other figure by the liberal press. He was portrayed as standing for the complete,

---

56 Khrapovitsky, “The Infallibility of the Pope according to Vladimir Soloviev”, *Orthodox Life*, vol. 37, № 4, July-August, 1987, pp. 37, 43.
tyrannical domination by the State of every aspect of Russian life; and among the epithets the press gave him were “prince of darkness, hatred and unbelief”, “state vampire”, “the great inquisitor” and “the greatest deicide in the whole of Russian history”.58

These were vile slanders; for Pobedonostev was a pious man who believed in the Church, and educated the future Tsar Nicholas on the necessity of his being a servant of the Church. And although he never tried to correct the uncanonical state of Church-State relations, and even expressed the view that Peter the Great’s removal of the patriarchate was “completely lawful”, his work as over-procurator was in fact very beneficial. Thus he did a great deal for the development of parish schools, an essential counter-measure to the spread of liberal and atheist education in the secular schools, for the spread of the Word of God in various languages throughout the empire, for an improvement in the lot of the parish priest and for an enormous (fourfold) increase in the number of monks over the previous reign.59

At the same time, it cannot be denied that the power that the tsars wielded over the Church through the over-procurators was anti-canonical. In the 16th and 17th centuries there had been something like real “symphony” between Church and State. However, the eighteenth century tsars from Peter the Great onwards succeeded, through the lay office of over-procurator, in making the Church dependent on the State to a large degree. Finally, through his decrees of November 13, 1817 and May 15, 1824 Alexander I made the Holy Synod into a department of State. Fortunately, the over-procurators of the 19th century were in general more Orthodox than those of the 18th century. But this did not change the essentially uncanonical nature of the situation.…60

Some of the complaints about the State’s interference in Church affairs were exaggerated - for example, the Petrine decree that priests should report the contents of confession if they were seditious. As Pobedonostsev himself pointed out, this had long been a dead letter. Others, however, were serious and had major consequences – as, for example, the tendency of over-procurators to move bishops from one diocese to another.

58 A.I. Peshkov, “‘Kto razoriaet – mal vo Tsarstvii Khristovym’” (He who destroys is least in the Kingdom of Christ), in K.P. Pobedonostev, Sochinenia (Works), St. Petersburg, p. 3 ®.
60 Peshkov provides a certain, not very convincing correction to this point of view: “It is necessary to take into account that even in the Synod he did not have that direct administrative power which any minister in Russia’s Tsarist government possessed in the department subject to him, since the Most Holy Synod was a collegial organ, whose decision-making required the unanimity of its members. As Pobedonostsev himself emphasised, ‘juridically I have no power to issue orders in the Church and the department. You have to refer to the Synod.’ In particular, when Metropolitan Isidore of St. Petersburg expressed himself against the publication in Russia of the New Testament in the translation of V.A. Zhukovsky, C.P. Pobedonostev had to publish it abroad, in Berlin…” (Peshkov, op. cit., p. 7)
Firsov writes: “While C.P. Pobednostsev was over-procurator of the Most Holy Synod, the transfer of hierarchs from see to see was finally turned into a kind of ‘educational’ measure. The paradox consisted in the fact that ‘while exalting the position of bishops from an external point of view, he [Pobedonostsev] at the same time had to increase his control over them’. The over-procurator was quite unable to square this circle: he wanted an intensification of Episcopal activity and at the same time did not want to present the hierarchs with the freedom of action that was necessary for this. State control over the Church had to be kept up. It was precisely for this reason that the over-procurator so frequently moved Vladykos from see to see. According to the calculations of a contemporary investigator, ‘out of 49 diocesan bishops moved in 1881-1894, eight were moved twice and eight – three times. On average in one year three diocesan bishops were moved and three vicars; four vicars received appointments to independent sees’. In 1892-1893 alone 15 diocesan bishops and 7 vicar bishops were moved, while 14 vicar-bishops were raised to the rank of diocesan. At times the new place of their service and the composition of their flock differed strikingly from the former ones. In 1882, for example, a hierarch was transferred to Kishinev from Kazan, then in his place came the bishop of Ryazan, and he was followed by the bishop of Simbirsk.

“One can understand that this ‘shuffling’ could not fail to affect the attitude of hierarchs to their archpastoral duties: they were more interested in smoothing relations with the secular authorities and in getting a ‘good’ diocese. One must recognise that serious blame for this must attach to the long-time over-procurator of the Most Holy Synod, C.P. Pobedonostev…”

Nevertheless, the theoretical works of Pobednostsev demonstrate a profound understanding of the importance of the Church in Russian life and indicate that, whether his views on Church-State relations were correct or not, he knew, as few others, what was truly in the Church’s interests. He considered that the State could not without profound damage to itself and the nation as a whole touch upon the religious consciousness of the people, upon which its own power depended. For the people will support only that government which tries to incarnate its own “idea”.

Thus in an article attacking the doctrine of the complete separation of Church and State that was becoming popular in Europe and Russia he wrote: “However great the power of the State, it is confirmed by nothing other than the unity of the spiritual self-consciousness between the people and the government, on the faith of the people: the power is undermined from the moment this consciousness, founded on faith, begins to divide. The people in unity with the State can bear many hardships, they can concede and hand over much to State power. Only one thing does the State power have no right to demand, only one thing will they not hand over to it – that in which every

61 Firsov, op. cit., p. 77.
believing soul individually and all together lay down as the foundation of their spiritual being, binding themselves with eternity. There are depths which State power cannot and must not touch, so as not to disturb the root sources of faith in the souls of each and every person...”

But in recent years a division had opened up between the faith of the people and the ideology of the State. “Political science has constructed a strictly worked out teaching on the decisive separation of Church and State, a teaching in consequence of which, according to the law that does not allow a division into two of the central forces, the Church unfailingly turns out to be in fact an institution subject to the State. Together with this, the State as an institution is, according to its political ideology, separated from every faith and indifferent to faith. Naturally, from this point of view, the Church is represented as being nothing other than an institution satisfying one of the needs of the population that is recognised by the State – the religious need, and the State in its most recent incarnation turns to it with its right of authorisation, of supervision and control, with no concern for the faith. For the State as for the supreme political institution this theory is attractive, because it promises it complete autonomy, a decisive removal of every opposition, even spiritual opposition, and the simplification of the operations of its ecclesiastical politics.”

“If the issue consists in a more exact delineation of civil society from religious society, of the ecclesiastical and spiritual from the secular, of a direct and sincere separation, without cunning or violence – in this case everybody will be for such a separation. If, coming to practical matters, they want the State to renounce the right to place pastors of the Church and from the obligation to pay for them, this will be an ideal situation... When the question matures, the State, if it wishes to make such a decision, will be obliged to return to the person to whom it belongs the right to choose pastors and bishops; in such a case it will no longer be possible to give to the Pope what belongs to the clergy and people by historical and apostolic right...

“But they say that we must understand separation in a different, broader sense. Clever, learned people define this as follows: the State must have nothing to do with the Church, and the Church – with the State, and so humanity must revolve in two broad spheres in such a way that in one sphere will be the body and in the other the spirit of humanity, and between the two spheres will be a space as great as between heaven and earth. But is that really possible? It is impossible to separate the body from the spirit; and spirit and body live one life.

---

62 Pobedonostev, Moskovskij Sbornik: Tserkov’ i Gosudarstvo (Moscow Anthology: Church and State), op. cit., p. 264.
63 Pobedonostsev, op. cit., p. 266.
“Can we expect that the Church – I’m not talking just about the Catholic, but any Church – should agree to remove from its consciousness civil society, familial society, human society - everything that is understood by the word ‘State’? Since when has it been decreed that the Church exists in order to form ascetics, fill up monasteries and express in churches the poetry of its rites and processions? No, all this is only a small part of that activity which the Church sets as her aim. She has been given another calling: teach all nations. That is her business. The task set before her is to form people on earth so that people of the earthly city and earthly family should be made not quite unworthy to enter the heavenly city and the heavenly community. At birth, at marriage, at death – at the most important moments of human existence, the Church is there with her three triumphant sacraments, but they say that the family is none of her business! She has been entrusted with inspiring the people with respect for the law and the authorities, and to inspire the authorities with respect for human freedom, but they say that society is none of her business!

“No, the moral principle is one. It cannot be divided in such a way that one is a private moral principle, and the other public, one secular and the other spiritual. The one moral principle embraces all relationships – private, in the home and political; and the Church, preserving the consciousness of her dignity, will never renounce her lawful influence in questions relations both to the family and to civil society. And so in demanding that the Church have nothing to do with civil society, they only give her greater strength.”

“The most ancient and best known system of Church-State relations is the system of the established or State Church. The State recognises one confession out of all as being the true confession of faith and supports and protects one Church exclusively, to the prejudice of all other churches and confessions. This prejudice signifies in general that all remaining churches are not recognised as true or completely true; but it is expressed in practice in various forms and a multitude of all manner of variations, from non-recognition and alienation to, sometimes, persecution. In any case, under the influence of this system foreign confessions are subject to a certain more or less significant diminution in honour, in law and in privilege by comparison with the native, State confession. The State cannot be the representative only of the material interests of society; in such a case it would deprive itself of spiritual power and would renounce its spiritual unity with the people. The State is the stronger and more significant the clearer its spiritual representation is manifested. Only on this condition is the feeling of legality, respect for the law and trust in State power supported and strengthened in the midst of the people and in civil life. Neither the principle of the integrity or the good of the benefit of the State, nor even the principle of morality are sufficient in themselves to establish a firm bond between the people and State power; and the moral principle is unstable, shaky, deprived of its fundamental root when it renounces religious sanction. A State which in the name of an unbiased

---

64 Pobedonostsev, op. cit., pp. 268-269.
relationship to all beliefs will undoubtedly be deprived of this central, centrifugal force and will itself renounce every belief – whatever it may be. The trust of the people for their rulers is based on faith, that is, not only on the identity of the faith of the people and the government, but also on the simple conviction that the government has faith and acts according to faith. Therefore even pagans and Mohammedans have more trust and respect for a government which stands on the firm principles of belief, whatever it may be, than for a government which does not recognise its own faith and has an identical relationship to all beliefs.

“That is the undeniable advantage of this system. But in the course of the centuries the circumstances under which this system received its beginning changed, and there arose new circumstances under which its functioning became more difficult than before. In the age when the first foundations of European civilisation and politics were laid, the Christian State was a powerfully integral and unbroken bond with the one Christian Church. Then in the midst of the Christian Church itself the original unity was shattered into many kinds of sects and different faiths, each of which began to assume to itself the significance of the one true teaching and the one true Church. Thus the State had to deal with several different teachings between which the masses of the people were distributed. With the violation of the unity and integrity in faith a period may ensue when the dominant Church, which is supported by the State, turns out to be the Church of an insignificant minority, and herself enjoys only weak sympathy, or no sympathy at all, from the masses of the people. Then important difficulties may arise in the definition of the relations between the State and its Church and the churches to which the majority of the people belong.

“That from the beginning of the 18th century there begins in Western Europe a conversion from the old system to the system of the levelling of the Christian confessions in the State – with the removal, however, of sectarians and Jews from this levelling process. [However, it continues to be the case that] the State recognises Christianity as the essential basis of its existence and of the public well-being, and belonging to this or that church, to this or that belief is obligatory for every citizen.

“That from 1848 this relationship of the State to the Church changes essentially: the flooding waves of liberalism break through the old dam and threaten to overthrow the ancient foundations of Christian statehood. The freedom of the State from the Church is proclaimed – it has nothing to do with the Church. The separation of the State by the Church is also proclaimed: every person is free to believe as he wants or not believe in anything. The symbol of this doctrine is the fundamental principles (Grundrechte) proclaimed by the Frankfurt parliament in 1848/1849. Although they soon cease to be considered valid legislation, they served and serve to this day as the ideal for the introduction of liberal principles into the most recent legislation of
Western Europe. Legislation in line with these principles is everywhere now. Political and civil law is dissociated from faith and membership of this or that church or sect. The State asks nobody about his faith. The registration of marriage and acts of civil status are dissociated from the Church. Complete freedom of mixed marriages is proclaimed, and the Church principle of the indissolubility of marriage is violated by facilitating divorce, which is dissociated from the ecclesiastical courts...

“Does it not follow from this that the unbelieving State is nothing other than a utopia that cannot be realized, for lack of faith is a direct denial of the State. Religion, and notably Christianity, is the spiritual basis of every law in State and civil life and of every true culture. That is why we see that the political parties that are the most hostile to the social order, the parties that radically deny the State, proclaim before everyone that religion is only a private, personal matter, of purely private and personal interest.

“[Count Cavour’s] system of ‘a free Church in a free State’ is based on abstract principles, theoretically; at its foundation is laid not the principle of faith, but the principle of religious indifferentism, or indifference to the faith, and it is placed in a necessary bond with doctrines that often preach, not tolerance and respect for the faith, but open or implied contempt for the faith, as to a bygone moment in the psychological development of personal and national life. In the abstract construction of this system, which constitutes a fruit of the newest rationalism, the Church is represented as also being an abstractly constructed political institution..., built with a definite aim like other corporations recognised in the State...

“... In fact, [however,] it is impossible for any soul that has preserved and experienced the demands of faith within its depths can agree without qualification, for itself personally, with the rule: ‘all churches and all faiths are equal; it doesn’t matter whether it is this faith or another’. Such a soul will unfailingly reply to itself: ‘Yes, all faiths are equal, but my faith is better than any other for myself.’ Let us suppose that today the State will proclaim the strictest and most exact equality of all churches and faiths before the law. Tomorrow signs will appear, from which it will be possible to conclude that the relative power of the faiths is by no means equal; and if we go 30 or 50 years on from the time of the legal equalisation of the churches, it will then be discovered in fact, perhaps, that among the churches there is one which in essence has a predominant influence and rules over the minds and decisions [of men], either because it is closer to ecclesiastical truth, or because in its teaching or rites it more closely corresponds to the national character, or because its organisation and discipline is more perfect and gives it more means for systematic activity, or because activists that are more lively and firm in their faith have arisen in its midst...
“And so a free State can lay down that it has nothing to do with a free Church; only the free Church, if it is truly founded on faith, will not accept this decree and will not adopt an indifferent attitude to the free State. The Church cannot refuse to exert its influence on civil and social life; and the more active it is, the more it feels within itself an inner, active force, and the less is it able to adopt an indifferent attitude towards the State. The Church cannot adopt such an attitude without renouncing its own Divine calling, if it retains faith in it and the consciousness of duty bound up with it. On the Church there lies the duty to teach and instruct; to the Church there belongs the performance of the sacraments and the rites, some of which are bound up with the most important acts and civil life. In this activity the Church of necessity enters ceaselessly into touch with social and civil life (not to speak of other cases, it is sufficient to point to questions of marriage and education). And so to the degree that the State, in separating itself from the Church, retains for itself the administration exclusively of the civil part of all these matters and removes from itself the administration of the spiritual-moral part, the Church will of necessity enter into the function abandoned by the State, and in separation from it will little by little come to control completely and exclusively that spiritual-moral influence which constitutes a necessary, real force for the State. The State will retain only a material and, perhaps, a rational force, but both the one and the other will turn out to be insufficient when the power of faith does not unite with them. And so, little by little, instead of the imagined equalisation of the functions of the State and the Church in political union, there will turn out to be inequality and opposition. A condition that is in any case abnormal, and which must lead either to the real dominance of the Church over the apparently predominant State or to revolution.

“These are the real dangers hidden in the system of complete Church-State separation glorified by liberal thinkers. The system of the dominant or established Church has many defects, being linked with many inconveniences and difficulties, and does not exclude the possibility of conflicts and struggle. But in vain do they suppose that it has already outlived its time, and that Cavour’s formula alone gives the key to the resolution of all the difficulties of this most difficult of questions. Cavour’s formula is the fruit of political doctrinarism, which looks on questions of faith as merely political questions about the equalisation of rights. There is no depth of spiritual knowledge in it, as there was not in that other famous political formula: freedom, equality and brotherhood, which up to now have weighed as a fateful burden on credulous minds. In the one case as in the other, passionate advocates of freedom are mistaken in supposing that there is freedom in equality. Or is our bitter experience not sufficient to confirm the fact that freedom does not depend on equality, and that equality is by no means freedom? It would be the same error to suppose that the very freedom of belief consists in the levelling of the churches and faiths and depends on their levelling. The whole of recent history shows that here, too, freedom and equality are not the same thing.”65

65 Pobedonostsev, op. cit., pp. 271-275, 276-277.
The Volga Famine

The various strands of socialist thinking had little influence in Russia during the reign of Alexander III. And it was not from bomb-throwing raznochintsy and peasants that the real threat to the regime came – at this time. The real threat came, not from socialists, but from liberals, and not from the lower classes, but from the nobility who dominated local government.

Oliver Figes explains: “The power of the imperial government effectively stopped at the eighty-nine provincial capitals where the governors had their offices. Below that there was no real state administration to speak of. Neither the uezd or district town nor the volost or rural townships had any standing government officials. There was only a series of magistrates who would appear from time to time on some specific mission, usually to collect taxes or sort out a local conflict, and then disappear once again. The affairs of peasant Russia, where 85 per cent of the population lived, were entirely unknown to the city bureaucrats. ‘We knew as much about the Tula countryside,’ confessed Prince Lvov, leader of the Tula zemstvo in the 1890s, ‘as we knew about Central Africa.’

“The crucial weakness of the tsarist system was the under-government of the localities. This vital fact is all too often clouded by the revolutionaries’ mythic image of an all-powerful regime. Nothing could be further from the truth. For every 1,000 inhabitants of the Russian Empire there were only 4 state officials at the turn of the century, compared with 7.3 in England and Wales, 12.6 in Germany and 17.6 in France. The regular police, as opposed to the political branch, was extremely small by European standards. Russia’s expenditure on the police per capita of the population was less than half of that in Italy or France and less than one quarter of that in Prussia. For a rural population of 100 million people, Russia in 1900 had no more than 1,852 police sergeants and 6,874 police constables. The average constable was responsible for policing 50,000 people in dozens of settlements stretched across nearly 2000 square miles. Many of them did not even have a horse and cart. True, from 1903 the constables were aided by the peasant constables, some 40,000 of whom were appointed. But these were notoriously unreliable and, in any case, did very little to reduce the mounting burdens on the police. Without its own effective organs in the countryside, the central bureaucracy was assigning more and more tasks to the local police: not just the maintenance of law and order but also the collection of taxes, the implementation of government laws and military decrees, the enforcement of health and safety regulations, the inspection of public roads and buildings, the collection of statistics, and the general supervision of ‘public morals’ (e.g. making sure that the peasants washed their beards). The police, in short, were being used as a sort of catch-all executive organ. They were often the only agents of the state with whom the peasants ever came into contact.
“Russia’s general backwardness – its small tax-base and poor communications – largely accounts for this under-government. The legacy of serfdom also played a part. Until 1861 the serfs had been under the jurisdiction of their noble owners and, provided they paid their taxes, the state did not intervene in the relations between them. Only after the Emancipation – and then very slowly – did the tsarist government come round to the problem of how to extend its influence to its new ‘citizens’ in the villages and of how to shape a policy to help the development of peasant agriculture.

“Initially, in the 1860s, the regime left the affairs of the country districts in the hands of the local nobles. They dominated the zemstvo assemblies and accounted for nearly three-quarters of the provincial zemstvo boards. The noble assemblies and their elected marshals were left with broad administrative powers, especially at the district level (uezd) where they were virtually the only agents upon whom the tsarist regime could rely. Moreover, the new magistrates (mirovye posredniki) were given broad judicial powers, not unlike those of their predecessors under serfdom, including the right to flog the peasants for minor crimes and misdemeanours.

“It was logical for the tsarist regime to seek to base its power in the provinces on the landed nobility, its closest ally. But this was a dangerous strategy, and the danger grew as time went on. The landed nobility was in severe economic decline during the years of agricultural depression in the late nineteenth century, and was turning to the zemstvos to defend its local agrarian interests against the centralizing and industrializing bureaucracy of St. Petersburg. In the years leading up to 1905 this resistance was expressed in mainly liberal terms: it was seen as the defence of ‘provincial society’, a term which was now used for the first time and consciously broadened to include the interests of the peasantry. This liberal zemstvo movement culminated in the political demand for more autonomy for local government, for a national parliament and a constitution. Here was the start of the revolution: not in the socialist or labour movements but – as in France in the 1780s – in the aspirations of the regime’s oldest ally, the provincial nobility…”

The government’s lack of support at the local level was glaringly revealed during the Volga famine of summer, 1891, which was caused by severe frosts in the winter followed by drought in the spring. Covering an area twice the size of France, the famine together with the consequent cholera and typhus had killed half a million people by the end of 1892.

Unfortunately, the government made several blunders, and on November 17, while appointing the Tsarevich Nicholas as president of a special commission to provide help to the suffering, it was forced to appeal to the

public to form voluntary organizations. This decision was to have fateful consequences...

At the height of the crisis, in October, 1891, Elder Ambrose of Optina died; and with his passing it seemed as if the revolutionary forces, which had been restrained for a decade, came back to life. They were led now by a privileged noble, the writer Count Lev Tolstoy, whom St. Ambrose had called “very proud” and who now joined the relief campaign. Under his influence the lawful expression of compassion for the poor in response to the state’s appeal was turned into an unlawful attack on the very foundations of that state.

“With his two eldest daughters,” writes Figes, “he organized hundreds of canteens in the famine region, while Sonya, his wife, raised money from abroad. ‘I cannot describe in simple words the utter destitution and suffering of these people,’ he wrote to her at the end of October 1891. According to the peasant Sergei Semenov, who was a follower of Tolstoy and who joined him in his relief campaign, the great writer was so overcome by the experience of the peasants’ sufferings that his beard went grey, his hair became thinner and he lost a great deal of weight. The guilt-ridden Count blamed the famine crisis on the social order, the Orthodox Church and the government. ‘Everything has happened because of our own sin,’ he wrote to a friend in December. ‘We have cut ourselves off from our own brothers, and there is only one remedy – by repentance, by changing our lives, and by destroying the walls between us and the people.’ Tolstoy broadened his condemnation of social inequality in his essay ‘The Kingdom of God’ (1892) and in the press. His message struck a deep chord in the moral conscience of the liberal public, plagued as they were by feelings of guilt on account of their privilege and alienation from the peasantry. Semenov captured this sense of shame when he wrote of the relief campaign: ‘With every day the need and misery of the peasants grew. The scenes of starvation were deeply distressing, and it was all the more disturbing to see that amidst all this suffering and death there were sprawling estates, beautiful and well-furnished manors, and that the grand old life of the squires, with its jolly hunts and balls, its banquets and its concerts, carried on as usual.’ For the guilt-ridden liberal public, serving ‘the people’ through the relief campaign was a means of paying off their ‘debt’ to them. And they now turned to Tolstoy as their moral leader and their champion against the sins of the old regime. His condemnation of the government turned him into a public hero, a man of integrity whose word could be trusted as the truth on a subject which the regime had tried so hard to conceal.

“Russian society had been activated and politicized by the famine crisis, its social conscience had been stung, and the old bureaucratic system had been discredited. Public mistrust of the government did not diminish once the crisis had passed, but strengthened as the representatives of civil society continued to press for a greater role in the administration of the nation’s affairs. The famine, it was said, had proved the culpability and incompetence
of the old regime, and there was now a growing expectation that wider circles of society would have to be drawn into its work if another catastrophe was to be avoided. The zemstvos, which had spent the past decade battling to expand their activities in the face of growing bureaucratic opposition, were now strengthened by widespread support from the liberal public for their work in agronomy, public health and education. The liberal Moscow merchants and industrialists, who had rallied behind the relief campaign, now began to question the government’s policies of industrialization, which seemed so ruinous for the peasantry, the main buyers of their manufactures. From the middle of the 1890s they too supported the various projects of the zemstvos and municipal bodies to revive the rural economy. Physicians, teachers and engineers, who had all been forced to organize themselves as a result of their involvement in the relief campaign, now began to demand more professional autonomy and influence over public policy; and when they failed to make any advances they began to campaign for political reforms. In the press, in the ‘thick journals’, in the universities, and in learned and philanthropic societies, the debates on the causes of the famine – and on reforms needed to prevent its recurrence – continued to rage throughout the 1890s, long after the immediate crisis had passed.

“The socialist opposition, which had been largely dormant in the 1880s, sprang back into life with a renewed vigour as a result of these debates. There was a revival of the Populist movement (later rechristened Neo-Populism), culminating in 1901 with the establishment of the Socialist Revolutionary Party. Under the leadership of Viktor Chernov (1873-1952), a law graduate from Moscow University who had been imprisoned in the Peter and Paul Fortress for his role in the student movement, it embraced the new Marxist sociology whilst still adhering to the Populist belief that all the workers and peasants alike - what it called the ‘labouring people’ - were united by their poverty and their opposition to the regime. Briefly, then, in the wake of the famine, there was growing unity between the Marxists and the Neo-Populists as they put aside their differences about the development of capitalism (which the SRs now accepted as a fact) and concentrated on the democratic struggle...

“Marxism as a social science was fast becoming the national creed: it alone seemed to explain the causes of the famine. Universities and learned societies were swept along by the new intellectual fashion. Even such well-established institutions as the Free Economic Society fell under the influence of the Marxists, who produced libraries of social statistics, dressed up as studies of the causes of the great starvation, to prove the truth of Marx’s economic laws. Socialists who had previously wavered in their Marxism were now completely converted in the wake of the famine crisis, when, it seemed to them, there was no more hope in the Populist faith in the peasantry. Petr Struve (1870-1944), who had previously thought of himself as a political liberal, found his Marxist passions stirred by the crisis: it ‘made much more of
a Marxist out of me than the reading of Marx’s *Capital*. Martov also recalled how the crisis had turned him into a Marxist: ‘It suddenly became clear to me how superficial and groundless the whole of my revolutionism had been until then, and how my subjective political romanticism was dwarfed before the philosophical and sociological heights of Marxism.’ Even the young Lenin only became converted to the Marxist mainstream in the wake of the famine crisis.

“In short, the whole of society had been politicized and radicalized as a result of the famine crisis. The conflict between the population and the regime had been set in motion…”

**Tsar Nicholas II**

When he succeeded to the throne on the death of his father in 1894, Tsar Nicholas II became the ruler of the largest and most variegated empire in world history. Extending from the Baltic Sea to the Pacific Ocean, from the Arctic tundra to the sands of Central Asia, it included within its borders a great number of races and religions. It had the largest army in the world and perhaps the fastest-growing economy. And its influence extended well beyond its borders. The Orthodox Christians of Eastern Europe and the Middle East looked to it for protection, as did the Orthodox missions in Persia, China, Japan, Alaska and the United States.

Since Tsar Nicholas has probably been more slandered and misunderstood than any ruler in history, it is necessary to begin with a characterization of him. “Nicholas Alexandrovich,” writes Archpriest Lev Lebedev, “was born on May 6/19, 1868 on the day of the memorial of Job the Much-Suffering. Later he used to say that it was not by chance that his reign and his suffering would become much-suffering. In complete accordance with the will of his father, Nicholas Alexandrovich grew up ‘as a normal, healthy Russian person’… From childhood he was able first of all ‘to pray well to God’. His biographer would unanimously note that faith in God was the living condition of his soul. He did not make a single important decision without fervent prayer! At the same time, being a young man and not yet Tsar, Nicholas Alexandrovich externally lived in the same way that almost all worldly young people of his time and his level of education. He loved sport, games, military activities, and acquired a fashionable for that time habit of smoking. He had an affair with the ballerina Ksheshinskaya – which, however, he decisively cut short after an open and firm explanation with his father. He read a great deal, both spiritual and scientific and artistic literature (he loved L. Tolstoy’s *War and Peace*), he loved amateur dramatics and various ‘shows’ in the circle of his family and friends, he was keen on amusing tricks. But all this was to a degree, without extremes, and never going to the service of the passions. He had a strong will, and with the help of God and his parents he was able to control and rule

---

himself. In sum, he preserved a wonderful clarity, integrity and purity of soul. The direct gaze of his deep, grey-blue eyes, which often flashed with welcoming humour, penetrated into the very soul of his interlocutors, completely captivating people who had not yet lost the good, but he was unendurable for the evil. Later, when his relations with the Tsar were already hostile, Count S.Yu. Witte wrote: ‘I have never met a more educated person in my life than the presently reigning Emperor Nicholas II’. Nicholas Alexandrovich was distinguished by a noble combination of a feeling of dignity with meekness (at times even shyness), extreme delicacy and attentiveness in talking with people. He was sincerely and unhypocritically *simple* in his relations with everybody, from the courtier to the peasant. He was organically repelled by any self-advertisement, loud phrases or put-on poses. He could not endure artificiality, theatricality and the desire ‘to make an impression’. He never considered it possible for him to show to any but the very closest people his experiences, sorrows and griefs. It was not cunning, calculated concealment, but precisely humility and the loftiest feeling of personal responsibility before God for his decisions and acts that led him to share his thoughts with almost nobody until they had matured to a point close to decision. Moreover, like his father, he put these decisions into effect in a quiet, unnoticed manner, through his ministers and courtiers, so that it seemed as if they were not his decisions... Later only his wife, Tsarina Alexandra Fyodorovna, knew the hidden life of his soul, knew him to the end. But for others, and especially for ‘society’, Nicholas Alexandrovich, like his crown-bearing forbear, Alexander I, was and remained an *enigma*, ‘a sphinx’. It would not have been difficult to decipher this enigma if there had been the desire, if people had looked at his deeds and judged him from them. But ‘educated’ society did not have this desire (there is almost none even now!). However, there was a great desire to represent him as ‘the all-Russian despot’, ‘the tyrant’ in the most unflattering light. And so sometimes spontaneously, at other times *deliberately*, a slanderous, completely distorted image of Tsar Nicholas II was created, in which by no means the least important place was occupied by malicious talk of the ‘weakness’ of his will, his submission to influences, his ‘limitations’, ‘greyness’, etc. One could test the Russian intelligentsia, as if by litmus paper, by their attitude to the personality of Nicholas Alexandrovich. And the testing almost always confirmed the already clearly established truth that in the whole world it was impossible to find a more despicable ‘cultural intelligentsia’ in its poverty and primitiveness than the Russian!... However, the personality of Nicholas II was not badly seen and understood by those representatives of the West who were *duty-bound* to understand it! The German chargé in Russia, Count Rechs, reported to his government in 1893: ‘... I consider Emperor Nicholas to be a spiritually gifted man, with a noble turn of mind, circumspect and tactful. His manners are so meek, and he displays so little *external* decisiveness, that one could easily come to the conclusion that he does not have a strong will, but the people around him assure me that he has a very definite will, which he is able to effect in life in the *quietest* manner.’ The report was accurate. Later the
West would more than once become convinced that the Tsar had an exceptionally strong will. President Emile Lubet of France witnessed in 1910: ‘They say about the Russian Tsar that he is accessible to various influences. This is profoundly untrue. The Russian Emperor himself puts his ideas into effect. His plans are maturely conceived and thoroughly worked out. He works unceasingly on their realization.’ Winston Churchill, who knew what he was talking about when it came to rulers, had a very high opinion of the statesmanship abilities of Nicholas II. The Tsar received a very broad higher juridical and military education. His teachers were outstanding university professors, including... C.P. Pobedonostsev and the most eminent generals of the Russian army. Nicholas Alexandrovich took systematic part in State affairs, and was president of various committees (including the Great Siberian railway), sitting in the State Council and the Committee of Ministers. He spoke English, French and German fluently. He had an adequate knowledge of Orthodox theology...

In an age when family life, especially among the nobility, was being undermined, the family of Tsar Nicholas presented an icon, as it were, of what Christian family life should be. Love, obedience and humility were at the root of all their relations. It was fitting, therefore, that the family as a whole should receive the crown of martyrdom in 1918...

The Tsar was unparalleled in Russian history for his mercifulness. He pardoned criminals, even revolutionaries, and gave away vast quantities of his own land and money to alleviate the plight of the peasants. It is believed that he gave away the last of his personal wealth during the Great War, to support the war effort. Even as a child he often wore patched clothing while spending his personal allowance to help poor students to pay for their tuition.

The reign of the meek and gentle Tsar Nicholas II gave an unparalleled opportunity to tens of millions of people both within and outside the Russian empire to come to a knowledge of the truth and be saved. Moreover, the strength of the Russian Empire protected and sustained Orthodoxy in other parts of the world, such as the Balkans and the Middle East. The Tsar considered it his sacred duty to restore to Russia her ancient traditional culture, which had been abandoned by many of the "educated" classes in favour of modern, Western styles. He encouraged the building of churches and the painting of icons in the traditional Byzantine and Old Russian styles. In the words of Archpriest Michael Polsky, "In the person of the Emperor Nicholas II the believers had the best and most worthy representative of the Church, truly 'The Most Pious' as he was referred to in church services. He was a true patron of the Church, and a solicitor of all her blessings."

---

During the reign of Nicholas II, the Church reached her fullest development and power. “By the outbreak of revolution in 1917... it had between 115 and 125 million adherents (about 70 per cent of the population), around 120,000 priests, deacons and other clergy, 130 bishops, 78,000 churches [up by 10,000], 1,253 monasteries [up by 250], 57 seminaries and four ecclesiastical academies.”

Old churches were renovated, and new ones built. The Emperor himself took part in the laying of the first cornerstones and the consecration of many churches. He visited churches and monasteries in all parts of the country, venerating their saints. Moreover, he took a very active part in the glorification of new ones, sometimes urging on an unwilling Holy Synod. Among those glorified during his reign were: St. Theodosius of Chernigov (in 1896), St. Isidore of Yuriev (1897), St. Seraphim of Sarov (1903), St. Euphrosyne of Polotsk (1909), St. Anna of Kashin (1910), St. Joasaph of Belgorod (1911), St. Hermogenes of Moscow (1913), St. Pitirim of Tambov (1914), St. John (Maximovich) of Tobolsk (1916) and St. Paul of Tobolsk (1917).

The Tsar stressed the importance of educating the peasant children within the framework of church and parish and, as a result, the number of parish schools, which were more popular among the peasants than the state, zemstvo schools, grew to 37,000. Moreover, Christian literature flourished; excellent journals were published, such as Soul-Profiting Reading, Soul-Profiting Converser, The Wanderer, The Rudder, The Russian Monk, The Trinity Leaflets and the ever-popular Russian Pilgrim. The Russian people were surrounded by spiritual nourishment as never before.

Nor did the Emperor neglect the material condition of his people. Under his leadership Russia made vast strides in economic development. He changed the passport system introduced by Peter I and thus facilitated the free movement of the people, including travel abroad. The poll tax was abolished and a voluntary programme of hospitalisation insurance was introduced, under which, for a payment of one rouble per year, a person was entitled to free hospitalisation. The parity of the rouble was increased greatly on the international markets. In 1897, a law was enacted to limit work hours; night work was forbidden for women and minors under seventeen years of age, and this at a time when the majority of the countries in the West had almost no labour legislation at all. As William Taft commented in 1913, “the Russian Emperor has enacted labour legislation which not a single democratic state could boast of”.

---

The young Tsar Nicholas was a peacemaker by nature, and early in his reign he suggested that all nations come together in order to cut their military forces and submit to general arbitration on international disputes. "The preservation of universal peace," he wrote, "and the reduction in weapons that weigh on all the peoples is, in the present situation, a goal to which the efforts of all governments should strive." Military expenses were an ever-increasing burden on the peoples, disrupting their prosperity. "Hundreds of millions are spent on the acquisition of terrible means of destruction which, while considered the last word in science today, must lose all value tomorrow in view of new inventions... Thus as the weapons of each state grow, they answer less and less to the goals put forward by governments."

As a result of the Tsar's proposal, the Hague Peace Conference was convened on May 18, 1899, and was attended by representatives of 26 nations. Several useful resolutions were passed.

"However," writes O.F. Soloviev, "at the very beginning Germany made clear her lack of desire even to consider the central question of disarmament, in spite of the intentions of the other participants. Kaiser Wilhelm II made a sensational speech in Wiesbaden in which he declared that the best guarantee of peace was 'a sharpened sword'. Then, for the sake of consensus, the remaining delegates, at the suggestion of the Frenchman L. Bourgeois (1851-1926), a former president of the council of ministers and a Mason, limited themselves to accepting an evasive formula on the extreme desirability of 'limiting the military burdens which now weigh on the world for the sake of improving both the material and the moral prosperity of mankind'.

"After this the attention of delegates was concentrated on the third commission, which discussed problems of arbitration under the presidency of the same Bourgeois, with [one of the leaders of the Grand Orient of Belgium, Jacques] Decan as secretary. As a result of these efforts, which were supported by other governments, success was obtained in paralysing the attempts of the Germans completely to exclude the application of arbitration procedures in the regulation of conflicts. In the preamble to the convention on 'the peaceful resolution of international conflicts', which was unanimously accepted, it was noted that the conference had been convened on the initiative of 'the most august monarch', Nicholas II, whose thoughts it was necessary to strengthen by an agreement on the principles of right and justice, on which 'the security of states and the prosperity of peoples' rested. The first article of the first section 'On the Preservation of Universal Peace' made the following provision: 'With the aim of averting, if possible, the turning to force in the mutual relations between states, the signatory powers agree to apply all their efforts to guarantee a peaceful resolution of international disagreements.'... Decan in his report to the commission was apparently the first to use the term 'League of Nations' to apply to the union of state approving of similar documents. Later the term was more and more widely used long before the
creation, after the First World War, of an international organization of that name.  \textsuperscript{71}

The Hague Conference was probably the first – and last – time that the two great opposing ideological forces of Europe – Russian Orthodox Tsarism and Continental Freemasonry – worked together in a fruitful way. However, as was only to be expected, the two powers had quite different understandings of the ultimate uses of peace. We see this most clearly in their attitudes to the two European power blocs that were forming between the French and Russians, on the one hand, and the German and Austrians, on the other.

The French ruling circles were all in favour of the alliance with Russia, since the consuming passion of the French since the Franco-Prussian war of 1870 was the recovery of the former French territories of Alsace-Lorraine from Germany, and this was clearly impossible without the support of some major power such as Russia. However, the Grand Orient of France, whose influence on French politics was increasing all the time\textsuperscript{72}, saw things differently. Their main concern was to effect a reconciliation between the French and German centres of Continental Masonry, a task made more difficult by the nationalist passions on both sides.

“Evidence of this,” writes O.F. Soloviev, “is provided by articles in the secret GOF journal, \textit{L’Acacia}, which in many ways reflected the intentions of the leadership of the Great Lodge of France and the Great Orient of France. The main editor and author of the editorial articles, writing under the name ‘Hiram’, was the well-known journalist S. Limousène (1840-1909), who touched on the influence of Franco-German relations on world politics. This brother was simultaneously in the lodges of the three French ‘obediences’ and was in close contact with their leaders, which gave an additional weight to his utterances and thoughts.

“At the beginning of 1904 \textit{L’Acacia} published an article by Limousène entitled ‘The Question of Alsace-Lorraine. Germany, France, Russia and Masonry’, whose central thesis was that the reconciliation of the first two countries would have to come one day ‘because of the necessity of agreeing for the sake of joint resistance to the Russian invasion’, for the State structures of Russia and France were ‘socially incompatible’. In the words of the author, the French were sympathetic only to the representatives of the Russian ‘intelligentsia and revolutionaries’. Moreover, [the Russians] have, he said, a different mentality from ours, conditioned by life in ‘the conditions of the

\textsuperscript{71} O.F. Soloviev, \textit{Masonstvo v Mirovoj Politike XX Veka} (Masonry in the World Politics of the 20th Century), Moscow: Rosspen, 1998, pp. 33-34 (in Russian). In 1921, the American President, Warren Harding, officially acknowledged the Tsar’s noble efforts towards the limitation of armaments by way of binding agreements among the Powers.

\textsuperscript{72} Thus in 1901 Masons founded the Radical party and the party of the Radical Socialists (Soloviev, \textit{op.cit}, p. 38).
most terrible and despotic regime, which is without any intellectual culture and unusually corrupted'. Moreover, even the Russians who are close [to us] in spirit believe in the inevitability of revolution, which will engender still more serious excesses and internal struggle than the revolution in France in 1789. In the end reaction will gain the upper hand thanks to ‘the masses of muzhiks’ – after all, the village population of Russia is much more backward than the French at the end of the 18th century. The result will be the expansion of Russia into Western Europe. But so far France helps Russia materially in the capacity of a friend and ally, which has allowed Moscow to build strategic railways while modernizing her weapons. There followed leisurely reflections on the striving of Russia to realize ‘the dream of world hegemony that was cherished already by Peter I’.

“The objections that Nicholas II was a peace-loving person and the initiator of the Hague conference were declared to be unsustainable in view of Russia’s predatory politics in Manchuria, which ‘will unfailingly lead to war with Japan’. Besides, such a liberal monarch had destroyed representative institutions in Finland, although he had sworn to preserve them. He was also weak-willed and indecisive, like the executed French King Louis XVI. In a word, such an order was not only distinguished by despotism, but also disorganized the country. ‘The genuine politics of Western Europe would have to consist in the dividing up of this colossus as long as it has not yet become too strong. It would have to use a possible revolution in order to re-establish Poland as a defensive rampart for Europe, while the rest of Russia would have to be divided into three or four states. Balance of power politics will remain the only fitting politics in the given conditions until the rise of the United States of Europe, which France will assist.’ In conclusion, the article noted that sooner or later, and without fail, ‘France will have to be reconciled with Germany’.”

Fortunately for Russia, France was not reconciled with Germany. And in spite of an almost entirely Masonic French cabinet at the beginning of World War I, nationalist passions continued to keep not only the two governments at loggerheads, but even their Masonic institutions. In other respects, though, the article was remarkably farsighted, from the future dominance of Russia (albeit Soviet, not Tsarist Russia) to the importance of that quintessentially Masonic project, the United States of Europe. In one important respect, however, the article was quite wrong: in its estimate of the character of Tsar Nicholas II. He was neither weak-willed nor a war-monger nor a despot. But he was absolutely determined to uphold the traditional Orthodox world-view and bring it unharmed into the twentieth century. The Grand Orient knew that, and was determined to stop him. On the struggle between these two powers, Orthodox Tsarism and Continental Freemasonry, would depend the future of the world in the century to come...

73 Soloviev, op. cit., pp. 41-42.
However, “the greatest of the Tsars” (the words of Blessed Pasha of Sarov) was destined to reign at a time of spiritual decline, even apostasy. And as the new century dawned, apocalyptic signs multiplied. In 1900 Vladimir Soloviev had a vision of Christians fleeing into the caves to escape what he called “the collective Antichrist”, which he felt was coming soon to Russia. And in his *Three Conversations on the Antichrist* he saw the Antichrist uniting Orthodox, Catholics and Protestants into a single false church. He also foresaw the advance of the power of the Jews under “a deceptive mask behind which the abyss of evil is hiding”. The Judaic Antichrist was to gain power with the help of the Freemasons and a United Nations-type organization, the Comité permanent universel.\(^4\) These presentiments were to be fulfilled after the Russian revolution of 1917 with the arrival of Soviet power…

In general, therefore, the reign of Tsar Nicholas II could be described as the period of preparation for the coming of “the collective Antichrist”, Soviet power, a last chance for people to repent and come to God before the cataclysm came and swept them all – or almost all - away.

*The Lure of the East*

The two most important decisions of Russian foreign policy around the turn of the century were the alliance with France in 1894, and the turning towards the Far East. The former clearly strengthened both France and Russia against the most dynamic power in Europe, Germany, although it increased the risk of conflict with Germany insofar as it divided Europe into two systems of alliances. However, there was no direct threat to Germany in the Franco-Russian alliance because Russia’s second major foreign-policy decision, to expand in the Far East, showed that her priorities now lay as much in Asia as in Europe. Only in the Orthodox peoples of Eastern Europe did Russia have an important interest. But here tension had been considerably lowered by the agreement with Austria in 1897 to preserve the status quo in the Balkans.

As the Tsar remarked to the German Foreign Minister, von Bulow, in 1899: “There is no problem that finds the interests of Germany and Russia in conflict. There is only one area in which you must recognize Russian traditions and take care to respect them, and that is the Near East. You must not create the impression that you intend to oust Russia politically and economically from the East, to which we have been linked for centuries by numerous national and religious ties. Even if I myself handled these matters with somewhat more scepticism and indifference, I still would have to support Russia’s traditional interests in the East. In this regard I am unable to go against the heritage and aspirations of my people.”\(^5\)


\(^5\) Tsar Nicholas, in Lieven, *Nicholas II*, p. 94.
But why was Russia so interested in the Far East? There were two possibilities: economic imperialism on the western model, or the desire to bring Orthodox Christianity to the Eastern peoples.

Now Russia had been baptizing the Asiatic peoples within and beyond her frontiers for some centuries. And among the greatest achievements of the late Russian Empire were the missions of St. Macarius (Nevsky) of the Altai, St. Nicholas of Japan, and St. Innocent of Alaska. Nor was this ideal confined to churchmen. As Oliver Figes points out, Dostoevsky had spoken of Russia’s “civilizing mission in Asia”: “Inspired by the conquest of Central Asia, Dostoevsky, too, advanced the notion that Russia’s destiny was not in Europe, as had so long been supposed, but rather in the East. In 1881 he told the readers of his Writer’s Diary:

‘Russia is not only in Europe but in Asia as well... We must cast aside our servile fear that Europe will call us Asiatic barbarians and say that we are more Asian than European... This mistaken view of ourselves as exclusively Europeans and not Asians (and we have never ceased to be the latter)... has cost us very dearly over these two centuries, and we have paid for it by the loss of our spiritual independence... It is hard for us to turn away from our window on Europe; but it is a matter of our destiny... When we turn to Asia, with our new view of her, something of the same sort may happen to us as happened to Europe when America was discovered. With our push towards Asia we will have a renewed upsurge of spirit and strength... In Europe we were hangers-on and slaves [the words ‘slave’ and ‘Slav’ are etymologically identical], while in Asia we shall be the masters. In Europe we were Tatars, while in Asia we can be Europeans. Our mission, our civilizing mission in Asia will encourage our spirit and draw us on; the movement needs only to be started.’

This quotation is a perfect illustration of the Russians’ tendency to define their relations with the East in reaction to their self-esteem and status in the West. Dostoevsky was not actually arguing that Russia is an Asiatic culture; only that the Europeans thought of it as so. And likewise, his argument that Russia should embrace the East was not that it should seek to be an Asiatic force: but, on the contrary, that only in Asia could it find new energy to reassert its Europeanness. The root of Dostoevsky’s turning to the East was the bitter resentment which he, like many Russians, felt at the West’s betrayal of Russia’s Christian cause in the Crimean War, when France and Britain had sided with the Ottomans against Russia to defend their own imperial interests. In the only published very he ever wrote (and the qualities of ‘On the European Events of 1854’ are such that one can see why this was so) Dostoevsky portrayed the Crimean War as the ‘crucifixion of the Russian Christ’. But, as he warned the Western readers of his poem, Russia would
arise and, when she did so, she would turn toward the East in her providential mission to Christianize the world.

Unclear to you is her [Russia’s] predestination!  
The East – is hers! To her a million generations  
Untiringly stretch out their hands…  
And the resurrection of the ancient East  
By Russia (so God had commanded) is drawing near.”  

However, the strategy to penetrate the Far East initiated by the Minister of Finance Count Sergius Witte - a man of talent and energy but deeply distrusted by all conservatives  - was not of a spiritual nature. His philosophy was closer to that of General A.A. Kireev: “We, like any powerful nation, strive to expand our territory, our ‘legitimate’ moral, economic and political influence. This is in the order of things…”

“As the main architect of Russia’s industrialization,” writes Pipes, “[Witte] was eager to ensure foreign markets for her manufactured goods. In his judgement, the most promising export outlets lay in the Far East, notably China. Witte also believed that Russia could provide a major transit route for cargo and passengers from Western Europe to the Pacific, a potential role of which she had been deprived by the completion in 1869 of the Suez Canal. With these objectives in mind, he persuaded Alexander III to authorize a railway across the immense expanse of Siberia. The Trans-Siberian, begun in 1886, was to be the longest railroad in the world. [Tsar] Nicholas, who sympathized with the idea of Russia’s Far Eastern mission, endorsed and continued the undertaking. Russia’s ambitions in the Far East received warm encouragement from Kaiser Wilhelm II, who sought to divert her attention from the Balkans, where Austria, Germany’s principal ally, had her own designs.

“In the memoirs he wrote after retiring from public life, Witte claimed that while he had indeed supported a vigorous Russian policy in the Far East, he had in mind exclusively economic penetration, and that his plans were wrecked by irresponsible generals and politicians. This thesis, however, cannot be sustained in the light of the archival evidence that has surfaced since. Witte’s plans for economic penetration of the Far East were conceived in the spirit of imperialism of the age: it called for a strong military presence,

---

76 Figes, Natasha’s Dance, pp. 415-416.  
77 On October 13, 1901, N.V. Muraviev, the Minister of Justice said that Witte, “thanks to his wife Matilda, a pure-blooded Jewess, has concluded a close union with the Jews and is confusing Russia… In his hands are special organs of his secret police… He is preparing, if there were to be a change of reign, to take power into his own hands. He has… influence everywhere” (Gubanov, op. cit., p. 705).  
which was certain sooner or later to violate China’s sovereignty and come into conflict with the imperial ambitions of Japan…”

Witte succeeded in persuading the Tsar to his point of view. Thus “before 1904,” writes Dominic Lieven, “Nicholas’s priorities in terms of foreign policy were clear. Unlike Russians of so-called pan-Slav sympathy, he did not believe that his country’s manifest destiny lay in the Balkans, nor did he feel that Petersburg must necessarily support the Balkan Slavs just because they were people of the same race and religion. The Emperor was determined that, should the Ottoman Empire collapse, no other power must steal Constantinople, thereby barring Russia’s route out of the Black Sea and assuming a dominant position in Asia Minor. To avoid such a possibility in 1896-7 he was even willing to contemplate very dangerous military action. But, above all, Nicholas was intent on developing Russia’s position in Siberia and the Far East. Particularly after 1900, his personal imprint on Russia’s Far Eastern policy became very important.

“Many of the Emperor’s advisors were dismayed by the diversion of Russia’s resources and attention to the Far East. The Ministry of Finance resented the cost of building up the Pacific fleet. The Foreign Ministry feared that it would no longer be strong enough in Europe to balance between France and Germany. But it was above all the Minister of War, obsessed by the dangers of a conflict with Germany and Austria on the western front, who was most alarmed by Russia’s Far Eastern policy. Bemoaning the money and troops being lavished on Manchuria, Kuropatkin commented in 1900 that ‘never in the whole history of Russia has our western frontier been in such danger in the event of a European war as is true today.’ In January 1902 Kuropatkin repeated that ‘we have to return again to the West from the East’ since the situation in Europe was potentially very dangerous.

“Such arguments seem to have cut little ice with the imperial couple. In August 1903, for instance, the Empress told Kuropatkin that he was wrong to worry so much about Europe. The ‘yellow peril’ in the East was a real threat whereas no danger at present existed in the West. Nicholas believed that Russia’s future lay in Siberia and Asia. In this era most intelligent Europeans tended to see their country’s future greatness as dependent on the possession and development of large colonies. In this competition Russia had great advantages. Her empire, second only in size to Britain’s, was potentially immensely rich. It was also a single land mass and therefore far more defensible than a maritime empire scattered across the globe. The Russian population, already much larger than that of any other European state, was growing at tremendous speed… Certainly the Romanovs’ empire was multinational but in Nicholas II’s reign the Slav element was growing much more quickly than the Tsar’s Asian and Muslim subjects. Economic development was very rapid. The people’s initiative and creative energy had not been

stifled and crippled by the economic system... It was in Nicholas II’s reign that the British geographer Halford Mackinder began to expound his theory that domination of the Eurasian heartland was the key to future global supremacy. At the same time the famous Russian scholars Dmitri Mendeleev and V.P. Semyonov-Tyan-Shansky argued that Russia’s centre of gravity must and would shift to Asia. The geographer A.I. Voeykov stressed the vital future significance of the Pacific economy and its trade routes. Such voices were very much in a minority within the psychologically insecure Eurocentrism that dominated the Russian intelligentsia. It was, however, to Nicholas’s credit that he shared this Eurasian outlook and believed that time was working in its and Russia’s favour. It is only against this background of Nicholas II’s largely correct perception of this geopolitical trend that one can understand his long-term optimism about Russia’s future. Set against this majestic vision of Russia’s unique and powerful Eurasian destiny many of the complaints of Russian educated society and not a few of the country’s problems appeared to be relatively small and transitory difficulties in the Emperor’s eyes.

“It would, however, be naïve to think that the main reason why Russia’s attention shifted to the Far East between 1894 and 1904 was simply Nicholas II’s views on his country’s priorities. The background to Russia’s Far Eastern policy was the competition between the great powers to control territories, markets and raw materials across the whole globe. China was the biggest plum still hanging on the tree and, given the increasing decrepitude of the Manchu government, it seemed ripe to fall. There was therefore a strong incentive to reserve one’s place in the Far Eastern sun by snatching valuable Chinese provinces before one’s rivals cut one out. Securing railway concessions in desirable regions was the first step in this process. In this competition Russia had both advantages and difficulties. Because it bordered on China, once the Trans-Siberian railway [begun by Alexander III] was completed it was better placed geopolitically than any of its European rivals. On the other hand, the population of Siberia was less than one fifth that of Japan. Russia’s Pacific fleet was weak and her only port, Vladivostok, was ice-bound in winter and easily blockaded. Moreover, Russia’s industrial products were seldom able to compete in an open market with those of Europe and the USA. To corner part of the Chinese market Russia would probably have to discriminate against foreign competition by political means, which was bound to incur the wrath of the other powers.”\(^80\)

The Chinese were in a weak position. The British, the French and the Russians had all annexed Chinese territory in the nineteenth century. Moreover, in 1884-5 the French defeated the Chinese over Indo-China, and ten years later the Japanese defeated them after interventions in Taiwan, the Ryukyu islands and Korea.

\(^{80}\) Lieven, *op. cit.*, pp. 94-96.
The rise of Japan and her defeat of China, writes Diana Preston, "shocked the world and prompted the Kaiser to coin the expression ‘die Gelbe Gefahr’ – ‘the Yellow Peril’. The idea that an armed, ambitious Asia was turning its covetous gaze westward quickly took hold. In The Yellow Danger, a potboiler by M.P. Shiel published in London in 1898, the Chinese are portrayed as conspiring with Britain’s Continental enemies to break Britannia’s power in the Far East. Their real goal, however, is to forge a secret alliance between China and Japan to enable them to become masters of Europe and Asia. ‘What appalling fate would be that of Europe if the yellow races in their hundreds of millions organized a westward march is beyond the imagination of man to conceive,’ says one character. Nevertheless, the scenario is depicted for the reader. Screaming Chinese play ball with severed heads and limbs in the streets of Paris and ‘the Oriental’ indulges an almost natural penchant for cannibalism. ‘The low hedge that divides the yellow man from omnivorousness was in Europe found to be very low indeed – where the flesh of men is not yellow, but pink, like the new-born mouse. At the first spur of hunger, the hedge was leapt with an easy bound.’

“The Yellow Danger is peppered with phrases like ‘fiendish love of cruelty’ and ‘devilish cunning’ to describe the Oriental character. Exactly the same language is to be found in the letters and diaries of the foreigners trapped in Peking in 1900 and in articles in the international press. Raging against the supposed massacre in Peking, The Times warned of ‘a universal uprising of the yellow race’…

“Darwinism appeared to give respectability to anti-Chinese fears and prejudices. It encouraged Westerners to think of Orientals as less highly evolved and more prey to savage animal instincts. In 1897 the North China Herald had published an article entitled ‘Darwinism and China’. Citing the work of the Dutch scientist Eugene Dubois, who claimed to have discovered the ‘missing link’ in the shape of an ape-man in Java, the anonymous author argued that the Oriental was plainly less highly evolved than the European. Anyone who doubted this had only to walk down a street in China: ‘Many Chinese have retained vestigial control of the feet which Europeans have lost… Observations of barefooted coolies on a damp road will prove plainly enough that the inner part of the sole never touches the ground.’ He went on: ‘Man is never nearer to the beasts than when he is angry; when a Chinaman was enraged his ‘simian ancestry’ returned, transforming him into ‘a raging beast whose eyes glare, whose mouth foams with almost as poisonous a secretion as that of a mad dog… Watch him half bend himself downwards and then spring up with a jerk, gesticulating arm and twitching fingers hardly under control… the very picture of an enraged anthropoid ape.’”

---

China’s defeat at the hands of Japan prompted some Chinese to wonder whether the westernisation undertaken by that country was what China also needed. Thus K’ang Yu-wei, a Confucian reformer, submitted a 

Memorial to the Imperial Throne in 1898, saying: “A survey of all states in the world will show that those states which undertook reform became strong while those states which clung to the past perished. The consequences of clinging to the past and the effects of opening up new ways are thus obvious. If Your Majesty, with Your discerning brilliance, observes the trends in other countries, you will see that if we can change, we can preserve ourselves, but if we cannot change, we shall perish.”

Meanwhile, Russia’s relations with Japan were deteriorating. “The first step towards confrontation with Japan,” writes Lieven, “came in 1895. In the peace treaty that followed its victory over the Chinese, Tokyo secured, amongst other possessions, the naval base of Port Arthur and control over southern Manchuria. Russia masterminded a coalition with Germany and France to force the Japanese to give up these gains. It also helped the Chinese to pay off their war indemnity. As a reward, in the autumn of 1896 Petersburg won from the Chinese the right to link Vladivostok to the Trans-Siberian railway which it was building by a short cut across northern Manchuria.

“The scheme was Witte’s and it possessed clear advantages. The Manchurian route was easier and cheaper to build than a line across Russian territory. It also opened up the prospect of Russian domination of Manchuria, which was potentially a very rich province. By forestalling foreign competitors and dominating northern Chinese markets Witte hoped to recoup many of the costs of building the Trans-Siberian railway. With Nicholas II’s support, he imposed his policy despite the doubts of some other Russian ministries. These doubts were well justified. It was extremely dangerous to place hundred of miles of Russia’s main line of communication to the East in a foreign and turbulent province. Witte’s hope of wringing back quick profits out of Manchuria were always fanciful, whereas the financial and political costs of defending his railway soon proved to be exorbitant. Moreover, by travelling across foreign territory the railway partly sacrificed one of its main objectives, namely the encouragement of colonization in Russia’s Far Eastern provinces.”

Moreover, the agreement with China to build the railroad across Manchuria had been achieved through some double-dealing on the part of Witte. “He obtained China’s consent with bribes given to the Chinese statesman Li Hung-chang and the promise of a defensive alliance. An agreement to this effect was signed in June 1896 during Li Hung-chang’s visit to Moscow to attend the coronation of Nicholas II. The signatories pledged mutual help in the event of an attack on either of them or on Korea. China

83 Lieven, op. cit., pp. 96-97.
allowed Russia to construct a line to Vladivostok across Manchuria, on the understanding that her sovereignty in that province would be respected.

“Russia immediately violated the terms of the treaty by introducing numerous police and military units into Manchuria and establishing in Kharbin a quasi-independent base of operations...”

Very soon the Russo-Chinese alliance was tested. “In November 1897 the Germans occupied the Chinese port of Kiaochow. The Russian Foreign Minister, M.N. Muravyov, believed that the British were likely to take Port Arthur in response. He therefore advocated that Russia should move into Port Arthur first. At a meeting on 26 November chaired by the Emperor, both the Minister of Finance and the Naval Minister opposed the seizure of Port Arthur, the latter on the grounds that a Korean port would be far more suitable for the navy’s needs. Perhaps for this reason Nicholas concurred with the majority view not to take Port Arthur, despite his personal view that it was vital for Russia to have a warm-water port in the Far East. Two weeks later, however, after private conversations with Muravyov, Nicholas changed his mind, a pattern of behaviour which drove his ministers to despair. In March 1898, under heavy pressure, the Chinese agreed to lease Port Arthur and its hinterland to Russia. In compensation for German and Russian gains the British took the port of Weihaiwei. The Japanese therefore had the mortification of seeing Russia ensconced in a port from which Tokyo had been evicted only three years ago amidst pious claims that the European powers were acting to protect China’s territorial integrity.”

The Europeans were scrambling for Chinese territory because they believed that China was about to collapse. The British “Open Door” principle, urged on the other great powers by the American secretary of state, had in effect made China a western colony. True, the defeat at the hands of Japan had led to a brief attempt to reform on western lines; but this failed. This

---

84 Pipes, op. cit., p. 13.
85 Lieven, op. cit., pp. 96-97.
87 “A few Chinese intellectuals and civil servants had founded in the 1890s a society for the study of ‘self-strengthening’ to consider Western ideas and inventions that might be helpful. Its leaders pointed to the example of Peter the Great of Russia as a modernizer and, more significantly, to what was then going on in Japan. Yet even these would-be reformers still sought to root change in Confucian tradition, albeit one purified and invigorated. Members of the gentry administrative class, they sought to work within the traditional framework and machinery of power to bring about reform and technological innovation without compromising the fundamentals of Chinese culture and ideology. Unfortunately, this meant that what came to be known as the ‘Hundred Days of Reform’ of 1898 was almost at once entangled in court politics. Reform edicts were swiftly overtaken by a coup d’état by the
failure, and the sometimes overbearing attitude of Christian missionaries and their Chinese converts, led to the building up of pressure within the country.

There were also political and economic pressures. In 1898 the Yellow River flooded, destroying 1,500 villages. There were also plagues of locusts and drought. These disasters were exploited by the Boxers, who were secretly supported by the Dowager Empress Tzu Hsi. Their symbol was the raised fist, hence their name. 88 They blamed the disasters on foreigners and the Christianity they had imported, which, they said, was angering the gods. The main objects of Boxer wrath were missionaries and railways, since these were both obviously foreign imports. 89 The Boxer rebellion was the last rebellion of the old, pagan world against the onslaught of western (including Russian) imperialism. And for the first time the European powers (including the Russians) joined forces under a German commander to suppress it and demand a large indemnity from the Chinese.

Superficially, this looked like the triumph of a united Christian Europe against the last and greatest pagan power in the world. 90 But the reality was very different. In 1901, as a direct result of her humiliating defeat at the hands of the foreigners, the Dowager Empress was forced to introduce the modernizing reforms she had rejected before. However, the dynasty was not prepared to surrender power to the reformers. So in 1911 an army revolt at Wu-ch’ang in 1911 spread through China, deposed the last emperor, Pu Yi, and brought the over 2000-year-old empire to an end. On January 1, 1912, the leader of the revolt, Sun Yat-sen, was proclaimed temporary president. But in 1949 a communist republic was proclaimed, and now, a century after the Boxer Uprising, China threatens western political and economic hegemony as never before…

88 Frances Wood writes: “Though the origins of Boxer belief and their ambitions remain unclear, it was evident from the beginning that anti-foreignism was a major component. Contemporary Chinese who opposed the movement referred to its adherents as quanfei or ‘boxing bandits’. More formally, they were known as the Yihetuan or ‘Militia united in righteousness’. Foreigners simply called them ‘Boxers’. The ‘boxing’ arose from their practice of a form of martial art which was supposed to ensure spiritual protection: ‘When you’ve reached the field of battle, as soon as the gods have entered your bodies you’ll go up to heaven, and the devils [foreigners] will have no way to attack you,’ bellowed one commander at his followers” (No Dogs and Not Many Chinese, London: John Murry, 1998, p. 159).

89 “Whilst the Taiping rebellion of the mid-nineteenth century had been viewed almost as a spectator sport by many foreign residents in China, the Boxer rebellion terrified all foreigners in China, caused the death of several hundred missionaries (and many thousand Chinese Christians)” (Wood, op. cit., p. 159).

90 J.M. Roberts calls it “the only instance in history of a combined, if reluctant, military effort by all the great powers of the day..., which... led to a declaration in June 1900 by the Chinese government that it was at war with the entire world”. (op. cit., p. 61).
As for Russia, immediately after the Boxer Uprising, she poured troops into Manchuria “to protect Witte’s precious railway. Once in possession of Manchuria Petersburg was disinclined to retreat, at least until absolute security could be guaranteed to its railway and the Chinese would concede Russia’s economic domination of the province. This Peking was unwilling to do. Its stand was strongly backed by Britain, the USA and Japan, all of which demanded free access for foreign trade to Manchuria. The signatories of the Anglo-Japanese alliance, clearly directed against Russia, in January 1902 further stiffened Chinese resolve.”

And so Russia entered the twentieth century dangerously isolated in the Far East. Moreover, a related event had undermined her moral standing. During the Boxer rebellion, certain Russian military commanders in Blagoveschensk on the Amur had driven some thousands of Chinese out of the city and into the river. This showed that Russia had begun to be infected by the racist and imperialist spirit of the pseudo-Christian West.

She would bear her punishment for it in the Russo-Japanese war only a few years later.

This was indicated by Bishop Anthony (Khrapovitsky), who “was profoundly saddened by this event and foretold that it was precisely there, in the Far East, that we were bound to await the special punishment of God. The text of this prophecy has unfortunately not been found, but Vladyka Anthony himself spoke about it in his sermon before the service at the conclusion of peace with Japan [in 1905]. Pointing to the fact that the unsuccessful war with Japan was God’s punishment for the apostasy of Russian society from the age-old foundations of Russian life, Vladyka Anthony said: ‘... I will speak about the fact that it is not only the traitors of the fatherland that are guilty before God, I will say what I said five years ago, when I foretold that it would be precisely there, in the Far East, that we had to expect a particular punishment of God. But I will speak not with evil joy, as do our enemies, but with sadness and with shame, as a Christian and a Russian priest. In Blagoveschensk, on the Amur, five years ago, we permitted a cruel action to take place. Several thousand Chinese, who were in service to Russian citizens, for the general security of the latter, were deceitfully led out of the city and forced into the river, where they found inescapable death... It was not for this that the Lord opened up before us the confines of the Far East, from the Volga to the sea of Okhotsk, so that we amazed the foreigners by our heartlessness. On the contrary, it is there, in the East, and not in the West, that lies the missionary and even messianic calling of our people. Russians did not want to understand this calling – not simple people, of course, but people who consider themselves enlightened, who, following the example of their western enlighteners, would not allow themselves the slightest rudeness in relation to any European rascal, but do not consider humble, straightforward and

---

91 Lieven, op. cit., p. 97.
industrious inhabitants of the East even to be people. We were bound to reveal to them Christ, we were bound to show them the Russian breadth of spirit, Russian love of man, Russian trustingness, but we showed them only animal self-preservation that does not stop before anything. This is our first guilt, for God even in the Old Testament imputed the sinful fall of a people’s military commanders to the whole people.”

But this does not exhaust the spiritual significance of events in the Far East at the turn of the century. During the Boxer rebellion 222 Chinese Orthodox from the Russian Spiritual Mission in Peking – the first saints of the twentieth century – were martyred. To some, the preaching of the Gospel in the greatest and most inaccessible of the pagan empires, China, and its first-fruits in the form of the Chinese martyrs, indicated that the end was coming, in fulfillment of the Lord’s words: “This Gospel of the Kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, and then the end will come (Matthew 24.14)…”

Students, Workers and Priests

“If,” writes Richard Pipes, “one wishes to identify events that not merely foreshadowed 1917 but led directly to it, then the choice has to fall on the disorders that broke out at Russian universities in February, 1899. Although they were soon quelled by the usual combination of concessions and repression, these disorders set in motion a movement of protest against the autocracy that did not abate until the revolutionary upheaval of 1905-6. This First Revolution was also eventually crushed but at a price of major political concessions that fatally weakened the Russian monarchy. To the extent that historical events have a beginning, the beginning of the Russian Revolution may well have been the general university strike of February 1899.”

We may doubt that “the beginning of sorrows” truly began with the university strike. Nevertheless it was the beginning of disorder, the beginning of a wave of riots and assassinations. And it is significant that this disorder should have begun with those who had not yet completed their education and had not yet received the wisdom that experience of life gives. There is much in the revolution that resembles the rebellion of an adolescent against his parents. In a healthy society such a rebellion is frowned upon and checked; for it overturns the normal order. The tragedy of these years was that the elders followed the younger, not daring to seem “behind the times”, to resist “progress”. The result was a terrible regression, the destruction of civilization and the ascendancy of barbarism.

---

94 Pipes, op. cit., p. 4.
“Henceforth, Russian institutions of higher learning became the fulcrum of political opposition. Viacheslav Plehve, the arch-conservative director of the Police Department, was of the opinion that ‘almost all the regicides and a very large number of those involved in political crimes’ were students. According to Prince E.N. Trubetskoi, a liberal academic, the universities now became thoroughly politicized: students increasingly lost interest in academic rights and freedoms, caring only for politics, which made normal academic life impossible. Writing in 1906, he described the university strikes of 1899 as the beginning of the ‘general crisis of the state’…”

Plehve was particularly associated, as Pipes writes, with “a unique experiment in police-operated trade unions, known as ‘Zubatovschshina’, after S.V. Zubatov, the chief of the Moscow political police (Okhrana). It was a bold attempt to remove Russian workers from the influence of revolutionaries by satisfying their economic demands. Russian workers had been stirring since the 1880s. The nascent labour movement was apolitical, confining its demands to improvements in working conditions, wages, and other typically trade-unionist issues. But because in Russia of that time any organized labor activity was illegal, the most innocuous actions (such as the formation of mutual aid or educational circles) automatically acquired a political and, therefore, seditious connotation. This fact was exploited by radical intellectuals who developed in the 1890s the ‘agitational’ technique which called for inciting workers to economic strikes in the expectation that the inevitable police repression would drive them into politics.

“Zubatov was a onetime revolutionary who had turned into a staunch monarchist. Working under Plehve, he had mastered the technique of psychologically ‘working over’ revolutionary youths to induce them to cooperate with the authorities. In the process he learned a great deal about worker grievances and concluded that they were politically harmless and acquired a political character only because existing laws treated them as illegal. He thought it absurd for the government to play into the hands of revolutionaries by transforming the workers’ legitimate economic aspirations into political crimes. In 1898, he presented a memoir to the police chief of St. Petersburg, D.F. Trepov, in which he argued that in order to frustrate radical agitators, workers had to be given lawful opportunities to improve their lot. Radical intellectuals posed no serious threat to the system unless they gained access to the masses, and that could be prevented by legitimizing the workers’ economic and cultural aspirations. He won over Trepov, and other influential officials, including Grand Duke Sergei Aleksandrovich, the ultrareactionary governor-general of Moscow, with whose help he began in 1900 to organize official trade unions. This innovation ran into opposition from those who feared that police-sponsored labor organizations not only would annoy and confuse the business community but in the event of industrial conflicts place the government in a most awkward position of having to support workers

---

95 Pipes, op. cit., pp. 6-8.
against their employers. Plehve himself was sceptical, but Zubatov enjoyed powerful backing of persons close to the Tsar. Great things were expected of his experiment. In August 1902, Zubatov was promoted to head the ‘Special Section’ of the Police Department, which placed him in charge of all the Okhrana offices. He expanded the Okhrana network beyond its original three locations (St. Petersburg, Moscow, and Warsaw) to the provincial towns, assigning it many functions previously exercised by other police groups. He required officials involved in political counterintelligence to be thoroughly familiar with the writings of the main socialist theoreticians as well as the history of European socialist parties.

“Zubatov’s scheme seemed vindicated by the eagerness with which workers joined the police-sponsored trade unions. In February 1903, Moscow witnessed the extraordinary spectacle of 50,000 workers marching in a procession headed by Grand Duke Sergei to the monument of Alexander II. Jewish workers in the Pale of Settlement, who suffered from a double handicap in trying to organize, flocked to Zubatov’s unions in considerable numbers.

“The experiment nearly came to grief, however, in the summer of 1903, following the outbreak in Odessa of a general strike. When Plehve ordered the police to quell the strike, the local police-sponsored trade union collapsed… The following month Plehve dismissed Zubatov, although he allowed some of his unions to continue and even authorized some new ones.

“Witte (Vospominania, II, Moscow, 1960, 218-10) says that in July 1903 Zubatov confided to him that Russia was in a revolutionary situation which could not be resolved by police measures. Zubatov also predicted Plehve’s assassination. This was betrayed to Plehve, who fired Zubatov and exiled him to the provinces. In March 1917, on learning of the Tsar’s abdication, he committed suicide…”

Now the largest section in the university student population were the sons of priests; and the strong representation of former seminarians and students from the priestly caste in the revolutionary movement was a striking, even apocalyptic phenomenon. Chernyshevsky, Dobroliubov and Nechaiev were early examples. Joseph Stalin was the most famous example of all…

In 1894 Stalin, as Alan Bullock writes, became “one of the 600 students at the Russian Orthodox theological seminary in Tiflis. The Tsarist authorities had refused to allow a university to be opened in the Caucasus, fearing that it would become a centre for nationalist and radical agitation. The Tiflis seminary served as a substitute, and was attended by many young men who had no intention of entering the priesthood…”

96 Pipes, op. cit., pp. 11-12 and note.
“... The official policy of Russification made the seminary a stronghold of Georgian nationalism. A student expelled for his anti-Russian attitude in 1886 had assassinated the Principal, and only a few months before Stalin’s admission a protest strike of all the Georgian pupils led to the seminary’s closure by the police and the expulsion of eight-seven students...

“... [Stalin’s] daughter Svetlana wrote after his death: ‘A church education was the only systematic education my father ever had. I am convinced that the seminary in which he spent more than ten years played an immense role, setting my father’s character for the rest of his life, strengthening and intensifying inborn traits.

“‘My father never had any feeling for religion. In a young man who had never for a moment believed in the life of the spirit or in God, endless prayers and enforced religious training could only produce contrary results... From his experiences at the seminary he came to the conclusion that men were intolerant, coarse, deceiving their flocks in order to hold them in obedience; that they intrigued, lied and as a rule possessed numerous faults and very few virtues.’

“One form which Stalin’s rebellion took was spending as much time as possible reading illicit books obtained from a lending library in the town and smuggled into the seminary. Besides Western literature in translation, and the Russian classics – also forbidden – Stalin became acquainted with radical and positivist ideas which he is said to have picked up from reading translations of Darwin, Comte and Marx, as well as Plekhanov, the first Russian Marxist.

“Growing discontented with the vague romantic ideals of Georgian nationalism, Stalin organized a socialist study circle with other students, including Iremashvili, and according to the latter soon began to show intolerance towards any member who disagreed with him. He found a natural attraction in the Marxist teaching of the inevitability of class war and the overthrow of an unjust and corrupt social order. The attraction was as much psychological as intellectual, appealing to the powerful but destructive emotions of hatred and resentment which were to prove so strong force in Stalin’s character, and offering a positive outlet for an ambition and abilities which would otherwise have been frustrated. As Robert Tucker wrote, the gospel of class war legitimized his resentment against authority: ‘it identified his enemies as history’s’.”

One member of Stalin’s group was Lado Ketshoveli, who was a ringleader in the revolt that led to the closing down of the seminary, founded the first underground Marxist press in Transcaucasia, and in 1902 was arrested and shot dead by guards after shouting from his cell window: “Down with the autocracy! Long live freedom! Long live socialism!” “To Stalin he still

remained, many years afterwards, the exemplar of a revolutionary fighter and
his influence no doubt helped to precipitate Stalin’s break with the seminary.
By his fifth year the school authorities regarded Stalin as a hardened
troublemaker, and he was expelled in May 1899 on the ground that ‘for
unknown reasons’ he failed to appear for the end-of-year examinations.
Iremashvili, who had accompanied him to the seminary, wrote later that he
took with him ‘a grim and bitter hatred against the school administration, the
bourgeoisie and everything in the country that represented Tsarism’.”

It is obviously dangerous to draw general conclusions about the nature of
seminary education from Stalin’s example alone. Nevertheless, the fact that so
many former seminarians, sons of priests and even priests joined the
revolution indicated that something was wrong in the Church. Could the
radicalism at the bottom of the hierarchy have been related to the liberalism at
the top? Could the lack of zeal of the leaders have influenced the followers to
look for certainty elsewhere? If so, then only a revival of zeal for the truth of
Christianity could quench the zeal for the falsehood of the revolution...

_Ferment in the Russian Church_

The traditional mainstays of Tsarist Russia had been the peasantry and the
Church. And the Church in turn gained much from the support of the State.
However, it was increasingly accepted that while the Church should be
supported by the State, she should not depend on it, financially and
administratively, to the degree imposed on her by Peter the Great’s _Spiritual
Regulation_, which had abolished the patriarchate and made the Church almost
a department of the State. Indeed, by the turn of the century it had become
almost an article of faith among the Church and near-Church intelligentsia
that Church-State relations needed a thorough overhaul in order to bring
them closer to the “symphonic” ideal inherited from Byzantium.

However, this movement was opposed by Pobedonostsev, who feared that
a reform of Church-State relations, even if desirable in itself from a canonical
point of view, might lead to Church-State _separation_ and the gradual
secularization of society. Sergei Firsov writes: “Pobedonostsev saw and
understood better than many that the demolishing of the Petrine Synodal
system in Russian conditions would not lead to the recreation of correct
mutual relations between the Church and the State, but would only
strengthen anti-government forces. To represent the Church and the kingdom
as existing in isolation from each other was psychologically impossible, while
any changes in the ecclesiastical structure could be understood by ‘the simple
people’ only as the abolition of the previous Church-State relationship
[because ‘for our peasant form is everything’]. It was not by chance that
Pobedonostsev, while talking with General A.A. Kireev about Church

---

problems and ‘about learning’, declared that what he feared above all was a new schism: ‘It’s fine for you, but where shall we go with our darkness, with the peasant. I fear a schism, that’s what I fear!’” It is not clear whether he meant a Church schism, or a schism between the peasants and the State. In either case, the events of 1905, when liberal reforms by the Tsar led to a wave of worker and peasant uprisings, showed that the old man had a point…

However, there was a contradiction in Pobedonostev’s position. On the one hand, he sincerely believed that the Church was the soul of the State and the People, and should be its teacher, corrector and inspirer. On the other hand, he acted as if he did not believe this, but rather that the Church should be tutored and disciplined by the State, and that he himself, as the representative of the State, should act as the task-master of the Church hierarchy…

Tsar Nicholas, with his deep love of pre-Petrine Russia, took a close interest in this question. He believed in giving the Church more freedom, and that freeing the Church from the dead hand of the State would ultimately be to the benefit of both Church and State. But, perhaps under the influence of his former tutor, Pobedonostsev, he acted cautiously.

Nevertheless, in 1901 he removed from the Basic Laws the phrase describing the Tsar as “Supreme Judge” of the Church. If political events had not intervened, it is likely that this would have been only the first step in a far-ranging reform of Church-State relations, bringing them back to true “symphony”…

The movement for Church reform first manifested itself publicly in 1901, when, somewhat reluctantly, Pobedonostsev allowed the convening of a series of religio-philosophical meetings between the “God-searching” intelligentsia and the clergy in St. Petersburg. These meetings - the idea of D.S. Merezhkovsky, V.V. Rozanov and a Synodal official, V.A. Ternavtsev - were an attempt to respond to a definite turning away of a part of the intelligentsia from sixties-style positivism to some kind of religion. Unfortunately, however, the conversion was, as often as not, not to Orthodoxy but to some vague kind of mysticism or theosophy. For Russia at that time was teeming with false teachers and prophets: revolutionaries such as Lenin and Trotsky, freethinkers and heretics such as the novelist Lev Tolstoy or the philosopher Vladimir Soloviev, theosophists such as Blavatsky and the “silver age” poets, and a huge army of masons, liberals, nihilists, anti-monarchists and ecumenists who were busy undermining the foundations of Church and State. Even when the intelligenty did convert to Orthodoxy, as when the philosophers Bulgakov, Berdiaev, Frank and Struve converted from Marxism, it was not to a pure, patristic Orthodoxy, as is proved by the “renovationist Orthodoxy” of Bulgakov and Berdiaev after the revolution.

99 Firsov, Russkaia Tserkov’ nakamune Peremen (konets 1890-x – 1918 gg.) (The Russian Church on the Eve of the Changes (end of the 1890s to 1918), Moscow, 2001, p. 47 ®.
Nevertheless, if these “God-seekers” were ever to acquire true Orthodoxy, they needed to encounter the Church in her more learned representatives. Hence the significance of the religio-philosophical meetings, which were chaired by a rising star of the Russian Church, Bishop Sergius (Stragorodsky).

“Sergius,” writes G.M. Soldatov, “was popular in circles waiting for the introduction of ‘democratic’ reforms in the State. In his sermons and speeches he criticized the relationship between the ecclesiastical and state authorities in the Russian Empire.”100 This would have been a risky subject to raise only ten years earlier; but times were changing rapidly, and Sergius, as his future career proved, was always sensitive to how the times were changing, and accommodated himself to them accordingly...

At the same time he did make a fair point in the eighth meeting, arguing that only if the State ceased to use the Church as a weapon would it become possible “to raise the question of freedom of conscience. Otherwise it will be only by virtue of indifferentism that the State can give freedom to the sects along with the Church”. But “Russian State power cannot be indifferent or atheism if it does not want to renounce itself”. In other words: if the State was truly the defender of Orthodoxy, as it claimed, it should free the Church from political tasks and bondage that were alien to her nature. Otherwise, freedom would simply help the sectarians and atheists to fight against the Church, while she remained unable to defend herself. Thus the questions of Church reform and freedom of conscience were inescapably linked...

It was not only liberals like Sergius who favoured Church reform. The former revolutionary-turned-monarchist L.A. Tikhomirov published an article arguing that the State should “give the Church independence and the possibility of being the kind of organization she must be in accordance with her own laws, while remaining in union with her”.101 The problem was that both conservatives and liberals could argue for Church reform, but for completely different motives. Tikhomirov wrote as one who had seen the revolution from within, and turned away from it with all his heart, acknowledging the only true defence against it to be the strengthening of Church consciousness among the people. The liberals, on the other hand, were motivated, not by a desire to see the Church free and therefore able to exert a more powerful influence on society, but rather the opposite: a desire to humble the State and destroy the Church’s influence once and for all. As for the liberal bishops such as Sergius, they leapt onto the bandwagon of the reform of Church-State relations, and of what later came to be called renovationism, in order to further their own careers...

100 Soldatov, “Tolstoj i Sergij: Iude Podobnie” (Tolstoy and Sergius: Images of Judas), Nasha Strana (Our Country), № 2786; Vernost’ (Fidelity), № 32, January 1/14, 2006 ®.
101 Tikhomirov, “Gosudarstvennost’ i religia” (Statehood and religion), Moskovskie Vedomosti (Moscow Gazette), March, 1903, p. 3; in Firsov, op. cit., p. 137.
Another liberal-renovationist cause that Bishop Sergius espoused during the religio-philosophical meetings was the supposed injustice of the novelist Tolstoy’s excommunication from the Church. Tolstoy was in essence a Protestant, who stood for a Christianity reduced to “pure” morality without the Church or the sacraments. He not only preached his own Gospel (according to his own translation published in Geneva), and created his own sect: he also subjected the teaching and the sacraments of the Orthodox Church to ridicule, as in his novel *Resurrection*. The Church anathematised him in February, 1901 in the following words: “In his writings Count Lev Tolstoy has blasphemed against the holy sacraments, denying their grace-filled character, has not venerated the Orthodox Church as his Church, has spoken evil of the clergy, has said that he considers that to venerate Christ and worship Him as God is blasphemy, while saying of himself, by contrast: ‘I am in God, and God in me’. It is not the Church that has rejected him, casting him off from herself, but he himself has rejected the Church: Lev himself has of his own will fallen away from the Church and is no longer a son of the Church, but is hostile to her. All attempts of the clergy to admonish the prodigal have failed to produce the desired fruits: in his pride he has considered himself cleverer than all, less fallible than all and the judge of all, and the Church has made a declaration about the falling away of Count Lev Tolstoy from the Russian Orthodox Church”.

I.L. Solonevich points out that for centuries the Russian Empire lived in the conditions of a military camp. Such conditions required obedience and discipline, but “this obedience and this discipline were not particularly sweet. In the last one hundred years Russia has experienced, so to speak, a permanent revolution. A permanent rebellion against the authorities and against discipline. This rebellion took the most various forms – from Pugachevschina to Tolstoyism. And if we take our greatest writer as an example, we can now, after our ‘great and bloodless’ [revolution of 1917], value his deeds more or less in accordance with their merits. The Tolstoyan rebellion did very much both for the undermining of the Russian monarchy (‘I cannot keep silent’) and for the undermining of Russian Orthodoxy (‘The Gospel of Tolstoy’) and for the undermining of the Russian family (‘The Kreutzer Sonata’), and even for the undermining of the Russian courts, which in *Resurrection* are portrayed as a talentless and feelingless machine – while the Russian courts were the most merciful and conscientious in the world.”

Tolstoy was opposed especially by the extraordinary priest St. John of Kronstadt, who demonstrated by his wonderful life abounding in good works.

---

102 Vladimir Gubanov (ed.), *Nikolai II-i i Novie Mucheniki* (Nicholas II and the New Martyrs), St. Petersburg, 2000, p. 701 ®.

and extraor dinary miracles, that Christianity “does not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God” (I Corinthians 2.5). He wrote of Tolstoy that he had “corrupted his moral personality to the point of deformity and mortification”, and that he had “made himself into a complete savage with regards to the faith and the Church, because of his lack of education in the faith and piety since his youth.” St. John appealed for help: “Holy warriors of the heavenly Church, take up arms, take up arms for the Church of God on earth. She, the beloved bride, is impoverished, she suffers from the savage attacks on her from the atheist Lev Tolstoy…” St. John especially bemoaned Tolstoy’s influence on youth: “Our intelligency youths have subverted the social and educational order, they have taken politics and the law-courts upon themselves without being called to do so by anyone; they have taken to judging their masters, their teachers, the government and all but kings themselves; together with their head, Lev Tolstoy, they have judged and condemned the universal and fearful Judge Himself… Verily, the day of the dread Judgement is near, for the deviation from God which was foretold has already occurred and the forerunner of the antichrist has already revealed himself, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped.”

Tolstoy was a forerunner of the antichrist in the precise sense of the word since he did not believe in the Divinity of Christ (I John 2.22, 4.3; II John 7). But Bishop Sergius, following the popular trend, defended him against the decision of his own Synod. Soldatov writes: “Sergius compared Lev Tolstoy to Julian the Apostate, whom, as he said, no council had condemned and who had not been excommunicated, but who was an apostate from Christianity. For that reason, he said, ‘it was not necessary to excommunicate Tolstoy, since he himself consciously left the Church’…” After the revolution, Bishop Sergius would become one of the leaders of the pro-communist “Living Church”, and then became the first “Soviet Church” patriarch …

St. John of Kronstadt, a fervent monarchist, was opposed not only to Tolstoy, but also to the whole “proto-renovationist” current in the Church led by Bishop Sergius. “These people,” he wrote, “are rejecting the Church, the sacraments, the authority of the clergy and they have even thought up a journal The New Way [which published reports on the religio-philosophical meetings in St. Petersburg]. This journal has undertaken to search for God, as if the Lord had not appeared to people and had not revealed the true way. They will find no other way than in Christ Jesus, our Lord. […] It is Satan who reveals all of these new ways and stupid people

105 Even some conservatives opposed the act. Thus the over-procurator Pobedonostsev opposed it on the grounds that it would give Tolstoy and Tolstoyism extra publicity. This was probably true – but not a sufficient reason for not excommunicating him.
106 Soldatov, op. cit.
who don’t understand what they are doing and are driving themselves and their nation to ruin by spreading their satanic ideas among the nation.”

Fr. John had great influence with the royal family, and the tsar visited him secretly... This influence was noted and feared by a new player in church and court circles – the false elder Gregory Rasputin. As Archbishop Theophan (Bystrov), at that time inspector of the St. Petersburg Theological Academy, witnessed to the Extraordinary Commission investigating the Royal Family in 1917: “Rasputin indicated with unusual skill that he had reservations [about Fr. John]... Rasputin... said of Fr. John of Kronstadt... that he was a saint but, like a child, lacked experience and judgement... As a result Fr. John’s influence at court began to wane…”

But Fr. John was supported by the better clergy, such as the future metropolitan and hieromartyr Joseph (Petrovykh), who wrote: “Lack of faith, impiety and all kinds of harmful tendencies are now pouring over Holy Rus’ in a still more swollen river. They were restrained by this powerful personality [St. John], who was put forward by the Providence of God to oppose the heretic Tolstoy.”

Again, the great missionary Fr. John Vostorgov contrasted the two as follows: “The one – a son and humble servant of the Church, the other – her embittered and very proud enemy and slanderer, excommunicated and removed from God’s people by the court of pure justice. And in truth: a future historian of Russian life will note – he cannot fail to note – ‘the signs of the times’, the two major personalities of the last 40-50 years that Russian society has lived through, the two prophets: the one – of the Lord, the other of Baal, the one – a servant of Christ, the other – of Antichrist, the one – a servant of spiritual edification, the other – a dark genius of denial and destruction: Father John of Kronstadt and Count Tolstoy…”

**Monasticism and Ecumenism**

Another arena of conflict between “rightist” church intelligentsy and “leftist” renovationists was *monasticism*. A movement to promote monasticism, not only within monastic walls, but also within the theological academies and seminaries, was led by Bishop Anthony (Khrapovitsky), rector of the Kazan Theological Academy. Many of his pupils were to occupy...

---


important posts after the revolution both inside and outside Russia. Bishop Anthony placed particular emphasis on pastoral theology in the system of higher theological education, and his devotion and love effected a gradual change in the system of education in the direction of a closer and more constant spiritual and moral intercourse between teachers and taught. Almost every day after supper he would arrange tea-parties with the students in his rooms. "On a long table," writes one of the participants, "there stood a samovar and ten to fifteen glasses, with sugar and jam. One of the students would pour out the tea. Over tea a conversation would begin and perplexities would be resolved. Sometimes quarrels would arise. But in general, there were all sorts of people present, and one could learn much."

Another important influence was Archbishop Theophan (Bystrov). As rector of the St. Petersburg Academy from 1909, Vladyka Theophan enlivened the religio-moral atmosphere in the academy and created a whole direction among the students, a kind of school of "Theophanites", as they were called. He tried to instill in the students a respect for the lofty authority of the Holy Fathers of the Church in everything that pertained to Church faith and piety. When replying to a question of a theological or moral character he tried to avoid speaking "from himself", but immediately went to the bookcase and found a precise answer to the question from the Holy Fathers. And yet this was by no means merely book knowledge: because of his ascetic life, he knew the truth of the teachings of the Fathers from his own experience. He would go to all the services, and often spend whole nights in prayer standing in his cell in front of the analog and the icons. He would even take service books with him on his travels, and read all the daily services. His very look inspired respect, and soon cases of amazing spiritual perspicacity revealed themselves. Never familiar, always correct and restrained in manner, but at the same time warm and attentive, he was a fierce enemy of all modernism and falsehood. If the conversation took a vulgar turn, he would immediately turn away, however distinguished his interlocutor. This caused him to have many enemies, but people also involuntarily respected him. Once the famous writer V.V. Rozanov spoke at length to him against monasticism. Vladyka Theophan did not reply with a single word. But his silence was effective, for at the end the writer simply said: "But perhaps you are right!"

The debate for and against monasticism also affected Moscow Theological Academy, where the proponents of monasticism, especially Archimandrite Nicon (Rozhdestvensky), the future Hieromartyr Archbishop of Vologda, and Archimandrite Joseph (Petrovykh), the future Hieromartyr Metropolitan of Petrograd, were opposed by several of the secular professors.

---

110 Monk Anthony (Chernov), Vie de Monseigneur Théophane, Archevêque de Poltava et de Pereiaslav (The Life of his Eminence Theophan, Archbishop of Poltava and Pereyaslav), Lavardac: Monastère Orthodoxe St. Michel, 1988 (in French)
“This polemic between the professors of the Academy and the steward of the Holy Trinity – St. Sergius Lavra, Archimandrite Nicon (Rozhdestvensky) began already in 1902 and unfolded on the pages of the journals Soul-Profiting Reading and The Theological Herald. The professors subjected monasticism in its contemporary form to sharp criticism and called on the monks to carry out in a practical way the commandment of love for one’s neighbour in the form of social service. Archimandrite Nicon defended the contemplative character of monasticism. The articles on both sides were quite sharp in character. In March, 1904 Metropolitan Vladimir of Moscow banned an article by the Academy Professor N.F. Kapterev, which was being prepared for the press as a reply to Archimandrite Nicon. On March 18 an extraordinary session of the Academy Council took place for this reason. The decision was taken to protest against the metropolitan’s ban. Archimandrite Joseph did not agree with this decision, supported the ban on the publication and expressed himself against N.F. Kapterev’s article because of its unbecoming and sharp attacks and even ‘the poison of barbs, mockeries and insults directed not only against opponents but also against monasticism itself, but very well concealed under an external mask of objective scholarship’.

“For his words Archimandrite Joseph was publicly and coarsely reproached by the offended N.F. Kapterev, after which he left the meeting. The scene made a bad impression on everyone, but Fr. Joseph was not spared – it was considered that he had received his due for his conceit and his speech against the professorial corporation and one of its most senior members. Professor I.V. Popov in a letter of April 16, 1904 wrote: ‘Joseph set off straight from the meeting to the elders at the skete. There he wept and wrote a petition for his retirement...’ At Pascha a deputation from the professors was received by Metropolitan Vladimir, who also summoned Archimandrite Joseph. In spite of the warm reception and long conversation with the professors, the ban was not removed, and Kapterev’s article was not printed.”

In 1909 Metropolitan Vladimir appointed one of Bishop Anthony’s pupils at Kazan, Archimandrite Theodore (Pozdeyevsky), as rector of the Moscow Academy, and then consecrated him as Bishop of Volokolamsk. Vladyka Theodore published a work, The Meaning of Christian Asceticism, which became a kind of manifesto of the “new wave” of monastics. And after the revolution Vladyka Theodore’s Danilov monastery in Moscow would become one of the power-houses of the Catacomb Church.

Bishop Theodore wrote: "Many contemporary renovators of Christianity think it unnecessary to take account of the true attitude of Christianity towards man, his nature and the meaning of life. They create their own ideal of life and judge Christianity in accordance with that ideal. They want to bring in Christianity as the most suitable, so to speak, most vital factor

111 Sakharov and Sikorskaia, op. cit., pp. 45-46.
contributing to the realization of their ideal. The most important thing, the question of sin, is completely ignored by them, and they have no idea what it is. That is why, for example, Merezhkovsky, who accuses Christianity of the split between flesh and spirit that destroyed the pagan world, has no explanation of where this split appeared among the pagans or why they lived by affirming the flesh. But Christianity says that this destructive split and disharmony in the nature of man was not imposed on man from without, but lives within him, as a consequence of sin... This is the corruption, illness and servitude of man to the flesh, and in order to understand what happened in the soul of man through sin it is necessary to penetrated into the psychology of sin. One should point out that, among the representatives of that part of the intelligentsia which is thinking of going along the path of Christianity, this path is indeed new, because, far from wanting to accept Christianity as it is and always was, historically speaking, they want to find - or, better, invent - in this same Christianity certain new ways of incarnating it in life and, through it, of renovating human life... For the man who is used to living in accordance with the ideals of the new philosophy of life, or in accordance with the moods revealed by the philosophy of Nietzsche and the wild heroes of the works of Gorky, L. Andreyev, etc., it is of course not easy immediately to accept Christianity in its historical integrity, and such people find much in the teaching of the Christian Church that is as strange as it is incomprehensible. The Apostle Paul said that the preaching of Christ crucified appeared as very strange and difficult to accept: for some it was simply a deception, and for others - sheer madness... This same teaching about Christ, crucified and suffering, this demand that man should crucify his passions and lusts, this Christianity imbued with the spirit of compunction and the suppression of the carnal principle in the name of spiritual interests - in a word: the ascetical spirit of Christianity has disturbed the new pagans who seek in the Christianity the truth of life (as they understand it, of course) and has become a stone of stumbling and fall in the task of following Christ. Open the pages of any work of Merezhkovsky, Minsky or Rozanov, and you will see that their articles are mainly occupied with a criticism of monasticism, which is identified with asceticism. This strange phenomenon is the result of the fact that a part of the intelligentsia which is seeking God has approached Christianity with the very definite aim of reforming it, which is nothing other than the same decadence applied to the religious life..."

"The proponents of the idea that ascetics should do public service make the direct demand that the antiquated institution of monasticism should be reformed by turning monasteries into associations and congregations with a predominantly practical significance. Among secular writers, Merezhkovsky, for example, in his article 'The Last Saint', directly states that 'the whole of ancient eastern and Russian asceticism is imbued with the spirit of hatred and disdain for society'. Berdyaev for some reason represents asceticism as rejoicing in the existence of diabolical evil in the world, for if this evil did not exist, where would ascetics go in their search for reasons to suffer? This is an
example of the contemporary misunderstanding of the nature and meaning of Christian asceticism..."\(^{112}\)

Closely related to the assault on monasticism was a less violent but no less insidious and dangerous attack on the dogma of the Unity of the Church. For generations now – in fact, since the time of Peter the Great’s infatuation with Lutheranism – it had been customary among the educated classes to deride the idea that there is only One True Church, and that that Church is the Orthodox Church. Holy hierarchs and elders such as St. Ignatius Brianchaninov and St. Ambrose of Optina had defended the dogma, and warned against the corrosive effects of ecumenist relativism or “indifferentism”, as it was then called. However, pro-Catholic religious philosophers such as Vladimir Soloviev, and the generalised influence of Protestant liberalism, continued to erode the foundations of the True Faith. Even the official service-books of the Russian Church revealed an unclear, ambiguous attitude towards the sacraments of the heretics and schismatics.

Thus in the *Trebnik*, or Book of Needs, we read: “Know this also, that a schismatic baptism, and a heretical one, by those who believe in the Holy Indivisible Trinity, in the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the Holy Orthodox-Catholic Church determines to be ultimately acceptable in every way.” Again, Bulgakov’s *Nastol’naia Kniga*, or *Handbook for Clergy*, explains that Roman Catholics, if they have been baptised and confirmed, should be received by the “Third Rite”, that is, renunciation of heresies and repentance. If they have not been confirmed, they must be chrismated. They must never be baptised. “Recognising Baptism as a requirement for becoming a member of her, [the Russian Orthodox Church] accepts Jews, Muslims, pagans and those sectarians who distort the fundamental dogmas of the Orthodox Church through Baptism; Protestants are accepted through Chrismation; and those Catholics, Armenians and members of the Anglican Church who have not received Chrismation or Confirmation, and also those who have fallen away from Orthodoxy, she accepts through the Third Rite, through Repentance, repudiation of errors and Communion of the Holy Mysteries.”\(^{113}\)

\(^{112}\) St. Theodore, *The Meaning of Christian Asceticism*.

\(^{113}\) S.V. Bulgakov, *Nastol’naia Kniga sviaschennno-tserkovno-sluzhitelej* (Handbook for Church Servers), Kharkov, 1900, p. 928 ®. In a footnote Bulgakov writes: “Accepting confirmed Anglicans [and Catholics] by the ‘Third Rite’ could be permitted only under the condition of recognition that the Anglican Church has a completely legitimate hierarchy, truly having preserved the grace of the priesthood in unbroken succession from the Apostles.” In line with this acceptance of Anglican order, Bishop Tikhon of Alaska and the Aleutian Islands, the future Martyr-Patriarch, attended the consecration of Reginald Weller as Episcopal Bishop Coadjutor of the Diocese of Fond du Lac, Wisconsin in 1900” (*The Living Church*, November 17, 1900). In his diary under December 16/29, 1900, Archbishop Nicholas (Kasatkin) of Japan mentions this fact with some annoyance: “Why did Tikhon worm himself in there in a hierarchical mantia?”

With regard to the Syro-Chaldean Nestorians, the position of the Church of Russia was expressed in a Synodal *ukaz* dated March 17-21, 1898, № 1017, which stated that in accordance with the 95th Canon of the Sixth Ecumenical Council they were to be received
In 1903, in an Epistle to the Ecumenical Patriarch, the Holy Synod declared that the Russians were against union with heretics and were “unchangeably convinced... that our Eastern Orthodox Church, which has inviolably preserved the complete deposit of Christ, is alone at the present time the Ecumenical Church”. “As regards our relations with the two great ramifications of Christianity, the Latins and the Protestants, the Russian Church, together with all the autocephalous Churches, ever prays, awaits, and fervently desires that those who in times of old were children of Mother Church and sheep of the one flock of Christ, but who now have been torn away by the envy of the foe and are wandering astray, ‘should repent and come to the knowledge of the truth’, that they should once more return to the bosom of the Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, to their one Shepherd. We believe in the sincerity of their faith in the All-Holy and Life-Originating Trinity, and on that account we accept the baptism of both the one and the other. We respect the Apostolic Succession of the Latin hierarchy, and those of their clergy who join our Church we accept in the Orders which they then possess, just as we do in the case of Armenians, Copts, Nestorians and other bodies that have not lost Apostolic Succession. ‘Our heart is enlarged’ (II Corinthians 6.11), and we are ready to do all that is possible in order to promote the establishment upon earth of the unity which we so much desire. But, to our great regret and to the common grief of all true children of the Church, at the present time we are obliged to think, not so much of softening our relations towards Western Christians, and of a love-abounding drawing of their communities into union with us, as of a tireless, ever-watchful defence of the rational sheep committed to our charge from unceasing attacks and multiform seductions on the part of the Latins and the Protestants.”

In general, it is hard to disagree with Andrew Psarev that “by the time of the Russian Revolution of 1917, Russian theological thought regarding non-Orthodox Christians paralleled the position of Blessed Augustine, which stated that a baptism performed by the non-Orthodox in the name of the Holy Trinity is legitimate, given that it comes from the Lord Himself; however, for as long as the sin of schism from the Orthodox Church is not overcome, this sacrament does not provide salvation for the non-Orthodox....”

However, a stricter view more in accordance with the Church canons was adopted by Archbishop Anthony (Khrapovitsky). He explained that the refusal to rebaptise or reordain a heretic did not entail the belief that the heretic was inside the Church. It was rather an acceptance that the form of according to the Third Rite, and that their clergy had be received in full ecclesiastical rank, with no re-ordination.

114 A translation of the whole Epistle is to be found in Athelstan Riley, Birkbeck and the Russian Church, London: Macmillan, 1917, pp. 247-257.

115 Andrei Psarev, “The Development of Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia’s Attitude Toward Other Local Orthodox Churches”, http://www.sobor2006.com/printerfriendly2.php?id=119_0_3_0, p. 5.
these rites was correct and did not have to be repeated; so that this form became as it were a cup receiving the grace that is imparted only in the Orthodox Church. Unfortunately, however, this widespread practice of “economy” in the reception of heretics led to frequent misunderstandings in the ecumenical era that began after the First World War...

The “proto-ecumenism” of the Russian Church in this period was influenced by the fact that the tsars tended, for political reasons, to transgress the Church canons regarding prayer with heretics. For as the Russian empire had expanded over the centuries, so had the number of subjects of other faiths than Orthodox Christianity, to the extent that by the late imperial period, as Igor Smolich put it, it was no longer a “confessionally united kingdom”, but an “interconfessional empire”. And so, for example, a Buddhist temple was built in St. Petersburg - to the horror of Archbishop Nicon of Vologda. Again, as Archimandrite Macarius (Veretennikov) writes, “Tsar Alexander III... visited Buddhist temples and attended their services; [and] Tsar Nicholas II also (for example, during the world war) visited Catholic churches, Jewish synagogues and Muslim mosques, attended their services, and kissed the Catholic cross. From a purely ecclesiastical-formal point of view the Orthodox tsar should not have done that, but as the head of a super-confessional empire, as emperor, he was forced to it.”

The New Theology

We see, then, that the ferment in political and social life was matched by a scarcely less varied, if less violent, ferment of opinions and movements in Church life. On the one hand, we see the conservative churchmen such as St. John of Kronstadt and Bishops Anthony (Khrapovitsky), Theophan (Bystrov), Nicon (Rozhdestvensky), Joseph (Petrovykh) and Theodore (Pozdeyevsky). And on the other we see the renovationists such as Bishops Sergius (Stragorodsky) and Antonin (Granovsky), and “the new pagans” such as Tolstoy, Merezhkovsky and Rozanov. These debates were to become more rather than less important in the course of time. For it would be largely along the lines drawn in these pre-revolutionary decades that the Church schisms of the post-revolutionary period would develop.

There also arose a movement against what was seen to be the dead scholasticism of contemporary theology. A common target was Metropolitan Macarius (Bulgakov)’s Dogmatic Theology, which was considered by many to be lacking in inspiration. Fairly typical of this tendency was the former

---


118 Thus Professor Nicholas N. Glubokovsky, while not denying that the “undoubted and huge” virtues of Macarius’ book, argued that “the author is dragged towards the past, lives
Tolstoyan and future martyr (and possibly bishop) of the Catacomb Church, Michael Alexandrovich Novoselov. He advocated a more living, experiential approach to theology in general and anti-heretical polemics in particular. “Our school theology,” he wrote, “on the soil of which the struggle against the opponents of the Church is waged, is foreign to religious experience and not only inspires nobody and brings nobody to God, but even kills the living shoots of religious life which are apprehended in the pious family and in church. The disgust or distrust which theology elicits in many alumni of our theological (and sometimes also secular) educational institutions is hardly a secret to anyone. Indifference to the faith or its rejection – that is our heritage.

“Look: who rules the mind and the aroused conscience of the Russian man? Literature, philosophy, science – only not theology, which in its extreme schematism decisively refuses to see the living human soul with its demands, torments and doubts. It does not take the man with his present spiritual requirements and does not raise him, cautiously and penetratingly, to a higher level of self-knowledge and self-feeling. This role secular literature has taken upon itself, although unfortunately it is not always in agreement with Christian ideals.

“Who has good success with us in the purely religious sphere? Vladimir Soloviev, Khomiakov, Samarin, Kireevsky, Nesmelov, that is, people who are particularly foreign to the methods of school theologising.

“How do such spiritual writers (who, however, are significant more for those who are not yet far from the Church, and still more those living in it) such as Bishop Theophan, Bishop Anthony of Ufa, Fr. John Sergiev (I have in mind his book, My Life in Christ) attract people to themselves? By renouncing the stereotypical, the dead and the deadening, the formal-dialectical method of thinking. They have gone along a new path of theological thought, a path which, it would seem, should most accurately be called ‘psychological’...”

The call for a more living approach to theology was not wrong in itself; we can find it in some of the later Byzantine Fathers, the study of whom was only just beginning in the Russian theological institutions. However, it contained by its traditions and is governed by former methods. For him dogma is a finished theoretical formula that is undeniably obligatory in its abstract, irrefutable completedness. In this case only one scientific operation is permitted in relation to it – the establishment of its truth by the logically interrelated connections of all its parts the crushing force of its external arguments. Hence the whole construction inevitably acquires the character of a priori dryness and bookish lifelessness, and the scientific exposition turns out to be directly scholastic...”

(Russkaia bogoslovskaia nauka v ee istoricheskom razvitii i noveishem sostoiанииi (Russian theological science in its historical development and contemporary condition), Moscow: St. Vladimir Brotherhood, 2002; http://proroza.narod.ru/; Glubokovsky.htm, p. 2 ©).

potential dangers. One was that “exciting” but heretical theologians such as Soloviev were preferred to “boring” but Orthodox ones like Metropolitan Macarius. Another was that false diagnoses of the causes of Russian theology’s supposed “deadness” were offered. Thus, as Protopriest Valentine Asmus writes, “Professor M.M. Tareev of the Moscow Theological Academy tried to demonstrate that Russian Orthodoxy had to cast off the yoke of Byzantine asceticism, which had dried up the Russian religious genius. A vivid representative of ‘the national theology’ was Tareev’s colleague, Vladimir Alexeevich Troitsky, in monasticism Hilarion (he was ordained to the episcopate after the revolution). He shared the ambiguity of Slavophilism, which well understood the universal meaning of Christianity and at the same time was inclined to see in Orthodoxy ‘the wealth of tribal faith’ (Khomiatkov), as if it were naturally inherent in the Russians and Slavs as a whole. ‘The spirit of Slavdom is defined by Orthodoxy’ (Troitsky, *The Church as a Union of Love*, Moscow, 1998, p. 333). ‘I always somehow feel a lie in the position of the Slav Catholic’. Everything specifically Catholic ‘must be extremely opposed to the Slavic soul. The betrayal of Orthodoxy is... the betrayal of Slavdom, a going over to a western key in mood and in life’ (this was said about the Poles, p. 334). The remarkable thought of Tertullian that the human soul is by nature Christian is here narrowed to a single tribe taken on its own. The Russian man even in the fall preserves such natural resources as are not to be found in others, and even flirting with the devil is for him child’s play. ‘The German has sold his soul to the devil, but the Russian has given it away in such way that – and in this is the undoubted superiority of the Russian – he can leave the devil, while the German has nothing with which to redeem himself’ (p. 115).”

Another danger was that the perception was created, whether justly or unjustly, that the reformers were striving to form an elite within the Church that would gradually replace the old cadres. Bishop Anthony in particular was seen as trying to create a core body of learned monks who would replace the old professorial cadres. Thus, “recalling the 1890s, N.N. Glubokovsky used to remark that it was precisely at that time that the opinion began to form as if the theological academies ‘did not even have meagre resources of churchliness [tserkovnostij], and were theological [dukhovnie] more because of the sign that stood out on them’. The professor thought that ‘these crafty invectives’ had appeared with the artificial development of a new monasticism, which created a special ‘direction’ in the Russian Church that announced and practised ‘in the spirit of true churchliness’ that ‘everything is permitted, allowed and forgiven to monks’. Later, wrote Glubokovsky, ‘there developed tendentious agitation for the monastic tonsure to be declared one of the sacraments, and if there were meant to be no more than seven, then it was necessary to dethrone marriage and put monasticism in its place, which

---

would serve God following the example of the redemption on the Cross “through the compassionate love” of Christ alone.”

Glubovsky is here referring to Bishop Anthony’s controversial theory of redemption, according to which Christ did not save us through offering an expiatory sacrifice to God’s justice, but only through the power of love. This product of the new, “living” theology, which was shared by other leading theologians such as Bishop Sergius (Stragorodsky) and Archimandrite Hilarion (Troitsky), bordered on heresy. One of its earliest critics was the future New Hieromartyr Archbishop Victor of Vyatka. He noted in 1912 that the “new theology” of Bishops Anthony and Sergius “would shake the Church”. When Sergius caused a huge schism in the Church in 1927, Archbishop Victor saw in this a direct result of Sergius’ pre-revolutionary teaching on salvation.

The Nationalities Policy

Among the many kinds of freedom idolized in the late nineteenth century, by no means the least important, as we have seen, was the freedom of the nation; and in a multi-national empire such as Russia the spread of nationalism could not fail to be a major concern of the authorities. Alexander III’s answer, which was followed by his son, Nicholas II, was to introduce the policy known to historians as “Russification”, a well-meaning but not always successful attempt to unite the empire around the language and culture of the dominant imperial nation. Let us see how that was applied in the different regions.

1. Poland and the West. Perhaps the clearest failure of Russian nationalities policy, besides the Jews, was Poland. Alexander I’s grant to the Poles of a very liberal constitution, more liberal than anything on offer in Russia itself, was brought to an end by the revolution of 1831. Then the second revolution of 1863 necessitated a harsher reaction; Russification was part of that reaction.

Thus Hosking writes: “Most Polish officials were replaced by Russian ones, and the Russian language was imposed for official business. The University of Warsaw was converted into a wholly Russian institution, whilst it was stipulated that Polish schools, even at primary level, should teach all subjects in Russia, save the Polish language itself. In practice, the government had no means to impose these provisions, and Polish-language schooling continued, albeit clandestinely.

121 Firsov, op. cit., p. 91.
“Poland did derive economic benefits from being included within the empire’s tariff enclosure: it was able to sell its industrial products in a huge market that needed them. With some 8% of the population, Poland produced about a quarter of the empire’s industrial output, notably in textiles, metallurgy and machine tools…”

In spite of these benefits, the Poles remained unremittingly hostile to Russia. “In 1905-6 Poland was perhaps the most violent part of the empire. Immediately after Bloody Sunday, in January 1905, workers in the textile centre of Lodz went on strike and demonstrated with placards proclaiming ‘Down with the autocracy! Down with the war!’ They also had economic demands: an eight-hour day and huge wage rises. The police intervened, and in the resultant fighting perhaps one hundred people were killed. That scene was repeated several times during 1905. At times Poland was in a state of virtual civil war, in which students, schoolchildren and often criminal bands were involved as well as workers. Only the peasants remained relatively quiescent: they had neither the grievances nor the communal solidarity of those in Russia.

“Altogether the armed struggle in Poland during 1905-6 lasted longer than the guerilla war of 1863-4 and claimed more lives. It was also a grave strain on the Russian armed forces: at the height of the troubles some 300,000 men were

---

124 In the countryside, as Lieven writes, “efforts were made to boost peasant agriculture and, on the eve of 1914, to give the Orthodox and therefore supposedly Russian and loyal peasantry a bigger voice in elected local government. Above all, however, large sums and efforts were devoted to reducing Polish landowning in the region and implanting a Russian landowning elite in its place. The policy had some similarities to the manner in which the English went about consolidating their hold on seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Ireland. In the eighteenth century, for instance, the English authorities were convinced that the almost complete expropriation of the Catholic landowning class deprived potential rebellion of its leaders and made revolt impossible unless Ireland was invaded by sizeable French armies.

“In comparison to the English in Ireland, Russian policy towards Polish landlords in the Western Borderlands was less ruthless and thoroughgoing. The number of Polish landowners and the size of their estates in the Western Borderlands was much reduced after 1863 but Poles still remained just over half of all estate-owners in Lithuania and Belorussia at the turn of the twentieth century. Even in Ukraine west of the Dnieper, where the number of small Polish estate-owners was drastically reduced after 1863, Poles still retained most of the medium-sized and big properties. In Ireland by contrast, only 5 per cent of the land was owned by Catholics by 1776. English policy was also more effective: a solid English elite society and culture was established in Ireland and dominated the country for many generations. Despite spending great sums on subsidizing Russian landowning, St. Petersburg was on the whole unable to create a sizeable group of landowners willing actually to live on estates in the Western Borderlands and to challenge Polish economic and cultural dominance. In fact, it was probably anachronistic in the second half of the nineteenth century to devote such resources and energy to implanting a landowning elite. In an era of impending mass literacy and urbanization it might well have made more sense even in the relatively backward Western Borderlands to target the children of richer peasants and other emerging middle-class elements. In this region, as in much of Eastern and Central Europe, it was to be these groups that were crucial in the creation of mass national identities.” (Empire, p. 274). (V.M.)
stationed there, as compared with 1,000,000 on the Japanese front. No clearer example could be imagined of the high cost of trying to Russify a people with a well-developed national identity and sense culture, religion and citizenship quite different from that of Russia.”

True; and yet the cause of Russia’s failure in Poland cannot be laid entirely on the policy of Russification. The root problem was the implacable opposition of Polish Catholicism to Russian Orthodoxy. As long as the combination of Catholicism and fervent nationalism prevailed, there was no hope, not only of assimilation, but even of peaceful relations between the two peoples. Catherine II’s conquest of Poland, while it had certain geopolitical advantages (e.g. the access of Russian armies with their supply trains to Germany and France), proved in the long run to have created the Achilles heel of the Russian empire, in that it included into the empire two peoples – the Poles and the Jews – whose opposition to Russia remained implacable to the end.

2. Ukraine and Belorussia. If Poland was to Russia what Ireland was to England, then Ukraine and Belorussia were to Russia what Scotland and Wales were to England. In the latter comparison, a common faith – Orthodoxy in the case of Russia, Ukraine and Belorussia, Protestantism in the case of England, Scotland and Wales – made coexistence easier. Even so, in an age of increasing nationalism there were bound to be centripetal pressures; and even where there was considerable identity of civilization – in the sense of “ideas and traditions… inherited from the ancient world and from Christianity”, it was the cultural difference – that is, idiosyncracies of speech, folklore, dress and everyday life – that tended to be emphasised. But underlining cultural differences could lead to a betrayal of the deeper civilizational traditions of the nation seeking to distinguish itself.

The Russians, by contrast, emphasised their civilizational unity with the Ukrainians and Belorussians. All three nations confessed Orthodox Christianity, and Kiev was “the mother of all Russian cities”, the capital of a pan-Russian State which in the eleventh century had covered the territories of all three peoples. Moreover (although here the commonality was cultural rather than civilizational), all three peoples were Eastern Slavic, and their languages could be said to be different dialects of a single original language. So, the Russians argued, they were all really one nation...

By contrast, the Ukrainian nationalists, writes Oliver Figes, “took inspiration from the Ukrainian national movement in neighbouring Galicia. As part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Galicia had been granted relatively

125 Hosking, op. cit., p. 378.
127 As when, for example, “Welsh Baptist ministers dressed up as Druids at the Welsh national Eisteddfod” (Davies, op. cit., p. 817).
liberal rights of self-government. This had allowed the Ukrainians, or ‘Ruthenians’ (dog-Latin for ‘Russians’) as they were known by the Austrians, to promote their own Ukrainian language in primary schools and public life, to publish native-language newspapers and books, and to advance the study of Ukrainian history and folk culture. Galicia became a sort of ‘Ukrainian Piedmont’ for the rest of the national movement in tsarist Ukraine: a forcing-house of national consciousness and an oasis of freedom for nationalist intellectuals. Lviv, its capital, also known as Lemberg (by the Germans) and as Lvov (by the Russians), was a thriving centre of Ukrainian culture. Although subjects of the Tsar, both the composer Lysenko and the historian Hrushevsky had found their nation in Galicia. The nationalist intellectuals who pioneered the Ukrainian literary language in the middle decades of the nineteenth century all borrowed terms from the Galician dialect, which they considered the most advance, although later, as they tried to reach the peasantry with newspapers and books, they were forced to base it on the Poltavan folk idiom, which, as the dialect of the central Ukraine, was the most commonly understood. The seminal texts of this national literary renaissance were published by the Brotherhood of Saints Cyril and Methodius prior to its dissolution by the tsarist authorities in 1847. The romantic poetry of Taras Shevchenko, which played the same role as Mickiewicz’s poetry in Poland in shaping the intelligentsia’s national consciousness, was the most important of these. Ukrainian-language publications continued to appear, despite the legal restrictions on them. Many were published by the Kiev section of the Russian Geographical Society, whose nationalist members devoted themselves to the study of Ukrainian folk culture, language and history.”

The Russian authorities refused to accept the existence either of a separate Ukrainian people or of a Ukrainian language. The Ukrainians were called, somewhat patronizingly, “Little Russians” by contrast with the “Great Russians” to the north. And P.A. Valuev, minister of the interior, insisted that “there never has been a distinct Little Russian language, and there never will be one”. As Lieven writes, tsarist statesmen “focused their attention on the linguistic and cultural foundations of national identity and therefore of subsequent political nationalism. In 1863 General Annenkov, the governor-general of the Kiev region, flatly opposed the publication of the bible in Ukrainian, commenting that by its publication Ukrainian nationalists ‘would achieve so to speak the recognition of the independence of the Little Russian language, and then of course they will make claims to autonomy for Little Russia.’ Thirteen years later a key government memorandum warned of the dangers of ‘various doctrines which superficially contain nothing political and seem to relate only to the sphere of purely academic and artistic interests’. In the long run their danger could be very great. ‘Nothing divides people as much as differences in speech and writing. Permitting the creation of a special literature for the common people in the Ukrainian dialect would

129 Hosking, op. cit., p. 379.
signify collaborating in the alienation of Ukraine from the rest of Russia.’ The memorandum went on to emphasize the very great importance of the Ukrainians to the Russian nation and state: ‘To permit the separation... of thirteen million Little Russians would be the utmost political carelessness, especially in view of the unifying movement which is going on alongside us among the German tribe.’ In the light of such views the tsarist regime did its utmost from 1876 to stop the development of a written Ukrainian language or high culture. Virtually all publication in Ukrainian was banned until the period 1905-14, when revolution, the semi-constitution of 1906 and the partial liberalization of politics allowed the language greater leeway. Even in the so-called Constitutional Era, however, not only the government but also the imperial parliament refused to contemplate any teaching of or in Ukrainian in schools, once again taking a much tougher line over Ukrainian than other languages.”

And yet here was the rub: that the ruling civilization (and culture) of most of Russia’s ruling elites was no longer the Orthodox Christianity that had united all the Eastern Slavic peoples in the past: it was the civilization of contemporary Western Europe. So “Russification” in practice often meant Westernization with a Russian tinge and in the Russian language. A better policy, surely, would have been for the government to emphasise the “civilizational”, religious unity between the three peoples without trying to deny their cultural, especially linguistic, differences. For among the peasants, if not for the intelligentsia, civilizational, religious unity was still strong – and stronger than any nationalist passion. As Figes writes, “in Belorussia and the northern Ukraine there was so much ethnic and religious intermingling – in an area the size of Cambridgeshire there might be a mixture of Belorussian, Ukrainian, Russian, Polish, Jewish and Lithuanian settlements – that it was difficult for anything more than a localized form of ethnic identity to take root in the popular consciousness. One British diplomat... concluded that this was still the case as late as 1918: ‘Were one to ask the average peasant in the Ukraine his nationality he would answer that he is Greek Orthodox; if pressed to say whether he is a Great Russian, a Pole, or an Ukrainian, he would probably reply that he is a peasant; and if one insisted on knowing what language he spoke, he would say that he talked “the local tongue”...’”

3. Finland. Lieven writes: “Conquered in 1809, the Grand Duchy of Finland enjoyed a high degree of autonomy throughout the nineteenth century. In Russian terms its status was anomalous, not only because it was uniquely free of Petersburg’s control but also because it possessed representative institutions and a secure rule of law. In the last two decades

131 Figes, op. cit., pp. 75-76.
132 Hosking writes: “Its parliament, the Diet, began to meet regularly after 1863, and passed a number of measures which underlined Finland’s distinctive status within the empire: the
of the nineteenth century pressure increased from Petersburg to bring parts of Finnish law and administration into line with Russian norms. It stuck in Russian gullets, for instance, that Russians resident in Finland enjoyed fewer rights than ethnic Finns, something that was not true of Finns living in Russia. With Russo-German antagonism growing and Sweden a very possible ally of Germany in any future war, the extent to which Helsinki was almost completely free from Petersburg’s supervision also caused worry. So long as Finland was governed by Count N.V. Adlerberg (1866-81) and then Count F.L. Heiden (1881-98) the very sensible rule prevailed that infringements on Finnish autonomy must be kept to the strictly necessary minimum. When General N.I. Bobrikov was appointed Governor-General in 1898, however, not only did he arrive with sweeping plans to increase Petersburg’s control, he also implemented this policy with a tactless, ham-fisted brutality which turned Finland into a hotbed of opposition.

“Real trouble with Finland began when Petersburg imposed its own military conscription system on the Finns and sought to unify the Russian and Finnish armies. Though this scheme had been in the making for a number of years, it was pushed hard by the new Minister of War, Aleksei Kuropatkin, who was appointed in 1898. The majority of Russian senior officials opposed Kuropatkin’s conscription law in the belief that it would needlessly antagonize the Finns and it was actually voted down in the State Council, the body of senior statesmen who advised the Tsar on legislation. As was his right, however, Nicholas overrode the council and Kuropatkin’s conscription law went into effect. In the Emperor’s defence it could be argued that had he failed to back up his new Minister of War the latter’s authority would have been fatally damaged. Moreover, the government’s case vis-à-vis Finland was not entirely unjustified, its fears for the security of Petersburg, very close to the Finnish border, causing it particular alarm. In terms of political wisdom and tact, however, Kuropatkin’s law, not to mention Bobrikov’s antics, were a disaster. The government, which had hoped to play off the ethnic Finnish majority against the country’s Swedish elite, quickly united the whole country against itself. Among those who protested to Nicholas about Bobrikov’s policy was his mother, herself a Scandinavian princess. In what was, coming from her, an extremely angry letter, she accused her son of going back on his promise to her that Bobrikov would be reined in and commented that ‘all that has been and is being done in Finland is based on lies and deceit and leads straight to revolution’. Apart from asserting that the Finns would come round if the government showed itself resolute, Nicholas’s reply to his mother skated around the main issue at stake. Seen from the Russian perspective this

spread of education, consolidation of freedom of worship, the issue of a separate currency and the establishment of a Finnish army.” (op. cit., p. 380). (V.M.)

 Hosking writes: “The Finns responded first of all with a petition for which they collected the signatures of no less than one-fifth of their population, and then with a boycott of all Russian institutions. This affected especially the army: in 1902 less than half the young men called up for service reported for duty, and they had to run the gauntlet of hostile crowds of their compatriots around the draft boards” (op. cit., p. 381).
issue was, in Kireev’s words, that ‘thanks to Bobrikov and his system we have created a new Poland at the gates of Saint Petersburg! And it would have been easy to avoid this.’

“In its approach to the Finnish question Petersburg made mistakes which were typical of the Russian government at this time. Policy towards Finland was decided on its own, not in the wider context of an overall strategy for achieving the government’s aims and avoiding danger across the whole range of the empire’s affairs. It made no sense to challenge Finnish nationalism at a time when the regime already had its hands full with a host of other domestic enemies. Nor did the government clearly define its essential interests in Finland in the light of its overall commitments, and then devote the necessary means to achieve these limited goals. By the time Governor-General Bobrikov was assassinated in June 1904 Finland was moving towards open insurrection…”134

4. The Baltic. “The Baltic region,” writes Hosking, “resembled Finland in so far as the Russian authorities supported, up to a point, the claims of the subordinate nationalities, the Estonians and Latvians, against the dominant Germans. But they pursued this policy with much greater caution than in Finland, since the Baltic Germans were far more important to them than the Swedes. Indeed, it could be argued that, of all ethnic groups in the whole empire, the Baltic Germans were the most loyal. However, their loyalty was to the Tsar personally, and to the empire as a multi-national entity, not to Russia as a nation. As Alexander Graf Keyserling, former rector of Dorpat University, wrote in 1889, ‘As long as the Emperor dominates the nation, we shall be able to survive and develop further.’ It was not only the Russian nation he had in mind. The growth of German nationalism was equally ominous for the Baltic landowners, since it threatened to swamp the Ritterschaften (aristocratic corporations) with Germans from the towns and Estonians or Latvians from the countryside, both more numerous than themselves. In the long run they would all become the mere pawns of European great-power politics.

“The first Russian statesman to attack the German domination in the Baltic was Iurii Samarin, who was sent to Riga as a senatorial inspector in 1849. He regarded the German urban guilds and the Ritterschaften as corrupt relics of an antiquated system which prevented the monarch from acting as the protector of ordinary people and obstructed Russians from exercising their legitimate authority in the Russian Empire. ‘We Russians claim the right to be in Russia what the French are in France and the English throughout the British dominions.’ At this stage, before the drive to national homogenization had gripped the authorities, such views were unwelcome to the Tsar: Nicholas ordered that Samarin be detained in the Peter-Paul Fortress for twelve days and personally rebuked him. ‘Your attack is aimed at the

134 Lieven, Nicholas II, pp. 86-87.
government: what you really meant was that since the reign of the Emperor Peter we have been surrounded by Germans and have ourselves become Germanised.’

“By the 1870s, however, different views prevailed in St. Petersburg. Reform had come to Russia, rendering Tsars more reluctant to acknowledge intermediate authorities between themselves and their subjects. Besides, the unification of Germany naturally reinforce the ethnic identification of Baltic Germans, especially those in the towns. Ivan Aksakov had warned of this danger in 1862, when he complained that the Baltic Germans, ‘though devoted to the Russian throne, preach war to the death against the Russian nationality; faithful servants of the Russian state, they care not a fig for the Russian Land’. Alexander III took a symbolically important decision when, on his accession to the throne in 1881, he declined to confirm the privileges of the Ritterschaften, as all his successors had done since Peter the Great.

“Administrative integration began with the introduction of the new municipal institutions in the Baltic in 1877, but the authorities shrank from undermining the Ritterschaften in the countryside by introducing Russian-style zemstvos there. To that extent, the old policy of accommodating local elites continued: the Ritterschaften remained as the ultimate repositories of local authority right through to 1917, though their practical power was gradually being chipped away both by social change and by governmental measures. In the 1880s they lost judicial powers with the introduction of the new Russian courts, along with the use of Russian in all administrative and judicial procedures. Their supervision of schools was weakened by the opening of numerous ‘ministerial schools’ run from St. Petersburg and offering intuition in Russian only: it was here that many Estonians and Latvians received their basic education and began to move into professional and administrative positions, becoming what St. Petersburg hoped would be the agents of future Russian domination. At the same time an attempt was made to make Russian compulsory in all but the lowest forms of primary schools. In 1893 Dorpat University was closed and reopened as Iur’ev University, a Russian institution: professors and lecturers (with the revealing exception of theology) who were not prepared to teach in Russian had to resign.

“In religious matters there was a return to the policy of forbidding Estonians and Latvians who had converted – usually under threat - to Orthodoxy to return to the Lutheran faith. Those who had done so now found that their marriages were declared invalid, while pastors who had celebrated them were suspended investigation. Some 120 suffered this fate before the policy was abandoned in 1894…”135

---

Here Hosking distorts the evidence. There was a genuine, unforced movement of Latvians towards Orthodoxy, of which the most famous product was the future hieromartyr Archbishop John (Pommer) of Riga. The Latvian peasants of his region had begun to show an interest in Orthodoxy in the middle of the nineteenth century, thanks to the preaching of the faith in their native language; and Hieromartyr John's great-grandfather had been one of the first to accept Orthodoxy in the region, for which he was subjected to persecution by the local German landowners. If there was persecution, it was much more likely to be by Lutherans against the Orthodox. Thus when St. John’s great-grandfather died he was buried outside the bounds of the local Lutheran cemetery (there were no Orthodox cemeteries at that time) as the leader of the "rebels". The native peasants raised a mound over the place of his burial and put an eight-pointed star on top of it, but both the mound and the cross were removed by the Lutheran authorities.

5. The Caucasus. The Georgian State and Church are much older than the Russian – the Church was granted autocephaly in the fourth century at the Council of Antioch. The Bagration dynasty was founded in 886, and Georgia’s golden age took place from the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries. In the 1220 the Mongols invaded, and thereafter Georgian history consisted of a long succession of Muslim invasions in which the country was repeatedly devastated and many thousands martyred for the Orthodox faith.

Daniel Sargis writes: “In the late eighteenth century, King Irakly II of Georgia, an Orthodox Christian, was threatened by the Islamic rulers of Persia and Turkey. He turned to Russia, his Christian neighbour, for protection. In 1783, Empress Catherine the Great of Russia and King Irakly II signed the treaty of Georgievsk, in which Russia guaranteed the territorial integrity of the Georgian kingdom in return for control of Georgia’s foreign policy. The treaty also guaranteed the royal status of the Bagratid dynasty…: ‘Henceforth Irakly II, as a believer in the same faith as Ours and as an ally of Russia, bears the title of King of Georgia, in which title and rights he and his issue are confirmed by Russia forever and for all time.’

“In 1795, the Persian shah, Aga Muhammad, demanded that King Irakly acknowledge Persian suzerainty over Georgia. King Irakly, declining to break his treaty with Russia, refused. The Persians then invaded. No Russian assistance was provided, but the old King, then more than 80 years old,

136 Figes writes that “the regime’s policies of Russification helped to promote the Orthodox cause: in Poland and the Baltic, for example, 40,000 Catholics and Lutherans were converted to the Orthodox Church, albeit only nominally, during the reign of Alexander III” (op. cit., p. 64). But on what basis does he say “nominally”? Just as the return of more than two million uniates to Orthodoxy in 1839 in the same region was by no means nominal, so there is no reason to suspect that these conversions were nominal.

137 Lyudmilla Koeller, Sv. Ioann (Pommer), Arkheipiskop Rizhskij i Latvijskij (St. John (Pommer), Archbishop of Riga and Latvia), Holy Trinity Monastery, Jordanville, 1984 ®. (V.M.)
managed to repulse the invaders three times before he was outnumbered and defeated. Finally, the Russians intervened and pushed out the Persians.

“In 1798, Irakly II died and was succeeded by his son, King George XII. Fearing the Persian threat, King George suggested to Empress Catherine’s son and successor, Tsar Paul I, that he incorporate Georgia into the Russian Empire while allowing the Bagrations to continue to bear the title of King... At first, Emperor Paul agreed, but in the end he simply seized the country, putting an end to the long reign of the Bagrations.”

The annexation of Georgia was proclaimed by Paul I on December 18, 1800, and reaffirmed by Alexander I on September 12, 1801. On the whole Georgia benefited from being part of the Russian empire – it could hardly have survived against the Muslims from outside. However, the price was high. “Within ten years,” writes Lado Mirianashvili, “the Russian authorities had abolished the Georgian monarchy, the Church’s autocephaly, and the patriarchal throne – all of which had withstood the Turks, the Mongols, and the Persians. During the subsequent 106 years, nineteen exarchs of the Russian Synod ruled the Georgian Church. Church services in Georgian were terminated, frescoes were whitewashed, and ancient Georgian icons and manuscripts were either sold or destroyed.

“The wanton destruction of the Iberian culture resulted in the emergence of the Georgian independence movement in the last half of the 19th century. Under the leadership of poet, historian, and philosopher St. Ilia Chavchavadze, members of the Georgian intelligentsia sought to preserve their language and culture, while promoting state independence and Church autocephaly. Both the Russian government and the Communist revolutionaries opposed this national movement, the latter because the movement proclaimed Georgia to be a Christian state. In 1907 the militant social democrats killed the ‘father of modern Georgia’, St. Ilia, in an attempt to crush the national movement, whose Christian ideology undermined the Communist agenda.”

Although the Georgian nationalists essentially harked back to the medieval Christian kingdom, according to Hosking their movement had “an anti-capitalist colouring, owing to the competition with the Armenians”, who dominated banking and commerce in the towns. “They also considered that,

---

138 Sargis, The Romanoffs and the Bagrations, 1996; quoted by Brien Horan, “The Russian Imperial Succession”, http://www.chivalricorders.org/royalty/gotha/russuclw.htm. The smaller Georgian kingdoms of Samegrelo and Imereti (western Georgia) were annexed in 1803 and 1804, respectively.

as a small nation, their interests were best protected by internationalism, or more specifically, by membership of a democratic multi-national federation formed on the framework of the Russian Empire. Two of the leading Georgian radicals, Noa Zhordania and Filip Makharadze, studied in Warsaw, where they became convinced that Poles and Georgians, for all their differences, were conducting a common struggle against the autocratic empire, and must work together. Marxism fulfilled both the internationalist and the anti-capitalist requirements. The Georgians became perhaps the most sophisticated Marxists in the empire, taking over from the Austrian Marxists the notion of individual cultural autonomy as the best way of making possible inter-ethnic cooperation in a multi-national state. They also adapted their original agrarian programme so that it met the demands of peasants, and in that way were able to make themselves the leading political force in the countryside as well as the towns.”

Meanwhile, in the third of the Transcaucasian territories, Azerbaidjan, “the emergence of a national consciousness was complicated by the domination of Islam, which tended towards supra-national forms and blocked the growth of a secular culture and a written language for the masses. To begin with, ironically, it was the Russians who encouraged the Azeris’ secular culture to develop, promoting the plays of Akhundzada, the ‘Tatar Molière’, and commissioning histories of the Azeri folk culture and language, as a way of weakening the influence of the Muslim powers to the south.”

6. Central Asia. “In Central Asia,” writes Hosking, “the thrust of imperial policy was economic rather than assimilationist. Uniquely in the Russian empire, one may consider this region a genuine colony. Its status differed from that of other parts of the empire in several ways. Its inhabitants were known as inorodtsy, a category common enough in other contemporary empires, but not applied elsewhere in the Russian one: it implied an alien and inferior political status. The whole territory was not even fully incorporated into the empire: the Khanate of Khiva and the Emirate of Bukhara remained nominally sovereign, as protectorates bound to Russia by one-sided treaties which included them in the Russian customs union.

“In the regions incorporated into the empire, the Russian authorities did not interfere in religion, education, local administration or law courts. These were Muslim and so far removed from Russian practice that any attempt to adapt them would have had scant chance of success and would have provoked intense resistance, which might have been exploited by the British to bolster their position in Central Asia. In this way a largely military supreme power in the region overlay a traditional and unchanged medium- and lower-level hierarchy.”

140 Hosking, op. cit., pp. 385-386.
141 Figes, op. cit., p. 75.
However, just beyond the bounds of the Central Asian territories, an important missionary movement began. In 1898 the Urmian spiritual mission of the Russian Orthodox Church was opened in Persia. By 1900 there had already been opened more than 60 schools serving 2300 students. On August 21, 1901 the future Hieromartyr, Fr. John Vostorgov was sent to Persia to oversee the work of the mission and began to labour for the conversion of the Syro-Chaldeans to Orthodoxy. For several years he waged a determined battle, the result of which was that three bishops - Mar Elijah, Mar John and Mar Marian - expressed their desire to be united to the Church. Thus was initiated the Syro-Chaldean Mission of the Russian Orthodox Church.143

We may conclude that Russification was not a success in any of the regions of the Russian empire where it was applied, even in those, such as Ukraine and Belorussia, where religious, linguistic and cultural similarities were greatest. Nevertheless, it is an exaggeration to call this policy one of oppression and tyranny. And the epithet “the prison of the peoples” given to Russia by her enemies was by no means just. In general, Russia coped well with the extraordinary diversity of peoples and traditions within her borders. Thus what subordinate people anywhere had more freedom than the Finns, the Muslims of Central Asia or the pagans of Siberia in the Russian empire?

It is not clear that any other contemporary multinational empire succeeded any better in solving one the most intractable problems of politics: how to accommodate different peoples with different cultures and religions within a unitary state. The British had the problem of Ireland, the French – of Algeria; while the Austro-Hungarians had to contend with a whole series of discontented nationalities. “The Russian empire,” writes Lieven, “included a wide range of peoples of very different cultures and levels of socio-economic development. Any attempt to impose a single, ‘coherent’ strategy on all of them would have been unthinkable and catastrophic. Moreover, it should by now be clear that there was no easy solution to the dilemmas of empire in the modern era. If tsarism floundered, so too did all its imperial rivals.”144

Lieven thinks that “in principle it might have been possible to strengthen empire by the appeal of the great civilization to which the imperial regime was linked. Together with the economic and military advantages of empire, this might at least have provided some defence against the nationalist challenge... The century before 1914 had witnessed a tremendous flowering of Russian literary and musical culture. Not only had the Russian

---

143 “The New Martyr Archpriest John Vostorgov”, Orthodox Life, vol. 30, No 5, September-October, 1980. By 1901 about 20,000 Nestorians had been converted to Orthodoxy. In 1912 the mission had charge of 36 Orthodox churches with 26 priests (8 Russians) and 70 schools in which there studied more than 2000 pupils (Istoria Russkaj Tserkvi (History of the Russian Church), Moscow, 1997, book 8, part 2, pp. 282-283 ®).

144 Lieven, Empire, op. cil. p. 275.
intelligentsia developed a very impressive high culture, but it was also open to people of varying races and religions, and had genuinely cosmopolitan sympathies and outlooks. Drawing inspiration from all the strands of European culture and speaking many languages, the Russian intelligentsia’s culture was in some respects genuinely broader than the more national perspective common in the individual cultures of Western Europe. Though Polish and German subjects of the tsar were never likely to defer to Russian culture, the educated classes of Ukraine, Belorussia and the other smaller Christian peoples might well do so, especially if they were allowed to develop their own languages and cultures alongside Russian. Even the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century Muslim reformers, the so-called Jadids, often had considerable respect for the Russian intelligentsia’s culture and were inclined to ally with it in order to modernize their own societies. Given the deep antagonism between the tsarist regime and much of the Russian intelligentsia, however, the pull of intelligentsia culture on the non-Russians was not much help to the empire’s rulers. If, for example, Ukrainian or Jewish socialists were often drawn to all-imperial revolutionary parties rather than to more narrowly national ones, this was scarcely a gain from the tsar’s point of view…”

Here we come to the hub of the matter: Russification was of little value if the Russia it propagated was not Orthodoxy, the root of Russian culture and the one thing that could truly unite its peoples at a deep level. But the Russian government, while generously supporting Orthodox missions to pagan peoples, and in general supporting Orthodoxy everywhere, did not always see its nationalities policy in terms of the spreading of Orthodoxy.

There were several reasons for this. First, the actual preaching of Orthodoxy is a task of the Church, not the State – and the Church was barely able to cope with the task of preaching the Gospel to the Russians themselves. (Thus St. John of Kronstadt had wanted to preach Christ to the Alaskan Indians, but decided to stay in Russia, where so many baptised people were still in need of conversion to True Christianity.) Secondly, the principles of religious tolerance and religious indifferentism had let down deep roots into the culture of the élites, who, if they had to preach or impose something, preferred that it would not be a dogmatic religion. And thirdly and most importantly, as Lieven points out, the dominant culture and religion of the Russian élites was no longer Orthodoxy, but West European liberalism, which led naturally to socialism, anti-tsarism and anti-Russianism. And so if the Russian élites were to draw the peoples of the empire away from centrifugal nationalism and towards a centripetal universalism, it would not be to the universalist civilization or “high culture” of Orthodox Christianity, the official religion of the empire, but to the quite different “high culture” of West European liberalism. What actually happened was a kind of bifurcation. Orthodoxy continued to be preached, with positive results, to the pagans and

---

145 Lieven, Empire, op. cit., p. 276.
to the peasants, but the intelligentsia also continued to preach their gospel, the gospel of westernism, constitutionalism and ecumenism, with the most catastrophic results for the whole world...

Figes notes that it was not the liberals, with their emphasis on individual human rights, who exploited the nationalist unrest among the empire's non-Russian peoples, but the socialists. “This socialistic aspect of the nationalist movements is worth underlining. For the late twentieth-century reader might be tempted to assume, on the basis of the collapse of Communism and the rise of nationalism in Eastern Europe, that they must have been opposed to socialist goals. What is striking about the nationalist movements within the Russian Empire is that their most successful political variants were nearly always socialist in form: Joseph Pilsudski’s Polish Socialist Party led the national movement in Poland; the Socialist Party became the national party of the Finns; the Baltic movements were led by socialists; the Ukrainians Socialist Revolutionaries were the leading Ukrainian national party; the Mensheviks led the Georgian national movement; and the Dashnak socialists the Armenian one. This was in part because the main ethnic conflict also tended to run along social lines: Estonian and Latvian peasants against German landlords and merchants; Ukrainian peasants against Polish or Russian landlords and officials; Azeri workers, or Georgian peasants, against the Armenian bourgeoisie; Kazakh and Kirghiz pastoralists against Russian farmers; and so on. Parties which appealed exclusively to nationalism effectively deprived themselves of mass support; whereas those which successfully combined the national with the social struggle had an almost unstoppable democratic force...”

The Liberation Movement

“By 1902-3,” writes Dominic Lieven, “rumblings of revolution, or at least of fundamental constitutional change, were in the air. Not everyone heard them. Even in April 1904, three months before his assassination, the Minister of Internal Affairs, Vyacheslav Plehve, did not believe in ‘the closeness of danger’ to the regime. Plehve’s optimism was partly based on the belief that ‘in the event of things going to extremes, the government will find support in the peasantry and urban lower-middle class’. In addition he recalled having survived earlier times of crisis and panic. ‘I have lived through more than one moment like the one we are living through now,’ he commented. ‘After the First of March [1881: the day Alexander II was assassinated] Count Loris-Melikov said to Plehve on the day after Alexander III rejected Alexander II’s constitution that “the Tsar will be killed and you and I will be hanged on a gallows”. Nothing happened though.’

“Other senior officials were less optimistic, often understanding better than Plehve that opposition to the government was by now much broader and

146 Figes, op. cit., p. 71.
deeper than had been the case a quarter of a century before. Kireev himself commented, as early as October 1900, that ‘I have seen a lot of intelligent people recently and in one voice, some with joy… others with horror, they all say that the present system of government has outlived its era and we are heading towards a constitution.’ Even the very conservative Konstantin Pobedonostsev agreed on this. A year later Kireev stated that in upper-class and senior bureaucratic circles ‘in the eyes of the great majority a constitutional order is the only salvation’. He himself believed, however, that ‘it is precisely this [constitutional order] which will in fact destroy us’. Like Alexander Polovtsov his eyes were turned towards the peasant masses, with their huge numbers and their potential for anarchy and socialism. ‘For the time being the peasants are still firm, still untouched. They are, as before, monarchists. But anyone can throw them into a muddle.’

“Those with the greatest interest in throwing the masses ‘into a muddle’ were of course the revolutionary socialist parties. Russian revolutionary socialism in the early twentieth century was divided into two currents, one Marxist, the other not. The former strand was represented by the Social Democrats, who in 1903 split into two factions, Menshevik and Bolshevik. The non-Marxist strand comprised the Socialist Revolutionary Party, formally constituted only in 1901, but deriving its ideas, traditions and older cadres from the nineteenth-century Russian socialist movement. In terms of ideas, the greatest distinction between the two was that the Marxists believed that the urban workers would spearhead the socialist revolution, which could only occur after capitalism had fully developed. The Socialist Revolutionary Party, on the other hand, claimed that a coalition of peasants, workers and poorer members of the intelligentsia and lower-middle class would achieve the socialist revolution, which could come immediately if the revolutionary parties pursued the proper tactics and exploited their opportunities.

“Unlike the Social Democrats, the Socialist Revolutionaries [called SRs] carried out a campaign of terror against leading officials as part of their strategy, killing three ministers between 1901 and 1904 alone and in the process sowing a good deal of alarm and confusion in the government. Partly for this reason the security police tended to regard the Socialist Revolutionaries as a more immediate and dangerous threat than the Social Democrats. The evaluation was not the product of mere panic or short-sightedness. The Marxists’ dogmatism and their obsession with the working class seemed to make them unlikely leaders of a successful revolution in a still overwhelmingly peasant country in which capitalism was only beginning to take root. Moreover, the fact that the majority of Social Democratic leaders were non-Russians, and a great number were Jews, made it seem less likely than ever that they would be able to compete with the Socialist Revolutionaries for the support of the Russian masses. Events were in part to prove the police right. When the monarchy fell in 1917 it was indeed the Socialist Revolutionaries who enjoyed by far the most popularity among the
masses, not only in the countryside but also generally in the cities. Russia’s socialist future should have lain in their hands. The combination of their own ineptitude, Lenin’s intelligence and ruthlessness, and the specific conditions of wartime Russia were to deprive the Socialist Revolutionaries of the spoils of victory.

“In Russia socialist parties existed long before liberal ones. The Russian intelligentsia borrowed its ideas from the more developed societies of Central and Western Europe and had already created revolutionary socialist groups by the 1860s. The origins of Russia’s liberal parties on the other hand only go back to the foundation of the so-called Liberation Movement in 1901. From the very start this movement was divided into two main currents, which were to split in 1905-6 into the more radical, Constitutional Democratic [known as the Cadets], and more conservative, Octobrist, strands of Russian liberalism. In sociological terms this split roughly coincided with the division between members of the professional and intellectual middle class on the one hand, and liberal landowners on the other. In terms of ideas, the basic divide came over whether one would insist on full-scale parliamentary government or accept some compromise combining elements of popular representation with parts of the existing regime. All sections of the Liberation Movement were, however, united in demanding civil rights and the end of the absolute monarchy. By 1904-5 the movement proved capable of mobilizing a broad coalition of supporters from middle- and upper-class Russia and of forging links with parts of the workers’ movement too. Though never likely in the long run to be able to compete with the socialists for mass support, the Liberation Movement was nevertheless a great challenge to the regime. Its wealthy activists, who often dominated the zemstvos, provided protection and patronage for a wide range of people opposed to the regime, some of them very radical. Many figures in the Liberation Movement came from the same world as senior officialdom and were even at times close relations. Such people were not easy to silence by mere repression and their arguments often carried conviction with liberal members of the ruling elite, weakening the government’s unity in the fact of the revolution.”

\[147\] Lieven, Nicholas II: Emperor of all the Russians, London: Pimlico, 1994, pp. 89-91. Pipes describes the origin of this movement as follows: “The ranks of zemstvo constitutionalists were augmented in 1901 by a small but influential group of intellectuals, defectors from Social-Democracy who had found intolerable its partisanship and dogmatism. The most prominent among them was Peter Struve, the author of the founding manifesto of the Social-Democratic Party and one of its outstanding theoreticians. Struve and his friends proposed to forge a national front, encompassing parties and groupings from the extreme left to the moderate right, under the slogan ‘Down with the Autocracy’. Struve emigrated to Germany and with money provided by zemstvo friends founded there in 1902 the journal Osvobozhdienie (Liberation). The periodical carried information not permitted in censored publications, including secret government documents supplied by sympathizers within the bureaucracy. Issues smuggled into Russia helped forge a community of ‘Liberationists’ (Osvobozhdentsy) from which, in time, would emerge the Constitutional-Democratic Party. In January 1904, its supporters founded in St. Petersburg the Union of Liberation (Soiuz Osvobozhdentia) to promote constitutionalism and civil rights. Its branches in many towns
The stated objectives of the Russian liberals, continues Pipes, “were not different from those of the Western liberals. In their strategy and tactics, however, the Russian liberals drew very close to the radicals: as Paul Miliukov, their leader, like to boast, their political program ‘was the most leftist of all those advanced by analogous groups in Western Europe’. Ivan Petrunkevich, another leading Kadet, thought that Russian ‘liberals, radicals, and revolutionaries’ were distinguished not by political objectives but by temperament.

“This left-wing tendency was dictated by two considerations. The liberals, appealing to the mass electorate, had to compete with radical parties, which also stood to the left of their Western European counterparts, making the most extreme and utopian promises to the electorate. It was a challenge they had to meet. To steal the thunder from the socialists, the liberals adopted a radical social program, which included a demand for the expropriation of large landed estates (with compensation at ‘fair’ rather than market prices), as well as Church and state properties, for distribution to the peasants. Their platform also called for a comprehensive program of social welfare. They would turn a deaf ear to the counsels of moderation, afraid of ‘compromising’ themselves in the eyes of the masses and losing out to the socialists.

“Even more compelling were tactical reasons. To wrest from the autocracy first a constitution and a legislative parliament and then parliamentary democracy, the liberals required leverage. This they found in the threat of revolution. In 1905-7 and then again in 1915 -17, they urged the monarchy to make political concessions to them as a way of avoiding a much worse fate. The party maintained discreet silence in regard to SR terror, which its liberal principles should have caused it to condemn outright.

“The political practice of the Kadets thus displayed a troublesome ambivalence – dread of revolution and exploitation of the revolution – and proved a gross miscalculation: playing with the revolutionary threat contributed not a little to promoting the very thing the liberals most wished to avoid. But this they would realise only after the event, when it was too late.

“Although more moderate than the socialists, the liberals gave the Imperial regime greater trouble, because they had in their ranks socially prominent individuals who could engage in politics under the guise of legitimate professional activity. Socialist students were fair game for the police. But who would dare to lay hands on a Prince Shakhovskoi or a Prince Dolgorukov, even as they were busy organizing a subversive liberal party? And how could attracted moderate elements as well as socialists, especially Socialists-Revolutionaries. (The Social-Democrats, insisting on their ‘hegemony’ in the struggle against the regime, refused to collaborate.) These circles, operating semi-legally, did much to stimulate discontent with existing conditions.” (op. cit., pp. 151-152) (V.M.)
one interfere with gatherings of physicians or jurists, although it was common knowledge that the participants discussed forbidden subjects? This difference in social status explains why the directing organizations of the liberals could function inside Russia, virtually free of police interference, while the SRs and SDs had to operate from abroad. It also explains why in both 1905 and 1917 the liberals were the first on the scene and in charge, weeks before their socialist rivals made an appearance.

“The Russian liberal movement had two main bases of support: the zemstva and the intelligentsia.

“The zemstva were elected on a franchise that ensured solid representation of the landed gentry, then considered by the monarchy to be a staunch supporter. They functioned on the district and provincial level, but the government did not allow them to form a national organization, fearing that it would arrogate to itself quasi-parliamentary functions. The elected deputies tended to be either liberal-constitutionalists or Slavophile conservatives, both hostile to the autocracy and bureaucratic rule, but opposed to revolution. The salaried personnel hired by the zemstva (agronomists, physicians, teachers, etc.), known as the Third Element, was more radical but also non-revolutionary.

“Properly treated, the zemstva might have helped stabilize the monarchy. But for the conservatives in the bureaucracy, and especially those in the ministry of the Interior, the zemstvy were an intolerable irritant: busybodies who meddled in affairs that were none of their business and hindered the efficient administration of the provinces. Under their influence, Alexander III in 1890 restricted the authority of the zemstva, giving the governors wide latitude to interfere with their personnel and activities.”

And with good reason: Pipes here fails to mention the degree to which the zemstva’s 70,000 teachers, doctors, statisticians and agronomists, collectively known as the “Third Element” (as opposed to the first two elements, the administrators and elected deputies), inculcated liberal ideas in the young. To consider that these ideas were “radical but also non-revolutionary” is naïve. The Interior Minister Plehve called them “the cohorts of the sans-culottes”; he believed that, coming themselves from a peasant or lower-class background, they were trying to use their position in the zemstva to stir up the peasantry. The radical schoolteachers raised a whole generation of radical schoolchildren. Their influence on millions of the younger generation was undoubtedly one of the main causes of the revolution. Alexander III and Pobedonostsev, made valiant attempts to counter this corrupting influence by encouraging and financing a vast web of church-parish schools, a policy continued by Nicholas II. However, the struggle was an unequal one: the

148 Pipes, op. cit., pp. 149-151.
149 Figes, A People’s Tragedy, p. 51.
zemstvo schools had more money, and even some of the teachers in the church-parish schools were infected by liberal ideas.

Pipes continues: “Harrassed by the authorities, zemstvo leaders in the 1890s held informal national consultations, often disguised as professional and scientific meetings. In 1899, they went further, organizing in Moscow a discussion group called Beseda (Symposium). Its membership was sufficiently prominent socially and professionally for the police to look at its meetings through their fingers: these took place in the Moscow mansion of Princes Peter and Paul Dolgorukov.

“In June 1900, the government once again restricted the competence of the zemstva, this time in the realm of taxation. It further ordered the dismissal of zemstvo deputies who were especially active in promoting constitutional causes. In response, Symposium, which until then had confined its deliberations to zemstvo affairs, turned attention to political questions. To many zemtsy, the government’s persecution raised the fundamental question whether it made sense to pursue ‘constructive’, apolitical work under a regime dominated by bureaucracy and police bent on stifling every manifestation of public initiative. These doubts were heightened by the publication in 1901 in Germany of a confidential memorandum by Witte which urged the total abolition of zemstva as institutions incompatible with autocracy…

“At the beginning of the twentieth century, there were in Russia thousands of men and women committed to fundamental change. A good part of them were ‘professional revolutionaries’, a novel breed who dedicated their lives to plotting political violence. They and their supporters might quarrel among themselves about strategy and tactics – whether to engage in terror, whether to ‘socialize’ or ‘nationalize’ the land, whether to treat the peasant as an ally or as an enemy of the worker. But they were at one on the central issue: that there was to be no accommodation, no compromise with the existing social, economic and political regime, that it had to be destroyed, root and branch, not only in Russian but throughout the world. So strong was the influence of these extremists that even Russia’s liberals came under their spell…

“The fact that the intelligentsia rejected any accommodation with official Russia, that it exacerbated discontent and opposed reform, made it unlikely that Russia’s problems could be peacefully resolved…”150

The Sarov Days

“From 1895 to 1901,” writes Archpriest Lev Lebedev, “four daughters were born to the Tsar and Tsarina: Great Princesses Olga, Tatiana, Maria and Anastasia. But an Heir was needed! Because of the absence of an Heir

150 Pipes, op. cit., p. 152.
complications arose in the official definition of the order of succession to the Throne. From the end of the 19th century and in the first years of the 20th, there was a sharp increase in students’ and workers’ disturbances. Under the influence of revolutionaries the workers’ strikes and demonstrations acquired not only an economic, but also a political character. Terrorist parties appeared again, and the murders of state functionaries began. In such a situation, clarity in the matter of the succession of tsarist power was more necessary than ever – an Heir was needed! It seemed that for a pair who had had four daughters this could happen only by a miracle, since medical means did not help. Various people renowned for the gift of healing were invited, beginning with natives ones (certain ‘blessed’ ones) and ending with foreigners such as the Frenchman Philippe. But nobody was able to help. The thought arose that a miracle could take place through the intercession of St. Seraphim of Sarov, whose glorification, on the initiative of the Tsar, was already being prepared.

“The Royal Family had known about the great Wonderworker of the Russian Land for a long time. But a particular impression was made on the Tsar and Tsarina by the book A Chronicle of the Seraphimo-Diveyevo Women’s Monastery, written and given personally to Nicholas II by Archimandrite Seraphim (Chichagov) – a scion of a noble family, one of the most educated and talented representatives of the nobility, who want to exchange a military career for monastic asceticism… In the Chronicle there were so many teachings, words of the holy elder of Sarov, prophecies, information about his miracles that the Royal Family was inspired with great faith in him! The triumphant glorification of Seraphim of Sarov, who had already been widely venerated in the people for a long time, was appointed from July 17-20, 1903. The Tsar came to Sarov with his whole family, his mother, the widowed Empress Maria Fyodorovna, his brothers, the Great Princes, other members of the Imperial House, and his suite. The Royal Family had never undertaken such a pilgrimage before. It was unlike any of the other journeys undertaken by the Tsar and Tsaritsa to holy places. Up to 300,000 worshippers from every corner of Russia assembled in Sarov for those days. Nicholas II tried to be present at all the long, almost unending services. The peak of the festivities was the transfer of the relics of St. Seraphim from the monastery’s hospital church of SS. Zosimas and Sabbatius, where he had been buried, into the Dormition cathedral of the Sarov community on July 18. The coffin with the relics was borne on their shoulders by the Tsar, the Great Princes and the hierarchs, tightly surrounded by a sea of people.”

The festivities were truly an icon of Holy Russia: the Royal Family and the Great Princes mixed with thousands of peasants in the true, unforced union that only the true worship of God and the veneration of His saints can produce. Many miracles of healing took place, and those who were present witnessed to the extraordinary spiritual peace and joy that was granted the worshippers.

“Something unseen and unheard took place. The Russian Tsar and his Family were for several days in immediate prayerful union with hundreds of thousands (!) of Russian people, praying together with them, in their very heart. The secret police were as it were dissolved in this mass; in fact, there was essentially no need for its presence! It was truly ‘with one heart and one mouth’ that the Orthodox people glorified God, the God-pleaser Seraphim and God’s Anointed, Tsar Nicholas II!... Such a meeting with Holy Russia, represented by such a multitude of the people and with the breathing of the special grace of God, bound up with the glorification of St. Seraphim of Sarov, turned out to be the first for the Royal Couple and... the last...

“The Sarov days of 1903 became a key event in the whole reign. During the festivities the Tsar received from the widow of P.A. Motovilov a letter of St. Seraphim of Sarov addressed precisely to him, Nicholas II ['to the Tsar in whose reign I shall be glorified'], ‘sealed (but never opened!) with the soft part of a piece of bread. The Tsar read the letter and his face changed, and after reading it... he wept (neither before nor after this did anyone see him in tears). To this day nobody knows what was in the letter. We can guess that it contained some kind of prophecy about his destiny, or the destiny of Russia. In the same period Nicholas II visited the fool-for-Christ Pasha of Sarov... She symbolically (by means of a doll) foretold to the Tsar the birth of a son, and spoke much with him in figurative language. The Tsar left amazed and joyful: ‘I have travelled across the whole of Russia and have not met such a saint. Everyone has received me as Tsar, but she as a simple person,’ he said. Pasha placed the portrait of Nicholas II in her prayer corner and made many prostrations to the earth in front of it, which greatly exhausted her cell-attendants who used to lift and lower Pasha since she could not make prostrations herself because of illness. ‘Matushka, why are you praying to the Tsar?!’ they asked. ‘You know nothing,’ replied the blessed one. ‘He will be higher than all the Tsars.’ When war began in 1914 Pasha, covered in tears, began to kiss the feet of the Tsar on the portrait, saying: ‘Dear one, it is already near the end,’ and sent him the message: ‘Your Majesty, come down from the Throne yourself’...

“The visit to Sarov quickly produced results: On July 30 / August 12, 1904 the Heir to the Throne Alexis Nikolayevich was born! We can imagine the joy of the Crown-Bearing Parents! In the first months of the life of the new-born it was still not known what a terrible disease nestled in him He looked completely healthy, he was simply a beautiful child...

“Now we can understand how the thought of the Tsar about the return of Russia to the pre-Petrine foundations of life were linked into one with the impressions and feeling that arose in the Royal Couple in the Sarov days...”

152 Lebedev, op.cit., p. 390.
The Sarov days were like a last warm glow from the fading fire of Holy Rus’. They demonstrated that the ideal of a nation united by the Orthodox faith and in submission to a benevolent Tsar-Father was still a living reality. And indeed, there were many great saints still living in Russia at that time, such as the Optina Elders and St. John of Kronstadt, and many hundreds of thousands more who would suffer martyrdom during the Soviet period. These holy people were the fruit of Holy Russia, and its justification. And this holy fruit did not ripen in spite of the tsarist regime, but under its protection and with its active support, the proof of which would be the holiness of the Tsar-Martyr himself and his martyred family...

It was during the Sarov days that “Blessed Pasha” of Sarov, the fool-for-Christ, prophesied to the Royal Couple that they would have a son and heir. Dominic Lieven writes: "Between 1895 and 1901 the Empress had given birth to four daughters: Olga, Tatiana, Marie and Anastasia. The four little girls were beautiful, healthy and lively children who were greatly loved by their parents. Nicholas was a fine father and the family circle was full of love, warmth and trust. If the Emperor had a favourite it was probably Tatiana, whose personality came closest to that of her mother. Olga, his eldest daughter, was the most thoughtful, sensitive and intelligent of the four. Marie, the third, with huge grey eyes and a warm-hearted, simple, friendly manner, was always the easiest to get on with at first acquaintance. Anastasia, born in 1901, was notorious as the family’s comedian. Under Russian law, however, no woman could inherit the crown. Had Nicholas died before 1904, the throne would have gone to his kind-hearted but weak-willed younger brother, the Grand Duke Michael. Since Michael was a bachelor in 1904 and subsequently contracted an illegal and morganatic marriage, the Romanov inheritance would then have passed to a younger brother of Alexander III, the Grand Duke Vladimir, and his descendents. Tension and mutual dislike between the ‘Vladimir branch’ and the imperial couple were never far below the surface in the twentieth century. Much therefore hung on the life of the little boy born in August, 1904. All the more horrifying was the discovery that the child had haemophilia.

"In the Edwardian era there was no treatment for haemophilia and little way of alleviating the terrible pain it periodically caused. The chances were against a haemophiliac living into middle age, let alone being able to pursue a normal life. For any parents who loved their children as intensely as the imperial couple did, the physical and emotional strain of a haemophiliac son was bound to be great. In the case of Nicholas and Alexandra, however, matters were made worse by the fact that it was considered unthinkable to admit that the future autocrat of all the Russias was incurably ill and quite possibly doomed to an early death. The natural sympathy and understanding which might have flowed to the parents had therefore to be foregone. Moreover, however harrowing one of Aleksei’s periodic illnesses might be, a monarch - let alone a Russian autocrat - had always to keep up appearances.
It says something for Nicholas's extraordinary self-control that, adoring Aleksei as he did, he nevertheless never let the mask slip. As Alexandra herself once wrote to him, 'you will always keep a cheery face and carry all hidden inside.'

"Inevitably, however, it was the mother who bore the greater burden during her son's illnesses, not to mention the incessant worry even when he was relatively healthy. Nor could she escape the guilt born of the knowledge that she was the cause of her son's suffering and of the extra burden of worry about his dynasty's future which had been placed on her husband's shoulders. Physically frail and always very highly strung, the Empress poured her last drop of energy into watching over her son and nursing him during his attacks... The effort cost the Empress dear. She was often too ill and exhausted to play the role of a monarch's consort, incurring great odium as a result. Moreover, the strain of Alexis' illness pushed his mother close to nervous collapse. As the Grand Duchess Olga commented, 'the birth of a son, which should have been the happiest event in the lives of Nicky and Alicky, became their heaviest cross.'"\[153\]

**Peasant Russia**

However, the bitter fact was that on the whole the Russian people was falling away from Christianity. And not only among the westernized educated classes. The peasants, too – that class which the tsars believed was most devoted to Altar and Throne – were losing their zeal.

Thus “according to an analysis of the Church's books of registration of confession, it was quite usual for Russian peasants at the end of the 19th century not to confess their sins and not to partake of Holy Communion for several years. Only around 20 per cent of the peasants per year in Central Russia used to go to confession.”\[154\] It was this fact that, more than any other, pointed to the fall of the dynasty and Holy Russia...

For the time being, however, it was hidden from the consciousness of the tsar himself. He was not to know that the rapturous expressions of devotion he received from peasant delegations in many parts of the country, and most strikingly in Sarov in 1903, came from an ever-dwindling proportion of the common people. He was not to know that Sarov, 1903 marked the high point of his reign, after which it would be a steady descent into anarchy...

---

Dominic Lieven writes: “At the turn of the century... the government was less scared by working-class militancy than by growing evidence of peasant discontent. In June 1901 A.A. Polovtsov wrote: ‘after the students’ disorders there have followed strikes and factor workers’ battles with the police. Next the peasant mass will rise up with a demand for land. Today’s militia [the conscript army], torn away from this very land for a short period, will not use its weapons to curb these appetites, which it itself shares. This will be the end of the Russia which we know.’ Nine months later, when a wave of arson and rioting swept the countryside in Poltava and Kharkov provinces, Polovtsov’s prediction seemed amply justified. In the wake of these agrarian troubles the Secretary to the Committee of Ministers, Anatol Kulomzin, sought to reassure his wife. There had always, he wrote, been agrarian riots of this kind in Russia, during which peasants customarily paid back stewards and foremen for a multitude of old scores and minor injustices. Troops had refused to open fire on only one occasion, and even then out of simple dislike for he officer who gave the order. Alexander Kireev had less reason to hide his fears since his comments were confined to his private diary. ‘I think we can cope with the students and co. without difficulty, but millions of peasants... that’s a completely different matter.’

“Witte’s response was to claim, correctly, that ‘the picture of the peasants’ miserable condition is greatly exaggerated’, particularly by opponents of the government’s economic policy who sought to hide their selfish interests or ideological preferences behind claims that the Ministry of Finance was ruining the peasantry. Throughout the 1890s Witte opposed direct subsidies or cheap credit to agriculture as a waste of scarce resources. In his view investment in industry was more useful even for the rural population because jobs in the cities would reduce land hunger in the villages and, above all, provide agriculture with markets for its produce and therefore with the incentive to modernize. Witte doubted whether big capital investments in noble estates could ever be justified given the low costs of production in the Americas and Australasia, whose agricultural produce was now flooding the world market. Though more sympathetic as regards cheap credit for peasant farms, he argued that the structure of peasant landowning made large-scale lending to the peasantry very dangerous. By law most peasant farms belonged not to individuals or even families but to the whole village community. Nor could this land be sold or mortgaged. As a result there was no way to secure loans or recover debts from the peasantry, as the latter knew only too well.

“By the early twentieth century, however, it was no longer possible for Witte to shrug off attacks on his indifference to peasant needs. Political pressure to ‘do something about agriculture’ was building up, as was fear of peasant discontent. After a tour of the provinces at the turn of the century even the rather dim Dmitri Sipyagin, the Minister of Internal Affairs, commented that ‘we are standing on a volcano’. In addition, the state’s
finances were in increasing disarray, and the need to increase its revenues pressing.

“Nicholas II was kept well informed about the problem of both the peasantry and the treasury. In addition to receiving regular reports on these subjects from his ministers, he also on occasion was sent special memoranda by other high officials. In the spring of 1903, for instance, the Emperor received an analysis of his country’s budgetary crisis from Peter Saburov, a senior official whose career had included service both as an ambassador and as a financial expert, a very unusual combination in Victorian Europe. Saburov warned Nicholas that the huge and always increasing costs of the arms race ‘together with the sad economic position of the mass of the tax-paying population naturally arouse fears for the stability of the state’s finances... To restore the state’s fiscal power is only possible by means of raising the economic position of the peasantry... But it is already becoming clear that to fulfil this necessary but complicated task heavy sacrifices from the treasury will be needed.’

“Both Serge Witte and Vladimir Kokovtsov, who succeeded the critically ill Edvard Pleske as Minister of Finance in 1904, shared Saburov’s concern about the parlous state of Russia’s finances. Kokovtsov indeed commented that ‘I look with alarm on our economic and financial position’ and condemned what he described as the ‘fantasies’ that underlay much government expenditure. ‘These fantasies I see all around,’ he added: ‘in the exorbitant and unreasonable strengthening of the fleet, in our active foreign policy waged at the expense of the peasant’s hungry stomach... [in] the automatic attempt to get money for everything instead of stopping this saturnalia of expenditure and beginning to reduce the tax burden to a measure where it corresponds with the growth in income.’ But whereas Witte and Kokovtsov, like Saburov, believed that excessive armaments were the key to Russia’s financial problems, neither shared his view that international agreement to the reduction of armaments was possible, or indeed his conviction that the first step in this direction should be made through a deal between Nicholas II and the German Kaiser. Nor could the Tsar have any illusions on this score since the failure of his appeal for a reduction of armaments in 1898 had taught him the impossibility of halting the arms race. But, as Serge Witte pointed out to Nicholas in January 1902, if the escalation of defence costs could not be halted, it was hard to see how the peasants’ tax burden could be greatly reduced or large sums provided for the modernization of village life and peasant agriculture. The conclusion drawn by Witte was that improvement of the peasants’ lot would have to come less from the largesse of the treasury than from changes in the system of peasant landholding. The farmer, he told Nicholas, must have individual rights and freedom, including unrestricted property rights to his land. In other words, Witte was calling for the abolition of the peasant commune, the cornerstone of Russia’s rural economy and society.
“Ever since the abolition of serfdom in 1861, indeed to some extent even before that, the commune had been the most important institution in Russian rural life. The peasant community, which was usually but not always made up of inhabitants of a single village, administered and judged by its own members through officials elected by itself. It also bore collective responsibility for paying the state’s taxes. Although in principle the administrative, judicial and fiscal institutions of the village were distinct from the community’s collective ownership of the land, in practice the power of the commune was enormously enhanced by the fact that it controlled, and in many cases periodically redistributed, the villagers’ basic source of wealth.

“Defenders of the commune believed it was a form of social welfare, which would ensure that no peasant would go without the means of survival. They felt that at least until the capitalist economy had developed to the point where millions of secure jobs existed in the cities, the only way to avoid pauperization was to ensure that any peasant, even if he was temporarily resident in a town, would have a plot of land on which to fall back. Because the masses would not be destitute and would have rights to the use of property, it was believed that they would be more immune to radical and socialist propaganda than urban workers and landless agricultural labourers in the West. Not even the most ardent defenders of the commune would probably have argued that, from the narrow perspective of agricultural modernization, it was the best form of landownership; they did deny, and probably rightly, that it was as serious an obstacle to technical improvement as its enemies suggested. The fact that the commune was seen to be an old Russian institution which would preserve the country from the perils that had attended modernization in the West also added to its appeal. Anatol Kulomzin, for instance, was very much on the liberal and Westernizing wing of the ruling elite. He wrote, however, that even he swallowed whole the Russian nationalist view of the commune, so flattering to patriotic pride, and ‘only troubles of 1905-6 which pointed to the socialist spirit which the commune had bred in the life of the peasantry finally sobered me.’”¹⁵⁵

Here was the central paradox of the peasant question: that its basic institution, the commune, both protected from socialism of the western, Marxist type, and fostered socialism of the eastern, “Asiatic” type. The latter we may also call “peasant socialism”, since it is found to a greater or lesser extent in many peasant societies. For some degree of communal ownership of land is a characteristic of almost all pre-industrial societies, and the transition from a mainly agricultural to a mainly industrial economy is almost always accompanied by the taking over of communal lands into private ownership.

Now the commune and “peasant socialism” was doomed in Russia from the moment that Alexander II decided, after the defeat in the Crimean War, to

---

enter upon the path of industrialization. For industrialization required industrial workers living near industrial centres, which meant that peasants had to be free to sell up and move - in other words, they had to be free citizens in relation to their noble owners and free landholders in relation to their communes. The problem was that, while emancipation had made them citizens and freed them from the bonds of the landowner, it had not made them truly independent of the commune and therefore truly independent landholders. In fact, since emancipation had made many nobles poorer, persuading them, too, - seven out of ten of them\(^{156}\) - to move to the cities, the communes had become even stronger, moving into the cultural void left by the nobility and controlling more land that used to belong to the nobility. (This was in contrast to, for example, Britain, where the landowning nobility remained powerful in the countryside long into the industrial age.) And so, though doomed in the longer term, peasant socialism for a time became more powerful and more aggressive.

Pipes writes: “The muzhik had no notion of property rights in the Roman sense of absolute dominion over things. According to one authority, Russian peasants did not even have a word for landed property (zemel’naia sobstvennost’): they only spoke of possession (vladenie), which in their mind was indissolubly bound up with physical labor. Indeed, the muzhik was not even able clearly to distinguish the land to which he held legal title by virtue of purchase from his communal allotment and from the land which he leased, all of which he called ‘our land’: ‘The expression “our land” in the mouth of the peasant includes indiscriminately the whole land he occupies for the time being, the land which is his private property... the land held in common by the village (which is therefore only in temporary possession of each household), and also the land rented by the village from neighbouring landlords.’ The muzhik’s whole attitude toward landed property derived from a collective memory of centuries of nomadic agriculture, when land was as abundant as water in the sea and available to all. The ‘slash-and-burn’ method of cultivating virgin forest had gone out of use in most of Russia in the late Middle Ages, but the recollection of the time when peasants roamed the forest, felling trees and cultivating the ash-covered clearings, remained very much alive. Labor and labor alone transformed res nullius into possession: because virgin soil was not touched by labor, it could not be owned. To the peasant’s mind, appropriation of lumber was a crime, because it was the product of labor, whereas felling trees was not. Similarly, peasants believed that ‘he who cuts down a tree with a beehive in it is a thief, because he appropriates human labor; he who cuts down a forest which no one has planted benefits from God’s gift, which is as free as water and air.’ Such a viewpoint, of course, had nothing in common with the rights of property as upheld in Russia’s courts. No wonder that a high proportion of the criminal offenses for which peasants were convicted had to do with illegal cutting of trees. This attitude was not motivated by class antagonism: it applied as much

\(^{156}\) Pipes, op. cit., p. 112.
to land and forest owned by fellow peasants. The belief that the expenditure of manual labor alone justified wealth was a fundamental article of faith of the Russian peasantry, and for this reason it despised landlords, bureaucrats, industrial workers, priests, and intellectuals as ‘idlers’. Radical intellectuals exploited this attitude to denigrate businessmen and officials.”

Pipes probably exaggerates the contempt of the ordinary peasant for non-peasants here, and in particular for priests. The priest was often as poor as himself, and had to work his own allotment in order to survive. The period after the revolution showed that the solidarity between priest and peasant was still a powerful bond in many villages. In general, however, there can be no question but that a different attitude to landownership put many peasants at odds not only with the property-owning classes, officials and businessmen, but also with the Tsar and the Church, which upheld the traditional – that is to say, the Roman – concept of ownership.

Pipes continues: “Such thinking underlay the universal belief of the Russian peasantry after Emancipation in the inevitable advent of a nationwide repartition of private land. In 1861, the liberated serfs could not understand why approximately one-half of the land which they had previously tilled was given to the landlords. At first, they refused to believe in the genuineness of such an absurd law. Later, after they had reconciled themselves to it, they decided that it was a temporary arrangement, soon to be annulled by a new law that would turn over to them, for communal distribution, all privately held land, including that of other peasants. Legends circulating in the villages had as one of their recurrent themes the prediction of the imminent appearance of a ‘Savior’ who would make all of Russia into a land of communes. ‘The peasants believe,’ according to A.N. Engelgardt, who spent many years living in their midst and wrote what is possibly the best book on their habits and mentality, ‘that after the passage of some time, in the course of census-taking, there will take place a general levelling of all the land throughout Russia, just as presently, in every commune, at certain intervals, there takes place a repartitioning of the land among its members, each being allotted as much as he can manage. This completely idiosyncratic conception derives directly from the totality of peasant agrarian relations. In the communes, after a lapse of time, there takes place a redistribution of land, an equalization among its members. Under the [anticipated] general repartition, all the land will be repartitioned, and the communes will be equalized. The issue here is not simply the seizure of landlord land, as the journalists would have it, but the equalization of all the land, including that which belongs to peasants. Peasants who have purchased land as property, or, as they put it, ‘for eternity’, talk exactly as do all the other peasants, and have no doubt whatever that the ‘lands to which they hold legal title’ can be taken away from their rightful owners and given to others.’ The soundness of this insight would be demonstrated in 1917-18.

“Peasants expected the national repartition of land to occur any day and to bring them vast increments: five, ten, twenty, and even forty hectares per household. It was a faith that kept the central Russian village in a state of permanent tension: ‘In 1879 [following the war with Turkey] all expected that a ‘new decree’ would be issued concerning land. At the time, every small occurrence gave rise to rumors of a ‘new decree’. Should a local village official... deliver the landlord a paper requiring some sort of statistical information about land, cattle, structures, etc., the village would at once call a meeting, and there it would be said that a paper had come to the landlord about the land, that soon a ‘new decree’ would be issued, that in the spring surveyors would come to divide the land. Should the police prohibit the landlord of a mortgaged estate to cut lumber for sale, it was said that the prohibition was due to the fact that the Treasury would soon take over the forest, and then it would be available to all: pay one ruble and cut all you want. Should anyone take out a loan on his estate, it was said that the landlords had gotten wind that the land would be equalized, and so they hurried to turn their properties over to the Treasury for cash.’

“Such thinking meant that the Russian village was forever poised to attack private (non-communal) properties: it was kept in check only by fear. This produced a most unhealthy situation. The revolutionary potential was an ever-present reality, in spite of the peasant’s anti-revolutionary, pro-monarchist sentiments. But then his radicalism was not inspired by political or even class animus. (When asked what should happen to landlords who had been evicted from their lands in consequence of the ‘Black Repartition’, some peasants would suggest they be place on a government salary.) Tolstoy put his finger on the crux of the problem when shortly after Emancipation he wrote: ‘The Russian revolution will not be against the Tsar and despotism but against landed property. It will say: from me, the human being, take what you want, but leave us all the land.’

“In the late nineteenth century, the peasant assumed that the nationwide repartition would be ordered by the Tsar: in peasant legends of the time, the ‘Savior’, the ‘Great Leveller’, was invariably the ‘true tsar’. The belief fortified the peasantry’s instinctive monarchism. Accustomed to the authority of the bol’shak in the household, by analogy it viewed the Tsar as the bol’shak or master (khoziain) of the country. The peasant ‘saw in the Tsar the actual owner and father of Russia, who directly managed his immense household’ – a primitive version of the patrimonial principle underlying Russian political culture. The reason why the peasant felt so confident that the Tsar would sooner or later order a general partition of the land was that, as he saw it, it lay in the monarch’s interest to have all the lands justly distributed and properly cultivated.
“Such attitudes provide the background to the peasant’s political philosophy, which, for all its apparent contradictions, had a certain logic. To the peasant, government was a power that compelled obedience: its main attribute was the ability to coerce people to do things which, left to themselves, they would never do, such as pay taxes, serve in the army, and respect private property in land. By this definition, a weak government was no government. The epithet Groznyi applied to the mentally unbalanced and sadistic Ivan IV, usually rendered in English as ‘Terrible’, actually meant ‘Awesome’ and carried no pejorative meaning. Personas who possessed vlast’ (authority) and did not exercise it in an ‘awe-inspiring’ manner could be ignored. Observance of laws for the peasant invariably represented submission to a force majeure, to the will of someone stronger, not the recognition of some commonly shared principle or interest. ‘Today, as in the days of serfdom,’ wrote the Slavophile Iurii Samarin, ‘the peasant knows no other sure pledge of the genuineness of imperial commands than the display of armed force: a round of musketry still is to him the only authentic confirmation of the imperial commands.’ In this conception, moral judgement of governments or their actions was as irrelevant as approval or condemnation of the vagaries of nature. There were no ‘good’ or ‘bad’ governments: there were only strong and weak ones, and strong ones were always preferable to weak ones. (Similarly, serfs used to prefer cruel but efficient masters to kindly but ineffective ones.) Weak rulers made it possible to return to primitive freedom or volia, understood as license to do whatever one wanted, unrestrained by man-made law. Russian governments took account of these attitudes and went to great lengths to impress on the country the image of boundless power. Experienced bureaucrats opposed freedom of the press and parliamentary government in good part because they feared that the existence of an overt, legitimized opposition would be interpreted by the peasantry as a sign of weakness and a signal to rebel.”

Again, we may suspect Pipes of some exaggeration here. The large-scale peasant rebellions against Soviet power in Tambov province and Siberia in 1920-21, and still more the rebellion against collectivization in the Black Earth region in the late 1920s and early 1930s, show that large numbers of peasants did know the difference between a “good” and “bad” power, and by no means always identified might with right. Moreover, the rebellion in the Black Earth region was closely linked with the True Orthodox Church and a specifically Orthodox Christian doctrine of political legitimacy: that for Orthodox Russians only the Orthodox tsar could be a legitimate, God-established authority, and that the “authority” that overthrew him could only be an “anti-authority”, established not by God but by the devil (Revelation 13.2).

Nevertheless, such a teaching came to the fore in the peasantry only as a result of the fiery trial of the revolution, when the terrible sufferings caused

by the new “authority” had forced the peasants to rethink their assumptions about power and return to the traditional teaching of the Church (especially the commandments on stealing, killing and envy). The very success of the revolution, and the rapidity with which all forms of deference to authority collapsed in 1917, witnesses to the truth of Pipes’ thesis for the majority of the peasants. And therefore the traditional hypothesis of right-wing historians and publicists that the revolution was caused mainly by the ideas of westernizing intellectuals needs to be modified at any rate to this extent: that if westernizers and westernizing ideas started and led the revolution, its success was guaranteed by the support it received from peasants who were scarcely touched by western ideas, but who had fallen away from the traditional teaching of the Orthodox Church in other ways...

And yet “the fish rots from the head”: once the head has rotted, there are few obstacles to the rest of the body undergoing the same corrupting process. Ultimately, the gradual alienation of the peasantry from its Orthodox roots must be attributed to the failure of its teachers, the nobility, the intellectuals and even the clergy, to provide right teaching in word and deed. The close unity of upper and lower classes that we observe in medieval Russia was ruptured by the eighteenth-century tsars and nobility, and while the nineteenth-century tsars were much more pious, they were unable to do more than slow down, but not reverse, the destructive process their predecessors had initiated.

Pipes continues: “At the turn of the century, observers noted subtle changes in the attitudes of the peasantry, particularly the younger generation. They were religiously less observant, less respectful of tradition and authority, restless, and somehow disaffected not only over land but over life in general.

“The authorities were especially perturbed by the behaviour of those who moved into the cities and industrial centers. Such peasants were no longer intimidated by uniformed representatives of authority and were said to act ‘insolently’. When they returned to the village, permanently or to help out with the field work, they spread the virus of discontent. The Ministry of the Interior, observing this development, objected, on security grounds, to further industrialization and excessive rural mobility, but, for reasons previously stated, it had little success.

“One of the causes of changes in the mood of the peasantry seems to have been the spread of literacy, actively promoted by the authorities. The 1897 census revealed a very low level of literacy for the Russian Empire as a whole: only one in five (21 percent) of the inhabitants could read and write. But disaggregated the statistics looked considerably better. As a result of the combined efforts of rural schools and private associations, literacy showed a dramatic spurt among the young, especially males: in 1897, 45 percent of the
Empire’s male inhabitants aged ten to twenty-nine were recorded as literate. At this rate, the population of the Empire could have been expected to attain universal literacy by 1925.

“Literate peasants and workers read most of all religious books (the gospels and lives of saints) followed by cheap escapist literature, the Russian equivalent of ‘penny dreadfuls’ – a situation not unlike that observed in England half a century earlier…”

“Growing literacy, unaccompanied by proportionately expanding opportunities to apply the knowledge acquired from reading, probably contributed to the restlessness of the lower classes. It has been noted in other regions of the world that schooling and the spread of literacy often produce unsettling effects. African natives educated in missionary schools, as compared with untutored ones, have been observed to develop a different mentality, expressed in an unwillingness to perform monotonous work and in lower levels of honesty and truthfulness. Similar trends were noted among young Russian peasants exposed to urban culture, who also seemed less ready to acquiesce to the routine of rural work and lived in a state of powerful, if unfocused expectations aroused by reading about unfamiliar worlds.”  

Orlando Figes points out that “the growth of the cities far outstripped the pace of church-building in them, with the result that millions of new workers, having been uprooted from the village with its church, were consigned to live in a state of Godlessness. The industrial suburb of Orekhovo-Zuevo, just outside Moscow, for example, had only one church for 40,000 residents at the turn of the century. Iuzovka, the mining capital of the Donbass, today called Donetsk, had only two for 20,000.”

Of course, industrial workers were still half-peasants, and often used to return to their villages at harvest time. But there, instead of recovering their Church consciousness in the more godly atmosphere of the village, they tended to infect the villagers with their own corrupt urban ways. This tendency was accentuated with time, as the older, more godly generation died off, and the younger, revolutionary generation took its place.

Moreover, continues Figes, “the traditional extended peasant family began to break up as the younger and more literate peasants struggled to throw off the patriarchal tyranny [sic] of the village and set up households of their own. They looked towards the city and its cultural values as a route to independence and self-worth. Virtually any urban job seemed desirable compared with the hardships and dull routines of peasant life. A survey of rural schoolchildren in the early 1900s found that half of them wanted to

---

159 Pipes, *op. cit.*, pp. 119-120.
pursue an ‘educated profession’ in the city, whereas less than 2 per cent held any desire to follow in the footsteps of their peasant parents. ‘I want to be a shop assistant,’ said one schoolboy, ‘because I do not like to walk in the mud. I want to be like those people who are cleanly dressed and work as shop assistants.’ Educators were alarmed that, once they had learned to read, many peasant boys, in particular, turned their backs on agricultural work and set themselves above the other peasants by swaggering around in raffish city clothes. Such boys, wrote a villager, ‘would run away to Moscow and take any job’. They looked back on the village as a ‘dark’ and ‘backward’ world of superstition and crippling poverty – a world Trotsky would describe as the Russia of ‘icons and cockroaches’ – and they idealized the city as a force of social progress and enlightenment. Here was the basis of the cultural revolution on which Bolshevism would be built. For the Party rank and file was recruited in the main from peasant boys like these; and its ideology was a science of contempt for the peasant world. The revolution would sweep it all away…”

**Unrest in the Army**

In addition to the Church and the peasantry there was a third major mainstay of the Tsarist regime that the Tsar particularly valued and that was to prove particularly important in the revolutionary years: the army.

Figes writes: “The patrimonial principle survived longer in the army than in any other institution of the Russian state. Nothing was closer to the Romanov court or more important to it than the military. The power of the Empire was founded on it, and the needs of the army and the navy always took precedence in the formulation of tsarist policies. All the most important reforms in Russian history had been motivated by the need to catch up and compete in war with the Empire’s rivals in the west and south: Peter the Great’s reforms had been brought about by the wars with Sweden and the Ottomans; those of Alexander II by military defeat in the Crimea…

“Many historians have depicted the army as a stalwart buttress of the tsarist regime. That was also the view of most observers until the revolution. Major Von Tettau from the German General Staff wrote in 1903, for example, that the Russian soldier ‘is full of selflessness and loyalty to his duty’ in a way ‘that is scarcely to be found in any other army of the world’. He did ‘everything with a will’ and was always ‘unassuming, satisfied and jolly – even after labour and deprivation’. But in fact there was growing tensions between the military – in every rank – and the Romanov regime.

“For the country’s military leaders the root of the problem lay in the army’s dismal record in the nineteenth century, which many of them came to blame on the policies of the government. Defeat in the Crimean War (1853-6),

---

followed by a costly campaign against Turkey (1877-8), and then the humiliation of defeat by the Japanese – the first time a major European power had lost to an Asian country – in 1904-5, left the army and the navy demoralized. The causes of Russia’s military weakness were partly economic: her industrial resources failed to match up to her military commitments in an age of increasing competition between empires. But this incompetence also had a political source: during the later nineteenth century the army had gradually lost its place at the top of government spending priorities. The Crimean defeat had discredited the armed services and highlighted the need to divert resources from the military to the modernization of the economy. The Ministry of War lost the favoured position it had held in the government system of Nicholas I (1825-55) and became overshadowed by the Ministries of Finance and the Interior, which from this point on received between them the lion’s share of state expenditure. Between 1881 and 1902 the military’s share of the budget dropped from 30 per cent to 18 per cent. Ten years before the First World War the Russian army was spending only 57 per cent of the amount spent on each soldier in the German army, and only 63 per cent of that spent in the Austrian. In short, the Russian soldier went to war worse trained, worse equipped and more poorly serviced than his enemy. The army was so short of cash that it relied largely on its own internal economy to clothe and feed itself. Soldiers grew their own food and tobacco, and repaired their own uniforms and boots. They even earned money for the regiment by going off to work as seasonal labourers on landed estates, in factories and mines near their garrisons. Many soldiers spent more time growing vegetables or repairing boots than they did learning how to handle their guns. By reducing the military budget, the tsarist regime created an army of farmers and cobblers.

“The demoralization of the army was also connected to its increasing role in the suppression of civilian protests. The Russian Empire was covered with a network of garrisons. Their job was to provide more or less instant military assistance for the provincial governors or the police to deal with unrest. Between 1883 and 1903 the troops were called out nearly 1,500 times. Officers complained bitterly that this police duty was beneath the dignity of a professional soldier, and that it distracted the army from its proper military purpose. They also warned of the damaging effect it was likely to have on the army’s discipline. History proved them right. The vast majority of the private soldiers were peasants, and their morale was heavily influenced by the news they received from their villages. When the army was called out to put down the peasant uprisings of 1905-6 many of the units, especially in the peasant-dominated infantry, refused to obey and mutinied in support of the revolution. There were over 400 mutinies between the autumn of 1905 and the summer of 1906. The army was brought to the brink of collapse, and it took years to restore a semblance of order.
“Many of these mutinies were part of a general protest against the feudal conditions prevailing in the army. Tolstoy, who had served as an army officer in the Crimean War, described them in his last novel Hadji-Murad. The peasant soldiers, in particular, objected to the way their officers addressed them with the familiar ‘your’ (tyi) – normally used for animals and children – rather than the polite ‘you’ (vyi). It was how the masters had once addressed their serfs; and since most of the officers were nobles, and most of the soldiers were sons of former serfs, this mode of address symbolized the continuation of the old feudal world inside the army. The first thing a recruit did on joining the army was to learn the different titles of his officers: ‘Your Honour’ up to the rank of colonel; ‘Your Excellency’ for generals; and ‘Your Radiance’ or ‘Most High Radiance’ for titled officers. Colonels and generals were to be greeted not just with the simple hand salute but by halting and standing sideways to attention while the officer passed by for a strictly prescribed number of paces. The soldier was trained to answer his superiors in regulation phrases of deference: ‘Not at all, Your Honour’; ‘Happy to serve you, Your Excellency’. Any deviations were likely to be punished. Soldiers would expect to be punched in the face, hit in the mouth with the butt of a rifle and sometimes even flogged for relatively minor misdemeanours. Officers were allowed to use a wide range of abusive terms – such as ‘scum’ and ‘scoundrel’ – to humiliate their soldiers and keep them in their place. Even whilst off-duty the common soldier was deprived of the rights of a normal citizen. He could not smoke in public places, go to restaurants or theatres, ride in trams, or occupy a seat in a first- or second-class railway carriage. Civic parks displayed the sign: DOGS AND SOLDIERS FORBIDDEN TO ENTER. The determination of the soldiery to throw off this ‘army serfdom’ and gain the dignity of citizenship was to become a major story of the revolution.

“It was not just the peasant infantry who joined the mutinies after 1905. Even some of the Cossack cavalry – who since the start of the nineteenth century had been a model of loyalty to the Tsar – joined the rebellions. The Cossacks had specific grievances. Since the sixteenth century they had developed as an elite military caste, which in the nineteenth century came under the control of the Ministry of War. In exchange for their military service, the Cossacks were granted generous tracts of fertile land – mainly on the southern borders they were to defend (the Don and Kuban) and the eastern steppes – as well as considerable political freedom for their self-governing communities (voiskos, from the word for ‘war’). However, during the last decades of the nineteenth century the costs of equipping themselves for the cavalry, of buying saddles, harnesses and military-grade horses, as they were obliged to in the charters of their estate, became increasingly burdensome. Many Cossack farmers, already struggling in the depression, had to sell part of their livestock to meet their obligations and equip their sons to join. The voiskos demanded more and more concessions – both economic
and political – as the price of their military service. They began to raise the flag of ‘Cossack nationalism’…

“The government’s treatment of the army provoked growing resentment among Russia’s military elite. The fiercest opposition came from the new generation of so-called military professions emerging within the officer corps and the Ministry of War itself during the last decades of the old regime. Many of them were graduates from the Junker military schools, which had been opened up and revitalized in the wake of the Crimean defeat to provide a means for the sons of non-nobles to rise to the senior ranks. Career officials dedicated to the modernization of the armed services, they were bitterly critical of the archaic military doctrines of the elite academies and the General Staff. To them the main priorities of the court seemed to be the appointment of aristocrats loyal to the Tsar to the top command posts and the pouring of resources into what had become in the modern age a largely ornamental cavalry. They argued, by contrast, that more attention needed to be paid to the new technologies – heavy artillery, machine-guns, motor transportation, trench design and aviation – which were bound to be decisive in coming wars. The strains of modernization on the politics of the autocracy were just as apparent in the military as they were in all the other institutions of the old regime…”

The Tsar loved the army, and loved nothing better than marching with the army or inspecting it on parade; but in the end the army proved to be one of the Empire’s critical weak points. In 1905 it wavered in its loyalty. And in 1917 it was the open treason of the generals that forced the Tsar to abdicate from the throne…

Kishinev, 1903

Alexander Solzhenitsyn writes: “Neither in Middle, nor Northern, nor Eastern Russia, never, not even in the upheaval that shook the whole people in October, 1905, were there any Jewish pogroms (they were against the revolutionary intelligentsia in general, against their rejoicing and mockery over the Manifesto of October 17). However: before the whole world pre-revolutionary Russia – not the Empire, but Russia – was slandered as causing pogroms, as black-hundredist… But Jewish pogroms were stirred up at all times and not only in the South-West of Russia (as also was the case in 1881).”

The Kishinev pogrom began on April 6, 1903 – the last day of the Jewish Pascha and the first day of the Orthodox Pascha. According to the official figures drawn up in the indictment by the procurator of the local court, V.N. Goremykin, it began with “the usual clashes between Jews and Christians

---

162 Figes, A People’s Tragedy, pp. 55-59.
163 Solzhenitsyn, op.cit, p. 321.
which have always taken place in recent years at Pascha” and with “the hostility of the local Christian population towards the Jews”. And then “two weeks before Pascha... rumours began to circulate in Kishinev that there would be a slaughter of Jews in the forthcoming feast”.

A particularly inflammatory role was played here by the newspaper Bessarabets, whose editor, Pavolachi Krushevan, also published The Protocols of the Elders of Zion. These purported to be the minutes of a meeting of Jewish elders somewhere in the West, but were in fact largely plagiarized from Maurice Joly’s Dialogue aux Enfers entre Montesquieu et Machiavel, published in 1864. When the forgery was demonstrated to Tsar Nicholas II, he said: “Drop the Protocols. One cannot defend a pure cause by dirty methods.” 164 Nevertheless, the forgery continued to exert a powerful influence, especially in the period between the two World Wars. And, as the London Times pointed out, the fact that it was a forgery did not prevent it from being uncannily prophetic...

Krushevan’s newspaper printed “from day to day sharp articles of an anti-Jewish tendency, which did not fail to leave a trace... among the salesmen and petty scribes, etc. of the uneducated people of Bessarabia. The latest provocative articles of Bessarabets contained communications about the murder in Dubossary of a Christian child supposedly carried out by Jews by ritual means...” 165

According to the indictment, 42 people were killed, including 38 Jews. About 500 Jewish shop fronts were destroyed. By April 9, 816 people had been arrested, of which 664 were charged with crimes.

“The conclusion of the indictment was: the disorders ‘grew to the indicated proportions only thanks to the incompetence of the police, who did not have the required leadership... The preliminary investigation has not unearthed any evidence that would indicate that the above-mentioned disorders were prepared beforehand.’

“And they were not unearthed by any subsequent investigation.

“But in spite of this, the Jewish ‘Bureau of Defence’ (with the participation of the very influential M. Vinaver, G. Sliozberg, L. Bramson, M. Kulisher, A. Braudo, S. Pozner and M. Krol), had no sooner heard about the pogrom in Petersburg than they excluded from the beginning any other causes of it than a tsarist plot: ‘Who gave the order for the organization of the pogrom, who directed the dark forces that carried it out?’ – ‘Immediately we learned under what circumstances the Kishinev slaughter took place, it became clear for us that this diabolic undertaking would never have taken place... if it had not

165 Solzhenitsyn, op.cit., p. 322.
been thought up in the Department of Police and carried out in fulfilment of orders from there’. Although, of course, writes the same M. Krol in the 40s of the 20th century, ‘the scoundrels organized the Kishinev pogrom in strict secrecy, we are profoundly convinced that the Kishinev slaughter was organized from above, with the knowledge, and perhaps even on the initiative of Plehve. Only if we had the most indisputable evidence against them could we tear the mask from these highly-placed murderers and place them in a fitting light before the whole world. Therefore we decided to send the well-known lawyer Zarudny to Kishinev.’ ‘He was the most suitable person to carry out the mission that we had laid on him’, he ‘took it upon himself to discover the hidden springs of the Kishinev slaughter’, after which the police ‘to make a diversion arrested some tens of robbers and thieves’. (Let us recall that on the day after the pogrom 816 were arrested.) – Zarudny collected and took away from Kishinev ‘exceptionally important material’, that is to say: ‘that the main culprit and organizer of the pogrom was the chief of the Kishinev garrison Levendal’.

This “exceptionally important material” was never published anywhere. Goremykin looked into the accusations against Levendal and found them baseless. But Krushevan, whose inflammatory articles had indeed helped the pogrom on arriving in Petersburg two months later, was attacked and wounded with a knife by Pinkhas Dashevsky… The government sacked the governor of Bessarabia, while Plehve issued a circular to all governors, city bosses and heads of police expressing disturbance at the inactivity of the Kishinev authorities and calling for decisive action to cut of violence.

The Holy Synod issued a circular ordering the clergy to take measures to root out hatred of the Jews. Fr. John of Kronstadt said: “Instead of a Christian feast they have arranged a disgustingly murderous feast to Satan.” And Bishop Anthony (Khrapovitsky) said: "The terrible punishment of God will attain those evil-doers who shed blood asking for that of the God-man, His Most Pure Mother, the Apostles and Prophets'; ‘that they should know that the Jewish race, which has been rejected up to now, is dear to the Spirit of God, and that every one who would want to offend it will anger the Lord.”

The Jews and radicals inside Russia, and the European and American press outside Russia, were loud in their accusations that the Russian government was responsible for the Kishinev pogrom. The newspaper magnate William Hurst even used the fateful word “holocaust”… On May 18 The Times of London published a letter of a “completely secret letter” of Plehve to the Kishinev governor von Raaben in which Plehve supposedly asked the governor not to put down any disturbances against the Jews but only to inform him about them. The letter turned out to be a forgery, as even pro-

---

166 Solzhenitsyn, op. cit., pp. 327-328.
167 Solzhenitsyn, op. cit., p. 329.
168 Solzhenitsyn, op. cit., p. 333.
Semite sources accept.\textsuperscript{169} However, this did not prevent the 1996 edition of 
\textit{The Jewish Encyclopaedia} from reiterating the accusation as if it were fact...\textsuperscript{170}

\textbf{The Russo-Japanese War}

“In November 1902,” writes Pipes, “high-ranking Russian officials held a 
secret conference in Yalta to discuss China’s complaints about Russia’s treaty 
violations and the problems caused by the reluctance of foreigners to invest in 
Russia’s Far Eastern ventures. It was agreed that Russia could attain her 
economic objectives in Manchuria only by intense colonization; but for 
Russians to settle there, the regime needed to tighten its hold on the area. It 
was the unanimous opinion of the participants, Witte included, that Russia 
had to annex Manchuria, or, at the very least, bring it under closer control. In 
the months that followed, the Minister of War, A.N. Kuropatkin, urged 
aggressive action to protect the Trans-Siberian Railroad: in his view, unless 
Russia was prepared to annex Manchuria she should withdraw from there. In 
February 1903, Nicholas agreed to annexation.”\textsuperscript{171}

Russia was also interested in Korea. “The ruler of Korea,” writes J.M. 
Roberts, “had only taken his title of emperor in 1897; only in 1901 did his 
government first decide to send representatives to foreign countries (even the 
Chinese had already done this). Several nations had interests in Korea: the 
Americans and British had long encouraged the ‘opening’ of the country to 
trade and reform (as they saw it), the Russians and the Japanese competed 
there for political supremacy and possible territorial aggrandizement, and (in 
theory as the suzerain power but actually increasingly powerless in Korean 
affairs) the Chinese went on claiming that Korea was a dependency of the 
Middle Kingdom. This was one reason for the Japanese (who had successfully 
occupied Seoul in the 1890s during a war against China) to promote 
‘westernizing’ influences in the court and among officials.”\textsuperscript{172}

“Russia’s main interest in Korea lay in the proximity of that country’s 
northern border to Vladivostok, which made domination of the whole 
country by another great power worrying. In addition, the Russian navy 
lusted after a Korean port and feared that if the Japanese controlled both sides 
of the Straits of Tsushima they could easily cut communications between 
Vladivostok and Port Arthur. The Koreans themselves looked to Russia for 
protection from Japan, which was clearly the greatest threat to their 
independence, and offered Russia many inducements to occupy itself in their 
affairs. But the greatest single complicating factor in Russia’s relations with 
Korea was the large timber concession which a number of aristocrats close to

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{169} Vital, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 513.} 
\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{170} Solzhenitsyn, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 335.} 
\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{171} Pipes, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 13.} 
\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{172} Roberts, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 61-62.}
Nicholas had secured on the river Yalu, with the aim of building up a Russian
bridgehead in northern Korea.

“The leaders in the Yalu enterprise were A.M. Bezobrazov and V.M.
Vonlyarlyarsky. Both came from prominent families of the Russian
aristocracy and were former officers of the Chevaliers Gardes, the most
exclusive regiment in the Russian army. Bezobrazov gained access to
Nicholas II through the former Minister of the Imperial Court, Count I.I.
Vorontsov-Dashkov. Neither Bezobrazov nor Vonlyarlyarsky were interested
in the Yalu enterprise for the sake of personal gain. They saw their company
as a means by which non-official patriots could out-manoeuvre bureaucratic
cautions and push forward Russia’s cause in the East. There was to be a latter-
day version of Britain’s East India Company but without its initially
commercial priorities. The whole scheme bore the stamp of aristocratic
arrogance and amateurism. Its leaders were convinced of their own innate
superiority to mere bureaucrats. Without knowing the East, they nevertheless
urged on Nicholas the belief that the Orientals would back down in the face of
a confident show of Russian power. There was more than a touch of opera to
the Bezobrazov affair. Rather typical was the fact that at one point secret
correspondence between Bezobrazov and Nicholas II was sent through their
respective batmen so that the ministers should be kept in the dark about it.
But there was nothing funny in the effect of Bezobrazov’s influence, which
was both to increase Nicholas’s distrust of his official advisers and to
encourage him to take a tougher and more intransigent line with the Japanese
and Chinese governments. In October 1901, for instance, the Emperor told
Prince Henry of Prussia that ‘I do not want to seize Korea – but under no
circumstances can I allow the Japanese to become firmly established there.
That would be a casus belli.’ Here was the voice of Bezobrazov not of
Nicholas’s ministerial advisers, whose position on Korea was much less
bellicose.

“Bezobrazov, Vonlyarlyarsky and their supporters in particular urged on
Nicholas two ideas to which he was very inclined to listen. They told him that
Russia was a proud and mighty country which should speak in a strong voice
and take no cheek from foreigners, least of all Orientals. This Guards officers’
patriotism was music to his ears. His aristocratic advisers, loathing the
bureaucracy and above all Witte, also told Nicholas that he was the captive of
his ministers, who colluded in keeping information from him, imposing their
own views and sabotaging his instructions when they conflicted with their
own interests. By 1900 Nicholas felt this to be true, not merely as regards Far
Eastern policy but across the whole range of government business. Frustrated
by his seeming powerlessness and aware of mounting criticism of his rule, he
turned more and more to unofficial advisers in an effort to secure alternative
sources of information and greater freedom from ministerial control. Among
these advisers Bezobrazov was typical in his aristocratic control. Among these
advisers Bezobrazov was typical in his aristocratic origins and in his appeal to
Nicholas’s patriotic and anti-bureaucratic instincts. In July 1901 Alexander Polovtsov commented that ‘in no field of policy is there a principled, well considered and firmly directed course of action. Everything is done in bursts, haphazardly, under the influence of the moment, according to the demands of this or that person and the intercessions emerging from various corners. The young Tsar feels more and more contempt for the organs of his own power and begins to believe in the beneficial strength of his own autocracy, which he manifests sporadically, without preliminary discussion and without any link to the overall course of policy.’

“As in his domestic policy Nicholas sought to balance between his groups of advisers, drawing information from both and thereby seeking a basis on which he could determine policy for himself. This had a disastrous impact on Russia’s Far Eastern policy in 1902-3 and on the way it was perceived by foreigners, above all the Japanese. It was not merely that Bezobrazov’s advice was dangerous and mistaken. Outsiders did not know what Petersburg’s policy was. Faced by criticism that divisions between ministers and unofficial advisers were causing government policy in East Asia to be incoherent and uncoordinated, in August 1903 Nicholas appointed Admiral Alekseev Viceroy of the Far East and subordinated to him all responsibility not only for civil and military affairs but also for diplomatic relations with Tokyo and Peking. This was to make a bad situation worse. Alekseev was a sailor, not a diplomat or a statesman. By definition neither he nor other officials in the East could have a balanced overall grasp of the Empire’s many interests for they were committed to pursuing a forward policy in their own bailiwick.

“The Japanese now had to deal with Alekseev in Port Arthur but they knew, of course, that the Viceroy’s decisions would have to be ratified by the Tsar, and therefore by those high officials to whom he chose to listen, in Petersburg. Confusion was compounded by the fact that during the critical period between August and November 1903 Nicholas II was seldom in his capital, spending most of his time on official and private visits to Western Europe. Though Japanese counsels were themselves divided, had Russia consistently stood out for a free hand for herself in Manchuria in return for Japanese control over Korea. Tokyo would almost certainly have agreed in the end. The demilitarization of northern Korea could have been obtained through such a deal had Petersburg offered some concessions in southern Manchuria. But the Russians overestimated the strength of their position, and the incoherence and delay in their responses to Tokyo convinced the Japanese that Petersburg was simply prevaricating. Nicholas’s own statements betrayed his uncertainty and miscalculations. In October 1903 he telegraphed to Alekseev: ‘I do not want war between Russia and Japan and will not permit this war. Take all measures so that there is no war.’ In late December, however, he commented that the situation reminded him of the 1895 crisis when Japan backed down under firm Russian pressure and surrendered Port Arthur. Referring to Japan, Nicholas remarked: ‘all the same it is a barbarian
country. Which is better: to risk war or to continue with concessions?” In February 1904 the Japanese permitted Russia no more wavering and attacked Port Arthur.”

In April Japan crossed the Yalu River into Russian-occupied Manchuria, forcing the Russians back into Port Arthur. After a series of victories on land and on sea, the Japanese began a long siege of Port Arthur and succeeded in taking the city in January, 1905. This was followed, in May, by the Battle of Tsushima, in which the Russians lost 5000 sailors killed with 6000 captured, while only 117 Japanese sailors died. Russia sued for peace. At Portsmouth, USA, in September, 1905, thanks to the very tough negotiating stance of Tsar Nicholas, skilfully carried out by Count Sergius Witte, favourable terms were won for Russia. Nevertheless, the loss of prestige was great, and gave renewed encouragement to the revolutionaries.

Perhaps not realizing how advantageous the terms were for the Russians, or perhaps realizing that such concessions had to be made because the Russians would have won if war had continued, the Grand Orient of France congratulated the mediator in the peace negotiations, American President Theodore Roosevelt (a Freemason since 1901) in the following telegram: “The Grand Orient of France has the honour to address to you its warmest congratulations for the outstanding service you have just offered to mankind. Masonry is happy to see the triumph, thanks to one of its eminent sons, of the principles of peace and brotherhood.” On September 4, Secretary of State Loomis, wrote back on behalf of the president, thanking the French Masons. As O.F. Soloviev points out, this direct exchange between the Grand Orient and the American president was unprecedented, and showed the increasing influence of Continental Masonry in world affairs.

The Russo-Japanese war is the first instance of a phenomenon that was to be of major importance in 1917: the financing of Russia’s enemies by American Jews. Archpriest Lev Lebedev asserts that “Japan would never have risked attacking Russia herself if she had not been specially incited to it by England and the U.S.A.

“At the end of 1903 the American Jewish banker Jacob Schiff, Morgan and also ‘First National Bank’ and ‘National City Bank’ loaned Japan 30 million dollars so that she should attack Russia. On January 27, 1904, without declaring war, Japanese ships treacherously attacked the Russian squadron in Port Arthur (on the Lyaodun peninsula in China, where Russia had built a

---

173 Lieven, op. cit., pp. 97-100.
175 Soloviev, op. cit., p. 45.
176 In all he loaned $200 million to Japan during the war, while preventing other firms from lending to Russia (Solzhenitsyn, op. cit., p. 347). (V.M.)
powerful naval base on leased land). The war began which, according to the plans of its inspirers, was bound to be accompanied by a revolution in Russia. The suddenness of the attack gave Japan many advantages. If all Russia’s military forces in the Far East did not exceed 100,000 men, Japan moved up an army of 300,000. Japan’s numerical and, to a certain degree, technical superiority allowed her to win a series of major victories over the Russian armies. The fortress of Port Arthur fell [in January, 1905] after a lengthy and heroic siege. In other battles at Mukden near Lyaoyan in Manchuria, the Russians were also defeated, and retreated. In the naval battles the Russians more than once defeated the Japanese. But... in [May,] 1905, in the Korean bay of Tsushima, the second Russian squadron under Admiral Rozhdestvensky, which had come from the Gulf of Finland through all the seas and oceans to the place of its destruction, was almost completely annihilated. But here, too, non-Japanese forces inimical to Russia helped... While ‘Rozhdestvensky’s squadron was accomplishing its gigantic voyage as if in the light of a torch lighting up the whole world’, wrote the newspaper Novoe Vremia (New Times), ‘nobody knew about the movements of the Japanese naval forces even in the ports of China’. The Japanese information services were actively helped by the Jews. Some of them acted as spies in the Russian army, others tried to demoralize it, which is witnessed by the commander-in-chief of the armies in the Far East, General Kuropatkin. In 1906 the well-known journalist M.O. Menshikov wrote in the same Novoe Vremia: ‘The last terrible war... was armed with the most active participation of the Jews. In order to thrust Japan against Russia, it was necessary to arrange for Japan not only external loans, but also the most ardent sympathy [for Japan] in America and England. This sympathy, as has now been established beyond doubt, was artificially stirred up in the American press, which almost completely in Jewish hands. In the course of a whole series of years an army of Jewish hacks has slandered Russia, poured an unbelievably dirty torrent of abuse on her, and stirred people up to hate and despise everything Russian. As a result public opinion, and not only in America, was confused. The huge reading world was pitifully deceived...’ At the height of the war the Paris newspaper Presse noted: ‘Japan has not been waging war against Russia alone. She has a powerful ally — Jewry.’…”

Undoubtedly the Jews’ support for the revolution at home and for the Japanese abroad was an important factor. But ultimately the Russians could blame only themselves. According to St. John of Kronstadt, the real cause of the defeat was the leaders’ negligent attitude towards Orthodoxy. And the theft of Russia’s greatest holy thing, the wonderworking Kazan icon of the

---

178 “The leader of our army A.N. Kuropatkin left all the icons given to him in captivity with the Japanese pagans, while he took all the secular things. What an attitude to the faith and the holy things of the Church! It was for this that the Lord is not blessing our arms and the enemies are conquering us.” (in Fomin & Fomina, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 373).
Mother of God, on June 29, 1904 indicated that the Mother of God had withdrawn her protection from Russia.

For “not in vain”, wrote Archbishop Nicon (Rozhdestvensky), “has there long been the belief in the people that as long as this holy icon is intact, and stands guard between Christian Europe and the heterodox, pagan-Muslim world of Asia, we can be calm. But if she, our fervent Intercessor, leaves her place, then woes and misfortunes threaten us, and we shall remain defenceless…”

In the end, Russia lost because “a house that is divided against itself cannot stand” (Mark 3.25). Thus “at the end of 1904, on the eve of the preparation of a general attack against the Japanese army near Lyaodun, strikes began in the major Russian military factories and on the railways, which left the Russian army without ammunition and food and allowed the Japanese to take back the initiative. The first defeats of the Russian army elicited the genuine joy of the liberals and a flow of congratulations on this score to the emperor of Japan... With regard to the surrender to the Japanese of Port Arthur his Majesty Emperor Nicholas II organized a government judicial inquiry, since there were no military reasons for the capitulation…”

In spite of that, “the Russian army conducted its retreat in good order, and its losses in manpower turned out to be almost two times fewer than those of the Japanese... The experience of the war of 1904-1905 allowed Russia in the next three to four years to carry out a military reform and modernize her armaments, munitions and technical equipment in all sections of the army. In spite of colossal credits by the standards of those times from England and the USA, and the participation of Germany in the technical fitting out of the army and fleet, Japan was so exhausted by this military encounter that it was only fourteen years later, at the very end of the First World War, that she was able to re-establish her pre-war military potential and join the Entente.”

The war with Japan caused particular problems for the Russian Orthodox Mission in Japan, headed by Archbishop Nicholas (Kasatkin). A peasant from Smolensk province, St. Nicholas first went to Japan in 1861. Encouraged to learn Japanese by St. Innocent, enlightener of Alaska, he began an astonishingly successful mission that at his death contained over 34,000 converts, 276 parishes, 34 priest, 8 deacons and 115 preachers.

180 Lebedev, op. cit.
On the eve of the Russo-Japanese war, “alarmed by the possibility of war with their co-religionists, the Orthodox Japanese turned to their bishop. He replied that they, like all Japanese, were obliged by their oath to carry out their military duty, but to fight was not at all the same as to hate one’s enemy, but means to defend one’s fatherland. The Saviour Himself bequeathed patriotism to us when He sorrowed over the lot of Jerusalem. The archpastor himself decided to stay in Japan with his flock, even if there was a war... And it began in February 1904. Then Bishop Nicholas handed over all ecclesiastical affairs to the council of priests, and himself served his last liturgy before the war. At the end of the service in his farewell sermon to his flock he called on it to pray for victory for their fatherland, but he, as a subject of the Russian Emperor, could not take part in the common service; but he would be happy to see his flock carrying out their duty. In his encyclical of February 11, 1904, Bishop Nicholas blessed the Japanese to carry out their duty, not sparing their lives, but reminded them that our fatherland is the Church, where all Christians constitute one family; he told them to pray for the re-establishment of peace and asked for mercy to prisoners of war. After this he shut himself away and gave himself over to exploits of prayer... Nobody in Russia understood the hierarch of Japan as well as Emperor Nicholas II. At the end of the war the Tsar wrote to him: ‘You have shown before all that the Orthodox Church of Christ is foreign to worldly dominion and every tribal hatred, and embraces all tribes and languages with her love. In the difficult time of the war, when the weapons of battle destroy peaceful relations between peoples and rulers, you, in accordance with the command of Christ, did not leave the flock entrusted to you, and the grace of love and faith gave you strength to endure the fiery trial and amidst the hostility of war to keep the peace of faith and love in the Church created by your labours...’”

Archbishop Nicholas’ noble affirmation, in word and deed, of the primacy of faith over politics did not go unappreciated. Michael Van Remortel writes: “In the very midst of home front hostility in 1904, the Japanese publisher Aisui Nakagawa wrote and distributed a laudatory profile of Bishop Nikolai... [After the war], in respect of Vladyka Nikolai’s efforts on behalf of Russian prisoners, he was awarded the Order of St. Alexander Nevsky by Tsar Nicholas II. In April 1906, the Holy Synod elevated him to the dignity of Archbishop; at that point, the Harisutosu Orthodox Church of Japan became an independent jurisdiction within the Russian Orthodox Church. In 1907, another diocese was created in western Japan, with its cathedral at Kyoto... An ecumenical assembly of American bishops voted Archbishop Nikolai the most outstanding Christian evangelist in the entire world...”

St. Nicholas’ death in 1912 was covered by all the newspapers of Japan. His life witnessed vividly to the fact that Christianity, while supporting true patriotism, is a universalist religion which always places the universalist message of the Gospel above the interests of any individual State or nation.

**The Role of the Press**

We have noted that one of the causes of the defeat of the Russians in the war with Japan was the defeatist attitude of the liberals in the rear, which was magnified by the diatribes of the largely Jewish-controlled press. Now the press had emerged as an important factor in international relations for the first time in the Crimean War, when reports in the British press of military incompetence and insanitary conditions in the hospitals, together with photographs from the battlefield, had had an important influence on public opinion, and thence on the government. It became even more important in the Balkan crises of the 1870s when reports of Turkish atrocities in *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Manchester Guardian* were an important ally to Gladstone in his campaign to jolt Disraeli’s government out of its pro-Turkish indifference.

“Already in the 70s,” writes Solzhenitsyn, “the ‘unbridledness of the Russian press’ had been noted more than once by Dostoyevsky. In relation to the State it displayed itself even at the conference of March 8, 1881 under the just-crowned Alexander III, and more than once after that: the journalists behaved like self-willed representatives of society.

“The expression: ‘Three hostile newspapers are more dangerous than 100,000 hostile soldiers’ has been ascribed to Napoleon. This phrase became very applicable to the Russo-Japanese war. The Russian press was openly defeatists throughout the war, in each of its battles. And, still more important: it did not hide its sympathy for terrorism and revolution.

“This press, which developed unchecked in 1905, was seen during the Duma period as, in the words of Witte, mainly ‘Jewish’ or ‘half-Jewish’: more precisely, with a predominance of leftist or radical Jews in the key correspondent and editors’ posts. In November, 1905 D.I. Pikhno, the editor of the Russian national newspaper *Kievlyanin*, who had already been in this post for 25 years and studied the Russian press, wrote: ‘Jewry... has placed huge stakes on the card of the Russian revolution... The serious part of Russian society had understood that at such moments the press is a force, but it did not have this power – it was in the hands of its opponents, who spoke in its name throughout Russia and forced themselves to be read, because there were no other publications, and you can’t create them in one day... and [society] was lost in the multitude of lies in which it could not find its way.’

“L. Tikhomirov saw nothing national in this, but in 1910 he made the following comments on the character of the Russian press: ‘Tearing on the
nerves... One-sidedness... They don’t want decency, gentlemanliness... They have no ideal, and have no understanding of it.’ And the public brought up by this press ‘demands glibness and hooliganism, it cannot value knowledge, and does not notice ignorance’.

“And, from completely the opposite political extreme, a Bolshevik publicist [M. Lemke], expressed himself as follows on the character of this press: ‘In our post-reformation era ideas have become cheap, while information, sensation and unabashed authoritarian ignorance fill the press.’

“Speaking, more specifically, about culture, Andrew Bely complained in 1909, although he was by no means a rightists or ‘chauvinist’: ‘The leaders of national culture turn out to be people who are foreign to this culture... Look at the lists of those working on the newspapers and journals of Russia: who are the musical and literary critics of these journals? You will see almost exclusively Jewish names: among these critics there are some talented and acute people, there are some among them who understand the tasks of a national culture, perhaps, more profoundly than the Russians: but they are exceptions. The general mass of Jewish critics are completely foreign to Russian art. They write in an Esperanto jargon and terrorize every attempt to deepen and enrich the Russian language.’

“In those same years the far-sighted Zionists VI. Zhabotinsky complained about the ‘leading newspapers sustained on Jewish money and filled with Jewish workers’ and warned: ‘When the Jews hurled themselves en masse to create Russian politics, we foretold them that nothing good would come out of it, neither for Russian politics, nor for Jewish.’

“The Russian press played a decisive role in the pre-revolutionary Cadet-revolutionary storming of the government: its mood was powerfully picked up and expressed by Duma deputy A.I. Shingarev: ‘Let this power sink! We will not cast this power even a bit of rope!’ It is appropriate to mention here that the First Duma stood up in memory of the victims of the Belostok pogrom (not agreeing... that this was an armed battle between anarchists and soldiers); the Second Duma – in honour of the murdered terrorist Iollos. But when Purishkevich suggested standing in honour of those killed at their posts as policemen and soldiers, he was forbidden to speak and excluded from the session: at that time it seemed unthinkable to the enflamed parliamentarians to sympathize with those who kept simple order in the State, which was necessary for all of them, and for a generally quiet life.

“A member of the Union of [Jewish] Complete Equality, A. Kulisher, drew the truthful conclusion – but late, looking back at the past in the émigré Jewish Tribune in 1923: ‘In Russian-Jewish society before the revolution there really were people and whole groups whose activity can be characterized precisely as... the absence of a feeling of responsibility for the turmoil in the minds of
Russian Jewry... the spreading of an indefinite and light-minded ‘revolutionism’. The whole essence of their politics consisted in being more leftist than anyone else. Always remaining in the role of irresponsible critics, never going to the end, they saw their purpose in saying: ‘Not enough!’... These people were ‘democrats’... But there were also democrats who called themselves ‘The Jewish Democratic Group’ who attached this adjective to every unsuitable noun, composing an intolerable Talmud of democratism... They created around themselves an irresponsible mood of groundless maximalism, with no precise limit to their demands. This mood manifested itself with destructive consequences in the revolution.' The destructiveness proceeding from this press was indeed one of the weakest, most vulnerable points in the Russian State by 1914 and 1917...”

Indeed, the stream of slander turned out by the Jewish-controlled press against the Tsar (and especially the Tsarina) was one of the major causes of the revolution... In the role of the press, as in many other ways, we see how early-twentieth century Russia was a type, a microcosm, as it were, of the problems of modern civilization...

Bloody Sunday

On January 22, 1905 some hundreds of demonstrating workers were killed by tsarist troops in St. Petersburg - a tragic event that was used by the intelligentsiya and revolutionaries as an excuse to undermine faith in the Tsar among the masses.

The first myth that needs to be dispelled is that the Tsar was heartless towards the condition of the workers. Of course, conditions for workers in Russia, as in every other industrialized country of the time, were harsh. But it needs to be borne in mind, as Nicholas Kazantsev writes, that “before ‘Bloody Sunday’ special laws had been issued to secure the safety of workers in mining and factory industries, on the railways and in enterprises that were dangerous for their life and health, as for example in munitions factories, etc.

“Child labour until the age of 12 was forbidden, while adolescents and women could not be employed in factory work between 9 in the evening and 5 in the morning. Fines deducted from pay packets could not exceed one third of the packet, moreover every fine had to be confirmed by the factory inspector. Money from fines went into a special fund designed to satisfy the needs of the workers themselves.

“In 1903 workers’ wardens elected by the factory workers on the corresponding sections were introduced. Moreover, in Tsarist Russia – again, before ‘Bloody Sunday’ - it was possible to resort to strikes. In factories controlled by the Labour Inspectorate there were 68 strikes in 1893, 118 in

1896, 145 in 1897, 189 in 1899 and 125 in 1900. While in 1912 social insurance was established.

“At that time the emperor’s social legislation was undoubtedly the most progressive in the world. This caused Taft, the president of the United States at the time to declare publicly two years before the First World War in the presence of some high-ranking Russians: ‘Your Emperor has created such a perfect workers’ legislation as not one democratic state can boast of.’”187

However, the demonstration was not really about workers’ conditions. In the petition composed by the demonstration’s leader, the priest Fr. George Gapon, together with his revolutionary friends, demanded, among other things: an amnesty for political prisoners, a government responsible to the people, the separation of the Church and State, a progressive income tax, the abolition of redemption payments from the peasants, an end to the war, the creation of elected trade unions and the abolition of the factory inspectorate.

“From this it was evident,” writes Kazantsev, “that Gapon was completely led by the revolutionaries. But the masses went behind the former Gapon, who had organized his workers’ movement under the protection of the over-procurator of the Synod, Pobedonostsev.

“They went towards the Tsar with by no means a peaceful request, as D. Zubov affirms, but with an ultimatum. Gapon went round the crowd of workers and said everywhere: ‘If the Tsar refuses us, then we have no Tsar.’ The crowd, as if enthralled, repeated his words and cried out: ‘We shall die!’ (L. Gurevich, ‘Narodnoe dvizhenie v Peterburge 9 janvaria 1905 g.’, Berlin, 1906, pp. 28, 31). Fine ‘monarchical sentiments’…

“N. Varnashev, the closest fellow-struggler of the provocateur, tells us that Gapon was warning those close to him: ‘I will have two flags with me – a white and a red; flying the white flag will mean that the tsar accepts our demands, but flying the red will be a signal for revolutionary actions’ (Kraskaia Letopis’, 1922, № 1). While the active participant in Gapon’s organization, I. Pavlov, cites the boastful declaration of Gapon: ‘We shall disarm the whole of the Petersburg police in ten minutes’ (Minuvshie Gody, 1908, № 4). That’s a ‘Workers’ movement free of politics’ for you!…

“Striving to represent the cunning of the tsarist government, Zubov-son writes: ‘The city authorities affirmed that they would not take any measures. However, from the evening of January 8 the guards and the garrison forces were drawn up towards the centre.’

“This is also a lie: two days before January 9 the city commandant hung up

declarations forbidding the crowds from gathering, while the soldiers — the first three thousand of them — were led out onto the streets of the capital on the same day, January 7 (S. Semanov, *Krovavoe voskresenie*, p. 51). Moreover, General Rudanovskiy witnesses in his memoirs: ‘The police units tried to persuade the crowd, they warned them that the soldiers would fire — but without effect. At that time an assistant police-officer of the Petersburg area, Lieutenant Zholtkevich, was seriously wounded, while an observer was killed’ (*Nachalo pervoj russkoj revoliutsii*, p. 51).

“The behaviour of the soldiers, who were sometimes shot at from revolvers 188, was by no means unexpected. A member of Gapon’s organization, A. Karelin, declares firmly and clearly: ‘Everyone knew very well that the workers would be shot at’ (*Krasnaia Letopis’, № 1, p. 111). N. Varnashev said the same thing: ‘Nobody was in any doubt of the bloody reprisals the government would take against the people, but let it be thus!’ And this is what Gapon himself said: ‘I am convinced that they will shoot at us. Within the course of tomorrow alone, thanks to the shooting, the working people will be revolutionised in such a way as would be impossible in any other way in the course of 10 years and with the loss of tens of thousand of lives’ (*Minuvshie Gody*, 1908, № 14, p. 94).

“Zubov-son chants dithyrambs to Gapon: ‘A man who was striving to improve the condition of the workers... striving to help the poor.’ In fact, he turned out to be a demagogue and a provocateur. At the beginning he enjoyed the protection of the tsarist government: as an agent of the Okrana he was entrusted with the task of organizing a society for the improvement of the life of the workers within the limits of loyalty. Therefore he enjoyed the benevolence of the Petersburg commandants Kleigels and Fullon. But having fallen under the influence of the social democrats, Gapon began rapidly to go to the left. As S. Semanov writes, ‘The Okhrana department lost control over Gapon’s organization and its leader for a time. The vainglorious adventurer was attracted by the illusory perspective of becoming a leader of the people and betrayed his police masters as easily as he betrayed the workers who believed in him’ (*Krovavoe voskresenie*, Leningrad, 1965).

188 Other sources confirm that the first shots were fired at, not by, the soldiers. Thus: “The information on the events of January 9, 1905 in St. Petersburg is filled with lies and unfounded attacks on his August Majesty. The organizers of the demonstration to the Winter Palace headed by the defrocked priest George Gapon well knew that the tsar was not in St. Petersburg, but in his residence in Tsarkoe Selo and was not intending to go to the capital. The city authorities issued a ban on the 200,000-strong crowd of demonstrators going into the centre of the city and stopped all eleven columns at the places where they were assembling. The opposition of the demonstrators and soldiers soon turned to gunfire from the crowd. The first victims turned out to be soldiers. A part of the armed force returned fire on the provocateurs...” (Review of A.M. Khitrov & O.L. Solomina, *Khram-pamiatnik v Bruussele* (The Memorial Church in Brussels), Moscow, 2005, *Pravoslavnaia Rus’* (Orthodox Russia), № 24, December 15/28, 2005, p. 14. (in Russian)). (V.M.)
“But at the first volley he really ‘bolted’. He abandoned the workers whom he had drawn into a fatal trap and, having cut his hair to avoid detection, fled abroad.

“D. Zubov casually drops the remark that ‘in April, 1906 they found Gapon hanged in someone else’s dacha near Petersburg’, but he is cunningly silent about the fact that he was executed by his own political fellow-travellers. The SRs heard that he was planning to betray them to the police and dealt with him…”

Probably no more than a few hundreds were killed on Bloody Sunday. The Tsar sacked the commander responsible for disobeying orders. Then, on January 11, he “received a deputation of workers who repented to him that they had allowed themselves to be drawn into an anti-government provocation. His Majesty mercifully forgave them all and gave to each family of those who suffered an allowance equivalent to half a year’s pay of a highly qualified worker. The police measures of the governments of the western countries, and especially the USA, at the beginning of the 20th century, to break up strikes and demonstrations led to far larger numbers of victims. It is sufficient to recall the shooting of the First of May strikers in Chicago and other cities in America, but democratically-inclined journalists prefer to keep silent about these facts.”

Great Prince Sergius Alexandrovich Romanov, the uncle of the Tsar, was governor of Moscow and one of the foremost pillars of the regime. On February 4, 1905 he was killed by a bomb that exploded almost at the doorstep of the palace that he and his wife, Grand-Duchess Elizabeth - the sister of the Tsaritsa, and, like her, a convert from Lutheranism - inhabited in the Kremlin. At that moment the grand duchess was leaving for her workshops. She was alarmed by the sound of an exploding bomb nearby. Hurrying toward the place (near the Chudov monastery in the Kremlin), she saw a soldier stretching his military overcoat over the maimed body of her husband. The soldier tried to hide the horrible sight from the eyes of the unfortunate wife. But the grand duchess dropped to her knees, on the street, and put her arms out trying to embrace the torn remains of her husband. The bomb had shattered his body to such an extent that fingers of the great prince were found, still in their gloves, on the roof of the neighbouring building.

The lofty spirit in which the Grand Duchess took the tragedy astounded everyone; she had the moral strength even to visit in prison her husband's assassin, Kaliayev, hoping to soften his heart with her Christian forgiveness.

"Who are you?" he asked upon meeting her.

---

189 Kazantsev, op. cit.
190 Khitrov and Solomina, op. cit.
"I am his widow," she replied, "Why did you kill him?"

"I did not want to kill you," he said. "I saw him several times before when I had the bomb with me, but you were with him and I could not bring myself to touch him."

"You did not understand that by killing him you were killing me," she said.

Then she began to talk to him of the horror of his crime before God. The Gospel was in her hands and she begged the criminal to read it and left it in his cell. Leaving the prison, the Grand Duchess said:

"My attempt was unsuccessful, but, who knows, perhaps at the last minute he will understand his sin and repent."

She then besought the tsar for clemency for him. And the emperor was ready to bestow it provided the bomber did not refuse it. He refused it…

On the memorial cross erected upon the site of her husband's death, the grand-duchess inscribed the Gospel words: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do..." After some years she became a nun and founded the monastery of Saints Mary and Martha in Moscow. The transformation of the aristocrat and renowned beauty into a strict ascetic astounded and intrigued high society…

**Towards the Reestabishment of Symphony**

There is strong evidence that not only was the Tsar deeply interested in the project of the convening of Church Council for the first time since 1666, and in the restoration of the patriarchate, but had even suggested, shortly after the birth of the Tsarevich, and probably on December 17, 1904, his own candidature to the post of patriarch! According to the account of Archbishop Anthony (KhраМОVtМsky), “the senior hierarchs, including myself, were summoned to his Majesty. At that time, in accordance with the will of the Tsar, preparatory work was being conducted for the convening of a Council at which the restoration of the Patriarchate in Russia was to take place. And his Majesty, following the course of the matter, wanted to see us. When we assembled in the palace, the Tsar asked us whether we had chosen a candidate. We glanced at each other and were silent. Each of us was probably thinking about himself as the most fitting Patriarch. After quite a long pause we replied: ‘No, your Majesty.’ A short period ensued; the Tsar again summoned us to himself, and put the same question to us. In our embarrassment we were forced, as before, to give a negative answer. Then the Tsar, after looking at us in silence, fell into thought. Some moments passed. The Tsar again began to speak: ‘If you have not found a candidate, then I have someone in mind.’ We all listened attentively, waiting to see which one of us
the Tsar would point to. But what was our amazement when the Tsar declared to us: ‘I myself am a candidate’. Stunned, we could not even find anything to say in reply. And the Tsar continued: ‘The heir to the throne has been born. When he has grown up a little, Great Prince Michael Alexandrovich will become the regent. The Empress has agreed to go into a monastery. And I will be tonsured.’”

The process that led to this discussion had begun a little earlier, in November, 1904, when a report sponsored by the Minister of the Interior Prince P.D. Sviatopolk-Mirsky was completed envisaging important changes in a liberal direction in both Church and State. This led to the convening of an important conference on December 2 that included all the government ministers and four of the Tsar’s uncles, and an ukaz called “On Plans for the Perfecting of State Order”, which was signed on December 12. The sixth point of this ukaz spoke of the sovereign’s unbending desire to grant tolerance to schismatics and non-Orthodox confessions in the empire. The question this immediately raised was: how would this affect the interests of the dominant confession of the empire, the Orthodox Church? In order to answer this question, a note entitled “On the Contemporary Situation of the Orthodox Church” was composed for the president of the council of ministers, Count Witte, and by professors of the theological academies in the capital.

“The note said that while externally free and protected by the State, the Orthodox Church was weighed down by heavy chains. The expulsion of the principle of sobornost’ from Church life had led to a change in her spirit. The main cause of the disorders was recognized to be Peter’s Church reform, as a result of which the Church’s administration had turned into one of the ‘numerous wheels of the complex machine of State’. The secular bureaucratic element was called a constant barrier between the Church and the people, as also between the Church and the State, while the only way to excite life from the dead was to return to the former, canonical norms of administration.

“Witte also subjected the contemporary situation of the Orthodox parish to sharp criticism; ‘only the name remained’ from it. The reasons for the fall of the parish were attributed by the authors of the note to the development of State centralization and the intensification of serfdom in Russia in the 18th and the beginning of the 19th centuries; the imposition of police duties on the clergy, as a consequence of which it was separated from its flock; the caste alienation of the clergy, and the payments it demanded for the carrying out of needs. But the autonomous re-establishment of small ecclesiastical units, which is what the parishes were, would not attain its aim if a general reform of the Church administration were not carried out: the parishes had to be linked by spiritual communion and pour into the community of the diocese, while ‘diocesan assemblies’ having Local Councils as their model should be convened periodically in parallel with the parish meetings.

---

191 Archbishop Anthony, in Fomin & Fomina, op. cit., p. 394.
“Later the note touched on the problem of the alienation from the Church of a significant part of the intelligentsia. Only the Church herself could resolve this problem and overcome the ‘spiritual schism’. The problem of the theological school was also raised; it was declared to be a task of the whole State, ‘for the degree of the influence of religion on the people depends completely on its organization’. The union of Church and State was wholeheartedly approved, while the ‘self-governing activity’ of the ecclesiastical and state organism, in the opinion of the authors, had to achieve the equilibrium destroyed by Peter the Great. With this aim it was necessary to convene a Local Council in which both white clergy and laity would participate. ‘In view of the present undeniable signs of a certain inner shaking both of society and of the masses of the people,” pointed out Witte, ‘it would be dangerous to wait. Religion constitutes the main foundation of the popular spirit, and through it the Russian land has stood and been strong up to now.’

“And so in S.Yu. Witte’s not the question was posed not about particular changes, but about a general ecclesiastical reform, which would lead to a strengthening of the independence of the Orthodox Church and would sharply reduce the privileges of the over-procurator’s authority. After all, it was a secret to nobody that in speaking about ‘dry bureaucratic principles’, the president of the Committee of Ministers had in mind the rules that found their completed expression in the activity of the department of the Orthodox confession.

“It was at about the same time, in February, that another note appeared expressing the opinion of the capital’s Metropolitan Anthony: ‘Questions relating to desirable transformations in the position of our Orthodox Church’. Vladyka reviewed concrete questions of the reform of the ecclesiastical administration that demanded a very speedy resolution. Referring to the discussions on religious toleration that had taken place in the Committee of Ministers, he noted: the authorities are opening to those who have separated from the Orthodox Church (the Old Ritualists, sectarians and others) ‘a definite position in the State’ without touching their inner church life, at the same time that the ‘ruling’ Church is deprived of such freedom. Citing the Popovtsi Old Ritualists who had accepted ‘the Austrian hierarchs’ as an example, Metropolitan Anthony warned: ‘The danger may occur that this community will be turned into the people’s Church while the Orthodox Church will remain only the State Church’.

“In pointing to the Church’s position within the State, Vladyka placed before the authorities a question of principle: had not the moment come to weaken the control of the secular authorities over the life of the Church? Other questions followed logically from that: should not the Church be given a greater freedom in the administration of her internal affairs? Should Orthodox priests also have the right to be permanent members of social-state
institutions having their place in the parishes? After this it was natural to pose
the further question on the desirability of providing the Church hierarchy
with the right to participate in the sessions of the State Council, the
Committee of Ministers and other higher state institutions with the right to
vote in them.

“The note undoubtedly touched on the privileges of the over-procurator of
the Most Holy Synod. After all, if the desires expressed by the metropolitan
were to be satisfied, the Orthodox episcopate would receive the possibility of
independently, with the mediation of the State, influencing legislative
proposals touching the Church, that is, it would have the right of a political
voice in the empire. It is understandable that C.P. Pobedonostsev could not
welcome such self-will, the more so in that, besides questions on the position
of the Orthodox Church in Russia, the metropolitan gave reasons for the need
to review the structure of the Church and some aspects of the Church’s
administration, and spoke about the particular importance of recognizing the
parish as a legal person and on the desirability of reviewing the laws that
regulated the right of the Church to own, acquire and use property...”

This debate highlighted two contradictions within the present position of
religion in the Russian empire, contradictions that could be removed only
simultaneously or not at all. The first contradiction was that the 44th and 45th
articles of the Basic Laws of the Empire guaranteed freedom of religion - but
the Emperor had to be Orthodox and was obliged both to watch over the
purity of the Orthodox Faith and to protect the Orthodox population of the
empire from threats presented by schisms and heresies. And the second
contradiction was that the Orthodox Church was the dominant confession of
the empire - but, since it was also a department of State, it was less, rather
than more free in relation to the State than the other confessions. Increasing
freedom of religion in the sense, not simply of allowing freedom to practise
religious rites (which already existed), but of creating real equality between the
religions from the point of view of the State (which did not yet exist) would
have the effect of abolishing the first contradiction – but only by removing the
Emperor’s role as guardian of the Orthodox faith and substantially increasing
the threat to Orthodoxy from certain confessions in certain regions (for
example, Catholicism in the west). This could be compensated for, in the view
of the hierarchs, only by abolishing the second contradiction at the same time
- that is, by giving the Church a free hand to defend herself from the
competition of other confessions without interference from the State.

Pobedonostsev suspected that Witte and Metropolitan Anthony were in
league against him, and mounted a vigorous campaign to stop the projected
reforms, defending the Petrine system. On March 13 he succeeded in
persuading the emperor to remove the question of Church reforms from the
competence of the Conferences of Ministers and Heads of State Departments

---

192 Firsov, op. cit., pp. 149-153.
and place it before the Holy Synod. However, this was only a seeming victory: the Holy Synod was no less in favour of the reforms than was Witte and the State. On March 17 the Synod recognized the necessity of reviewing the present situation of the Church vis-à-vis the State “in view of the changed situation of the heterodox confessions, the so-called Old Ritualists and sectarians, and transform the Church’s administration”. The restoration of the patriarchate was deemed desirable “for the sake of the honour of the Russian State”, and it was suggested that a Local Council be convened in Moscow composed of the diocesan bishops and their representatives. On March 22 the seven members of the Synod signed an appeal to the Tsar to convene a Council “at the appropriate time” in Moscow, at which a patriarch would be elected and a series of major questions of Church life would be discussed.\footnote{Firsov, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 163.}

Once again, on March 31, Pobedonostsev succeeded in persuading the Tsar to put off the Synod’s project, and to postpone giving Metropolitan Anthony an audience “for a certain time”. As the Tsar wrote on the Synod’s appeal: “I admit the impossibility of accomplishing, in the anxious times we are living through, such a great work requiring both calm and careful thought as the convening of a Local Council. I reserve for myself, when the fitting time for this will come, in accordance with the ancient examples of the Orthodox Emperors, the task of giving this work momentum and convening a Council of the All-Russian Church for the canonical discussion of matters of faith and Church administration.”

However, Pobedonostsev’s victory could only be temporary: society’s interest in the reforms was increasing, and even V.M. Skvortsov in the conservative journal \textit{Missionerskoe Obozrenie} [Missionary Review], after pointing out that the martyred Great Prince Sergius Alexandrovich had been in favour of the reforms, expressed the opinion that “the reform of the administration of the dominant Church has appeared as \textit{the logical end and natural consequence of the confessional reform} which was so quickly and decisively pushed through by S.Yu. Witte and a special Conference of the Committee of Ministers”.\footnote{Skvortsov, in Firsov, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 172.}

On May 5, the Tsar consented to see the metropolitan, who explained that to delay the reform was neither possible nor desirable. “But as long as Pobedonostsev is alive,” he said, “we cannot expect much.” On May 18 the Tsar officially thanked the Synod for the icon and the report that had been composed two months before, thereby indicating that Pobedonostsev’s bid to keep the Petrine system untouched had failed...

The confessional reform became law in the Tsar’s \textit{ukaz} of April 17, the Sunday of Pascha, “On the Strengthening of the Principles of Religious Toleration”. St. John of Kronstadt, among others, was critical of it, seeing it as
one product of the revolutionary unrest: “Look what is happening in this kingdom at the present time: everywhere students and workers are on strike; everywhere there is the noise of parties who have as their goal the overthrowing of the true monarchical order established by God, everywhere the dissemination of insolent, senseless proclamations, disrespect for the authority of the ruling powers established by God, for ‘there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God’: children and young people imagine that they are the master and commanders of their own fates; marriage has lost all meaning for many and divorces at will have multiplied to endlessness; many children are left to the whims of fate by unfaithful spouses; some kind of senselessness and arbitrariness rule… Finally, an unpunished conversion from Orthodoxy into any faith whatever is allowed [the Decree of April 17, 1905]; even though the same Lord we confess designated death in the Old Testament for those denying the law of Moses.

“If matters continue like this in Russia and the atheists and the anarchist-crazies are not subjected to the righteous retribution of the law, and if Russia is not cleansed of its many tares, then it will become desolate like the ancient kingdoms and cities wiped out by God’s righteous judgement from the face of the earth for their godlessness and their wickedness: Babylon, Assyria, Egypt, Greece-Macedonia. Hold fast, then, Russia, to your faith, and your Church, and to the Orthodox Tsar if you do not wish to be shaken by people of unbelief and lawlessness and if you do not wish to be deprived of your Kingdom and the Orthodox Tsar. But if you fall away from your faith, as many intelligenty have fallen away, then you will no longer by Russia or Holy Rus’, but a rabble of all kinds of other faiths that wish to destroy one another…”195

And again he said: “Russia, if you fall away from your faith, as many intelligenty have already fallen away, you will no longer be Russia or Holy Rus’. And if there is no repentance in the Russian people, the end of the world is near. God will remove the pious tsar and will send a whip in the form of impious, cruel, self-called rulers, who will drench the whole land in blood and tears.”196

At about the same time, St. John’s friend and fellow-wonderworker, Protopriest Valentine Amphiteatrov said: “Pray well for the Sovereign. He is a martyr. Without him the whole of Russia will perish…”197

These warnings followed in a long line of nineteenth-century prophecies. Thus already at the beginning of the nineteenth century the Prophet Abel had

196 Otets Ioann Kronstadtskij (Father John of Kronstadt), Utica, N.Y., 1958.
197 Protopriest Valentine, in “Zhizneopisanie protoierea Valentina Amphiteatrova (II)” (Life of Protopriest Valentine Amphiteatrov – II), Pravoslavnaia Zhizn’ (Orthodox Life), No 12 (659), December, 2004, p. 29 ®.
prophesied to Tsar Paul I: “Nicholas II will be a holy tsar, like Job the much-suffering. He will have the mind of Christ, patience and dove-like purity. The Scriptures speak about him: Psalms 90, 10 and 20 have revealed to me the whole of his destiny. He will exchange a royal crown for a crown of thorns, he will be betrayed by his people as was once the Son of God. He will be a redeemer, he will redeem his people, like the bloodless sacrifice. There will be a war, a great war, a world war. People will fly through the air like birds, and swim under the water like fish, they will begin to exterminate each other with evil-smelling sulphur. On the eve of victory the Russian throne will collapse. But the betrayal will grow and multiply. And your great-grandson will be betrayed, many of your descendants will also whiten their garments in the blood of the Lamb, the peasant will seize power with his axe in madness, but he himself will later weep. A truly Egyptian punishment will begin… Blood and tears will soak the wet earth. Rivers of blood will flow. Brother will rise up against brother. And again: fire, the sword, invasions of aliens and the inner enemy of the godless authority. The Jew will beat the Russian land with a scorpion, he will take hold of her holy things, close the churches of God and execute the best Russian people. This will be allowed by God, it will be the wrath of the Lord against Russia for her rejection of the Anointed of God.”

The October Manifesto

The final defeat of the Russian navy at Tsushima in May, 1905 increased the political tensions in Russia. A meeting in Moscow of representatives from the zemstva, the nobility and the municipal councils called for the convocation of a national representative body elected on a secret, equal, universal and direct ballot. On June 6 a delegation from the meeting led by Prince Sergius Trubetskoj was received by the Tsar, and on August 6 what became known as the Bulygin Constitution was published: a proposal for a consultative parliamentary body called the Duma. Although the franchise to this parliament was limited, its powers were limited, and “the inviolability of autocratic power” was retained, it represented a major concession by the government to the liberal opposition. But the liberals were not satisfied – they were never satisfied…

On August 27 the government made another unexpected concession: university faculties were allowed to elect rectors and students to hold assemblies. Moreover, the police were told to keep out of the universities, making them in effect “no-go” areas. Soon workers and other non-students joined the student meetings, and, as Richard Pipes writes, “academic work became impossible as institutions of higher learning turned into ‘political clubs’: non-conforming professors and students were subjected to intimidation and harassment… In Witte’s view, the university regulations of

198 Monk Abel, in Gubanov, op. cit., p. 30.
August 27 were a disaster: ‘It was the first breach through which the Revolution, which had ripened underground, emerged into the open.’”\(^{199}\)

At the end of September a wave of strikes, economic in origin, but politicised by the Union of Unions and the radical students, hit Central Russia. They culminated in a vast general strike in mid-October. The country was descending into anarchy. Witte tried to persuade the Tsar to introduce a constitutional monarchy. Both he and D.F. Trepov, the Governor-General of St. Petersburg, were in favour of the creation of a constitutional monarchy along the lines of the resolution of the Zemstvo Congress held in Moscow the month before. “To the question whether he [Trepov] could restore order in the capital without risking a massacre, he answered that ‘he could give no such guarantee either now or in the future: rebellion [kramola] has attained a level at which it was doubtful whether [bloodshed] could be avoided. All that remains is faith in the mercy of God.’

“Still unconvinced, Nicholas asked Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaevich to assume dictatorial powers. The Grand Duke is said to have responded that the forces for a military dictatorship were unavailable and that unless the Tsar signed the manifesto he would shoot himself...\(^{200}\) The Tsar gave in because the only real alternative, the imposition of a military dictatorship, was rejected by the man whom he called upon to take up the post: Grand Duke Nicholas Nikolayevich Romanov. The parallel with February, 1917 and the behaviour of the generals then is revealing...

In his Manifesto of October 17, 1905, which was entitled “On the Improvement of Order in the State”, the Tsar declared: “The disturbances and unrest in St Petersburg, Moscow and in many other parts of our Empire have filled Our heart with great and profound sorrow. The welfare of the Russian Sovereign and His people is inseparable and national sorrow is His too. The present disturbances could give rise to national instability and present a threat to the unity of Our State. The oath which We took as Tsar compels Us to use all Our strength, intelligence and power to put a speedy end to this unrest which is so dangerous for the State. The relevant authorities have been ordered to take measures to deal with direct outbreaks of disorder and violence and to protect people who only want to go about their daily business in peace. However, in view of the need to speedily implement earlier measures to pacify the country, we have decided that the work of the government must be unified. We have therefore ordered the government to take the following measures in fulfilment of our unbending will:

1. Fundamental civil freedoms will be granted to the population, including real personal inviolability, freedom of conscience, speech, assembly and association.


\(^{200}\) Pipes, op. cit., p. 43.
2. Participation in the Duma will be granted to those classes of the population which are at present deprived of voting powers, insofar as is possible in the short period before the convocation of the Duma, and this will lead to the development of a universal franchise. There will be no delay to the Duma elect already been organized.

3. It is established as an unshakeable rule that no law can come into force without its approval by the State Duma and representatives of the people will be given the opportunity to take real part in the supervision of the legality of government bodies.

We call on all true sons of Russia to remember the homeland, to help put a stop to this unprecedented unrest and, together with this, to devote all their strength to the restoration of peace to their native land.”

Witte was invited to chair the Council of Ministers, whom he, and not the Tsar, now selected. The position of the Prime Minister under the constitution was now critical – and critically ambiguous. Was he still primarily a servant of the Tsar? Or simply a lackey of the Masons in the Duma?

Fr. Lev Lebedev writes: “When some time had passed, Witte began to praise his Majesty with sweet words for ‘the people’s representation’ in which the Tsar would find support. Nicholas II interrupted him: ‘Sergius Yulyevich: I very well understand that I am creating for myself not a helper, but an enemy, but I comfort myself with the thought that I will succeed in bringing up a state force which will turn out to be useful for providing Russia in the future with a path of peaceful development, without sharp undermining of those supports on which she has lived for so long.’ In the new order the old State Council, composed of high-ranking dignitaries appointed by the Tsar was preserved, as a kind of ‘higher chamber’. However, all this together with the Duma was not a parliament, since his Majesty was not intending to renounce his autocratic power. He made a public declaration about this during a reception of a monarchist organization: ‘The reforms I announced on October 17 will be realized unfailingly, and the freedoms given by me in the same way to the whole of the population are inalienable. But my Autocracy will remained what it was of old.’…”

But could the Autocracy remain what it was when there was now a Duma with not merely consultative, but also legislative powers? Although the Manifesto made no mention of the word “constitution”, many thought that the Tsar had committed himself to a constitution that permanently limited his autocratic powers. Of course, the Tsar’s power was not unlimited in an absolute sense - as Protopriest John Vostorgov said, “The supreme power in a pure, true monarchy is unlimited, but not absolute, for it is limited morally by

---

the content of its ideal” – which is the Law of God. It was because he always saw himself as under God’s law that the Tsar himself removed the word “unlimited” from the Basic Laws to describe the nature of his power, while retaining the word “autocratic”. However, the Tsar remained above all human (as opposed to Divine, Church) laws in his realm, since he was the source of them, so that if he bestowed a law, or manifesto, or even a constitution, he was entitled to change it or remove it altogether. Moreover, his subjects were bound by their oath of allegiance to accept such a change, whatever they might think privately of the Tsar’s inconsistency.

As N. Rodzevich wrote in Moskovskie Vedomosti: “Let us assume that the Tsar is not knowledgeable on military affairs. Well, he selects an experienced general and declares that without the agreement of this general no military question may be decided. A time comes and the Tsar realizes that the general selected by him gives bad advice; can he really not change his previous order and dismiss the general? Of course he may do so. Similarly, if the Duma does not warrant the Tsar’s confidence, would he not be justified in dissolving the Duma and then creating a new one or refusing to convoke one at all? This depends on the Autocrat’s will.”

This was true. And yet we must remember that the date of the October Manifesto, October 17, was also the date of the creation of the St. Petersburg Soviet, or “the Soviet of Workers’ Deputies” to give it its official name, which was controlled by the socialists (they had twenty-one out of fifty seats on the Executive Committee). In other words, whatever kind of state Russia remained in theory, in practice a great change had taken place – the public creation of a revolutionary institution inexorably opposed both to God and the Autocracy that would have been unthinkable in an earlier age. And if this revolution was eventually crushed, it left a general feeling of malaise in the people, and a weakness and uncertainty in state administration (in spite of the efforts of the excellent prime minister, Peter Arkadievich Stolypin), that made 1917 inevitable.

And so if the revolution was born in October, 1917, it was conceived twelve years before, in 1905…

The 1905 Revolution

The Manifesto, far from calming political passions, excited them to the utmost. Anarchy increased as young revolutionaries rampaged in the cities, the press, freed from all restraints and almost exclusively owned by Jews, raged against the government, and the police, overstretched and unsure of their rights under the new constitution, hesitated to apply strong measures.

203 Vostorgov, in Fomin & Fomina, op. cit., p. 403.
Even the peasants, hitherto the strongest support of the monarchy, began to be violent... “The peasantry,” writes Pipes, “completely misunderstood the October Manifesto, interpreting it in its own manner as giving the communes licence to take over the countryside. Some rural disorders occurred in the spring of 1905, more in the summer, but they exploded only after October 17. Hearing of strikes and pogroms [both anti-Christian and anti-Jewish] in the cities going unpunished, the peasants drew their own conclusions. Beginning on October 23, when large-scale disorders broke out in Chernigov province, the wave of rural disorders kept on swelling until the onset of winters, re-emerging in the spring of 1906 on an even vaster scale. It would fully subside only in 1908 following the adoption of savage repressive measures by Prime Minister Stolypin.

“... The principal aim of the jacquerie was neither inflicting physical harm nor even appropriating land, but depriving landlords and other non-peasant landowners of the opportunity to earn a livelihood in the countryside – ‘smoking them out’, as the saying went. In the words of one observer: ‘The [peasant] movement was directed almost exclusively against landed properties and not against the landlord: the peasants had no use whatever for landlords but they did need the land.’ The notion was simple: force the landlords to abandon the countryside and to sell their land at bargain prices. To this end, the peasants cut down the landlord’s forests, sent cattle to graze on his pasture, smashed his machinery, and refused to pay rent. In some places, manors were set on fire...

“In an effort to stem the agrarian unrest, the government in early November reduced the due instalments of the redemption payments (payments for the land given the emancipated serfs in 1861) and promised to abolish them altogether in January 1907, but these measures did little to calm the rural districts.

“In 1905 and 1906 peasants by and large refrained from seizing the land they coveted from fear that they would not be allowed to keep it. They still expected a grand national repartition of all the non-communal land, but whereas previously they had looked to the Tsar to order it, they now pinned their hopes on the Duma. The quicker they drove the landlords out, they reasoned, the sooner the repartition would take place...

“The government faced one more trial of strength, this time with the radical left. In this conflict, there was no room for compromises, for the socialists would be satisfied with nothing less than a political and social revolution.

“The authorities tolerated the St. Petersburg Soviet, which continued to sit in session although it no longer had a clear purpose. On November 26, they order the arrest of Nosar, its chairman. A three-man Presidium (one of whose
members was Leon Trotsky) which replaced Nosar resolved to respond with an armed uprising. The first act, which it was hoped would bring about a financial collapse, was an appeal to the people (the so-called Financial Manifesto), issued on December 2, urging them to withhold payments to the Treasury, to withdraw money from savings accounts, and to accept only bullion or foreign currency. The next day, [the Interior Minister] Durnovo arrested the Soviet, putting some 260 deputies (about one-half of its membership) behind bars. Following these arrests a surrogate Soviet assembled under the chairmanship of Alexander Helphand (Parvus), the theoretician of ‘permanent revolution’. On December 6, the St. Petersburg Soviet issued a call for a general strike to being two days later. The call went unheeded, even though the Union of Unions gave it its blessing.

“The socialists were more successful in Moscow. The Moscow Soviet, formed only on November 21 by intellectuals of the three principal socialist parties, decided to press the revolution beyond its ‘bourgeois’ phase. Their followers consisted of semi-skilled workers, many of them employed in the textile industry, professionally and culturally less mature than their counterparts in the capital. The principal force behind this effort was the Moscow Bolshevik Committee. The Moscow rising was the first occasion in the 1905 Revolution when the socialists took the lead. On December 6, the Moscow Soviet voted to begin the following day an armed insurrection for the purpose of overthrowing the tsarist government, convoking a Constituent Assembly, and proclaiming a democratic republic.

“On December 7, Moscow was paralyzed: the strike was enforced by Soviet agents who threatened with violence anyone who refused to cooperate. Two days later, government forces launched an attack on the insurgents; the latter responded with urban guerilla tactics. The arrival of the Semeonovskii Regiment, which used artillery to disperse the rioters, settled the issue. On

205 The textile industry was virtually founded in Russia in the Orekhovo-Zuevo district by the freed serf Savva Morozov during the Napoleonic Wars. The Morozov family soon became rich, and in the 1850s Savva employed more than 1000 workers. His son Timothy took over the business, but was very cruel to the workers, which led in 1885 to the first organized workers’ strike in Russian history. Savva junior took over after his father’s death, and, as Valentine Tschebotariev Bill writes, “decided to build new, light, and airy living quarters for the workmen and their families. Savva improved medical care with remarkable efficiency and reduced the accident rate. And most important of all, he did away with the system of fines.” However, Savva admired Maxim Gorky, and gave large sums to the Social Democratic Party. Early in 1905, his mother heard of this and promptly removed him from the management of the firm. A few weeks later, on May 13, Savva Morozov shot himself. As Bill writes, the history of the Morozovs “is typical of the times and the development of the Russian bourgeoisie: the painful efforts of the first generation to extricate themselves from the burden of servitude, the coldblooded, uncompromising tyranny displayed by the second generation, and the rising tide of revolution which confronted the third.” It is thought that Gorky’s novel The Artamanov Business is based on the history of the Morozov family. A comparison between the fortunes of the Morozovs and the Artamanovs discloses a number of interesting parallels (‘The Morozovs’, The Russian Review) (V.M.)
December 18 the Executive Committee of the Moscow Soviet capitulated. Over 1,000 people lost their lives in the uprising and whole areas of the ancient capital were gutted.\textsuperscript{206}

As regards the pogroms, the general pattern was as follows. First the revolutionaries, usually led by young Jews, would call on the population to strike and free prisoners from the prisons, and would themselves tear down the symbols of tsarist authority, although “undoubtedly both Russians and Jews took part in the destruction of portraits and monograms”.\textsuperscript{207} Then, a day or two later, when it was clear that the authorities were unwilling or unable to restore order, the anti-Jewish pogrom would begin.

Thus in Kiev the pogrom began on October 18. “A crowd of Jews seized the building of the City Duma, tore down national flags and mocked the portraits of the Tsar. One of the Jews cut the head out of a portrait [of the Tsar], put his own [in the hole] and shouted: ‘Now I’m the Tsar!’ Others declared to the stunned Kievans: ‘Soon your St. Sophia cathedral will become our synagogue!’”\textsuperscript{208} “In its initial stage the pogrom undoubtedly had the character of revenge taken for the offence to national feeling. Subjecting the Jews they met on the street to blows, smashing shops and trampling the goods they took out of them into the dirt, the pogromists would say: ‘There’s your freedom, there’s your constitution and revolution; there are your tsarist portraits and crown’. And then on the following morning, the 19\textsuperscript{th}, a thousand-strong crowd made its way from the Duma to St. Sophia square carrying the empty frames from the broken portraits of the tsar, the tsarist monogram and smashed mirrors. They went to the university, repaired the damaged portraits and served a moleben, while ‘Metropolitan Flavian exhorted the crowd not to behave badly and to disperse to their homes’. ‘But at the same time that the people constituting the centre of the patriotic demonstration… maintained exemplary order in it, people joining it from the street allowed themselves to commit all kinds of violence in relation to the Jews they met and to people wearing the uniforms of academic institutions [students].’ Then the demonstrators were joined by ‘black workers, homeless inhabitants of the flea market and bare-footed people from the river-bank’, ‘groups of pogromists smashed up Jewish flats and stalls and threw out property and goods onto the street. Then they would be partly destroyed and partly stolen.’… The pogromists passed by the stalls of the Karaite Jews without touching them, and also ‘those Jewish flats where they were shown portraits of the emperor’. [On the 19\textsuperscript{th} the wealthiest Jewish shops in the centre were looted.] Proceeding from the fact that ‘almost two thirds of all the trade in the city was in the hands of the Jews’, [Senator] Turau calculates the losses, including the homes of the rich, ‘at several million roubles’. They set

\textsuperscript{206} Pipes, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 48-50.
\textsuperscript{207} Solzhenitsyn, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 375.
\textsuperscript{208} Lebedev, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 428.
out to destroy not only Jewish houses, but also the flats of well-known liberal social activists…

“In all during the days of the pogrom, according to the approximate estimate of the police (some of those who suffered were taken away by the crowd), 47 people were killed, including 12 Jews, while 205 were wounded, one third of whom were Jews.

“Turau concludes his report with the conclusion that ‘the main cause of the Jewish pogrom in Kiev was the long-existing enmity between the Little Russian and Jewish population, based on the difference in their world-views. The immediate cause was the insult to national feeling by the revolutionary manifestations, in which a prominent role belonged to Jewish youth.’ The simple people saw ‘the Jews alone as being to blame for the insults and imprecations against everything that was holy and dear to it. It could not understand the revolutionary movement after the concessions given it, and explained it by the striving of the Jews to gain “their own Yiddish freedom”.’ ‘The failures of the war, at which Jewish youth always openly expressed its most lively joy, their avoidance of military service, their participation in the revolutionary movement, in a series of violent acts and murders of high-ranking people, and undoubtedly the irritation of the simple people against the Jews – that is why there were incidents in Kiev when many Russians openly gave refuge in their houses to poor Jews hiding from the violence, while sharply refusing to give it to young Jews.’

“The newspaper *Kievlyanin* also wrote about this. ‘Unfortunate Jews! What were these thousands of families guilty of?… To their own woe and misfortune the Jews have not been able to restrain their madmen… But, you know, there are madmen among us Russians, too, and we have not been able to restrain them.’

“The revolutionary youth went mad – and it was the elderly and peaceful Jews who had to pay for it…”

Indeed, the older generation of Jewry did not support the young. “’[Jewish] orthodoxy was in a struggle, not always open, but hidden, against the Jewish intelligentsia. It was clear that orthodoxy, in condemning the liberation movement in Jewry, was striving to win the goodwill of the government.’ But it was already late. By 1905 the autocracy had generally lost control in the country. While traditional Jewry by that year had completely lost a whole, and already not the first, generation, which had departed into Zionism, into secular liberalism, rarely into enlightened conservatism, and – the most significant in its consequences – into the revolutionary movement.”

---


“It is not surprising,” continues Solzhenitsyn, “that ‘in many places... an active struggle of prosperous religious elements in Jewry against the revolution was noticed. They helped the police to catch Jewish revolutionaries, and to break up demonstrations, strikes, etc.’ Not that it was nice for them to be on the side of the government. But... they not want to accept the revolutionary law, for they honoured their own. While for many young revolutionaries the religious ‘Union of the Jews’ in Bialystok and other places was ‘Blackhundredist’.”

It must also be emphasized that the main motivation for this flood of Jews into the revolutionary movement was not the restrictions placed by the government on the civil rights of Jewry (which were in any case being quickly whittled down), but infection with the same liberal and revolutionary ideas as infected so many contemporary Russians. “‘The participation of Jews in the general Russian revolutionary movement can only to a very small degree be explained by their inequality... The Jews only shared the general mood’ of the struggle against the autocracy. Is that to be wondered at? The young members of intelligenty families, both Russian and Jewish, had for years heard at home [such phrases as]: ‘the crimes of the authorities’, ‘a government of murderers’. They then rushed into revolutionary action with all their energy and ardour.”

The pattern of the Kievan pogroms was repeated almost exactly in Odessa, except on a larger scale, as the report of Senator Kuzminsky makes clear. On the 18th, the morning after the declaration of the Manifesto, “General Kauldbars, the commander of the Odessa military district, in order to ‘give the population the unhindered opportunity to use the freedom given by the Manifesto in all its forms’, ordered all the soldiers not to appear on the streets, ‘so as not to spoil the joyful mood in the population’. However, ‘this mood did not last for long. From all sides individual groups, mainly of Jews and young students, streamed towards the centre of the city’ with red flags of shouts of ‘Down with the autocracy!’ and “Down with the police!” And orators summoned them to the revolution. From a metallic image on the Duma of the words ‘God save the Tsar!’, the first two words were broken off. They rushed into the Duma hall, ‘a huge portrait of his Majesty the Emperor was torn to pieces, while in the Duma the national flag was replaced with the red flag. They removed the hats from a protopriest, deacon and reader who were passing by in a cab to a pannikhida, and then later at the burial they stopped the procession ‘and interrupted the singing of “Holy God” with shouts of “Hurrah!”’. ‘They dragged along a dead cat and a scarecrow without its head and with the inscription “This is the autocracy”, and collected money on the spot “for killing the Tsar” or “for the death of

211 Solzhenitsyn, op. cit., pp. 367-368. At the same time it must not be forgotten that the Jewish religion is revolutionary by nature – the Talmud preaches a kind of permanent revolution against the non-Jewish world.
212 Solzhenitsyn, op. cit., p. 361.
Nicholas’’. ‘The young people, and especially the Jews, with an evident consciousness of their superiority began to point out to the Russians that freedom had not been given voluntarily, but had been snatched away from the government by the Jews… They openly said to the Russians: “Now we will rule you”’, and also: ‘We gave you God, we will also give you a tsar’.”  

Prophetic words when we remember that it was little more than twelve years to the Jewish Soviet “tsardom”…

Soon the students were forcing workers to take off their hats in front of the red flag. When the workers refused, they were shot at. But though unarmed, they succeeded in dispersing the crowd. Then, however, another thousand-strong crowd of Jews began to fire at the workers… Four workers were killed. Thus “in various places there began fights and armed confrontations between Russians and Jews: Russian workers and people without fixed occupations, the so-called hooligans, began to catch and beat up Jews. They went on to break into and destroy Jewish houses, flats and stalls.”

The next day the “counter-pogrom” of the Russians against the Jews began in earnest. Crowds of Russians of all classes carrying icons and portraits of the tsar, and singing “Save, O Lord, Thy people” marched into the centre of the town. There the revolutionaries shot at them, a boy carrying an icon was killed, bombs were thrown… Open warfare between Jews and Russians now began. The violence continued on October 20 and 21…

“On October 31 [21?] a crowd of Jews destroyed state emblems and seized the Duma, proclaiming a ‘Danubian-Black Sea Republic’ headed by the Jew Pergament. It was suggested that the Don and Kuban lands should be ‘cleansed’ of Cossacks and handed over to Jewish settlers. Moreover, Jewish organizations armed from four to five thousand warriors, and not a little blood was shed in conflicts with soldiers. All this was described by the correspondent of the [London] Times, who was a witness of the events, in an article entitled ‘A Regime of Terror’ (Jewish terror was meant). Then in London the chief rabbi of the Spanish communities Gasper came out in print denying everything (‘Not one Jew insulted the Majesty’ of the Tsar) and affirming that that Tsarist troops and police had killed four thousand completely innocent Jews! The Times correspondent from Odessa refuted this fabrication: in general there had not been thousands of Jews killed. During the Odessa disorders only 293 Jews had been buried, of whom many died a natural death. The Englishman also pointed out that the provocation had been arranged by the ‘central Jewish organization in Switzerland which sent its emissaries from Poland to Odessa’. He quoted L.Ya. Rabinovich on how

214 Solzhenitsyn, op.cit., p. 393.
215 “According to information provided by the police, those killed numbered more than 500, of whom 400 were Jews, while the wounded registered by the police numbered 289… of whom 237 were Jews”. (Solzhenitsyn, op.cit., p. 397) (V.M.).
the transfer of arms had taken place. But such witnesses from objective foreign observers were extremely rare! On the other hand, the whole of the world’s press was filled with descriptions of the horrors of the Jewish pogroms, which rolled in an especially powerful wave from October 18 to 21 in the cities of Orel, Kursk, Simferopol, Rostov-on-Don, Ryazan, Velikiie Luki, Ivanovo-Voznesensk, Kaluga, Kazan, Novgorod, Smolensk, Tula, Ufa, Tomsk, Warsaw, many others and in all the cities of the ‘Pale of Settlement’. Of course, nothing was said about how these pogroms had been provoked by the Jews themselves (especially often by firing at Russians from the windows of well-known Jewish houses). In our days it has become clearer that at that time social-democratic organizations led by Jews deliberately spread leaflets among the people calling on them to [start] Jewish pogroms.”

The wrath of the people was directed not only against the Jews but against leftists generally. Thus in Tver a crowd set fire to the theatre in which the leftists were sitting – 200 perished. Another crowd threatened to do the same thing in Balashov, but thanks to the courageous actions of the governor, Peter Arkadyevich Stolypin, there were no victims.

And yet, considering the scale of the disturbances, there were far fewer victims than might have been expected – 1000 dead and several thousand wounded, according to one Jewish source. Again, the Jew G. Sliozberg, a contemporary witness who was in possession of all the information, wrote: “Fortunately, all these hundreds of pogroms did not bring in their wake significant violence against the persons of Jews, and in the vast majority of places the pogroms were not accompanied by murders.”

For in 1905 faith and morality still held the great majority of the Orthodox people back from taking revenge against their persecutors. It would be a different story during the Civil War…

On October 27 the Tsar wrote to his mother “that the pogromshchiki represented ‘a whole mass of loyal people’, reacting angrily to ‘the impertinence of the Socialists and revolutionaries… and, because nine-tenths of the trouble-makers are Jews, the People’s whole anger turned against them.’ This analysis was accepted by many foreign observers, notably British diplomats like the ambassador at St. Petersburg, Sir Charles Hardinge, his councillor, Cecil Spring Rice, and the Consul-General in Moscow, Alexander Murray.”

This analysis was also supported by Senator Kuzminsky, who concluded that “the October disturbances and disorders [in Odessa] were caused by factors of an undeniably revolutionary character and were crowned by a

217 Solzhenitsyn, op. cit., p. 401.
pogrom of Jews exclusively as a result of the fact that it was the representatives of this nationality who took the dominant part in the revolutionary movement”.219

Alexander Solzhenitsyn has shown by extensive quotations from Jewish sources that the Jews were well aware of the true state of affairs. Even the more honest Jews had to admit that 1905 was in essence “a Jewish revolution”. “Thus in November, 1905 a certain Jacob de Haas in an article entitled ‘The Jewish Revolution’ in the London Zionist journal Maccabee wrote directly: ‘The revolution in Russia is a Jewish revolution, for it is the turning point in Jewish history. This situation stems from the fact that Russia is the fatherland of about half of the overall number of Jews inhabiting the world…”220

What part did the Church play in the disturbances? There were some lower clergy who expressed themselves against the Tsar.221 But the great majority of the clergy were patriots. The higher clergy conducted themselves in general with great distinction. Thus, as we have seen, Metropolitan Flavian tried to restrain the patriotic crowds in Kiev. Other clergy were similarly brave. Thus Protopriest Michael Yedlinsky, the future catacomb hieromartyr, in full vestments, together with his clerics, choir and banners, headed a procession in the direction of the Kontaktovi Square and Gostini Place, where some Jewish shops were located. The procession moved along the boulevard, cutting off the rioters from Gostini Place. People in the crowd removed their hats out of respect. When Batyushka turned to the rioters admonishing them, many of them calmed down and began to disperse, even more so because a squadron of cavalrymen began to move onto the square from Alexander Street.222

Another hero was Archbishop Platon, the future Metropolitan of North America. Charles Johnston writes: “On October 22, 1905… a huge throng of wildly excited townsmen assembled, inflamed by stories and rumors of misdoings, determined to raid the Jewish quarter [of Kiev]. Their pretext was that a Jew had cursed the Emperor and spat upon his portrait.

“When the multitude assembled Archbishop Platon was in his own church in full canonicals, with his miter upon his head. He heard the angry storming of the crowd without and realized its meaning and purpose. Instantly he came to a decision, and in robes and miter went forth to meet the multitude. Of the church attendants only two accompanied him. So the tumultuous throng came on, crying for vengeance upon the Jews, and Archbishop Platon went to meet them. It had rained heavily all night and was raining still.

220 Lebedev, op. cit., p. 421.
Paying no heed to the pools of water and mud that covered the street, the Archbishop, seeing that there was but one way to check the hysterically excited mob, knelt down in the street immediately in the path of the turbulently advancing throng and began to pray.

“The profound love and veneration for the Church which is at the center of every Russian heart was touched, and the multitude wavered, halted, grew suddenly silent. Those who were in front checked those who were behind, and a whisper ran through the crowd carrying word that the Archbishop was kneeling in the street praying, in spite of the mud and rain.

“After he had prayed Archbishop Platon rose and confronted the huge throng.

“He spoke, and his fiery words so dominated the multitude that he led the turbulent thousands to the church and made them promise, calling God to witness, that they would leave the Jews unharmed and return quietly to their homes. Thus the multitude was checked and the work of destruction was prevented by the great churchman’s fearless devotion.

“The impression which this exhibition of devoted valor made on the public of Kieff was immediate and profound. The Jews especially were full of gratitude…”223

Another bishop who spoke powerfully against the rebels was Archbishop Nicon of Vologda, who was martyred in 1919. And in Moscow, another future hieromartyr, Metropolitan Vladimir, powerfully raised his archpastoral voice, rebuking the rebels and exposing the essence of the revolution. Thus on October 16, after the liturgy in the Kremlin Dormition cathedral, he said: “The heart bleeds when you see what is happening around us… It is no longer the Poles, or external enemies, but our own Russian people, who, having lost the fear of God, have trusted the rebels and are holding our first capital as it were in a siege. Even without this we have been having a hard time because of our sins: first harvest failures [in 1891, 1897, 1898 and 1901], then illnesses, then an unsuccessful war [the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-05], and now something unheard of is taking place in Rus’: it is as if God has deprived Russian people of their minds. By order of underground revolutionaries, strikes have begun everywhere, in the factories, in the schools, on the railways… Oh if only our unfortunate workers knew who is ruling them, who is sending them trouble-maker-agitators, then they would have turned from them in horror as from poisonous snakes! You know these are the so-called social-democrats, these are the revolutionaries, who have long ago renounced God in their works. They have renounced Him, and yet it may be that they have never known the

Christian faith. They denounce her servants, her rites, they mock her holy things. Their main nest is abroad: they are dreaming of subduing the whole world to themselves; in their secret protocols they call us, the Christians, animals, to whom God, they say, has given a human face only in order that it should not be repulsive to them, His chosen ones, to use our services… With satanic cunning they catch light-minded people in their nets, promising them paradise on earth, but they carefully hide from them their secret aims, their criminal dreams. Having deceived the unfortunate, they drag him to the most terrible crimes, as if for the sake of the common good, and, in fact they make him into an obedient slave. They try in every way to cast out of his soul, or at any rate to distort, the teaching of Christ. Thus the commandments of Christ say: do not steal, do not covet what belongs to another, but they say: everything is common, take from the rich man everything you like. The commandments of Christ say: share your last morsel, your last kopeck with your neighbour, but they teach: take from others everything that you need. The commandments of Christ say: give to Caesar what is Caesar’s, fear God, venerate the Tsar, but they say: we don’t need any Tsar, the Tsar is a tyrant… The commandments of God say: in patience possess your souls, but they say: in struggle acquire your rights. The commandment of Christ orders us to lay down our souls for our friends, but they teach to destroy people who are completely innocent, to kill them only for the fact they do not agree with them, and do not embark on robbery, but just want to work honourably and are ready to stand for the law, for the Tsar, for the Church of God…”

“The sermon of Metropolitan Vladimir elicited the annoyance of the liberal-democratic press, and also of the liberal clergy. The latter either read the sermon in a shortened version, or did not read it at all. In the leftist newspaper Russkoe Slovo 76 priests published a declaration regarding their ‘complete non-solidarity’ with ‘the “Word” of Metropolitan Vladimir…’

“As a result of the actions of the priests quarrels also arose amidst their flock. The Synod, in response to this, unfortunately saw in the epistle of Metropolitan Vladimir, not a call to defend the Faith and the Fatherland, but ‘a call to the local population to defend themselves in the sphere of political convictions’, and in their ‘Resolution of October 22, 1905 № 150’ instructed the diocesan bishops and the clergy subject to them to make efforts ‘to remove quarrels in the population’, which, to a large extent, were continuing because of the opposition of the liberal priests to their metropolitan.

“But nothing could devalue or undermine the influence of the epistle of Metropolitan Vladimir on the Muscovites, and the true Russian people responded to it. The day after the publication of the ‘Word’, the workers began to serve molebens and return to work; the city water-supply began to work, the trams began to run, etc. Metropolitan Vladimir himself went to the factories and, after prayer, conducted archpastoral discussions with the workers.
”Later, in evaluating the labours of the holy hierarch Vladimir in overcoming the disturbances of 1905, Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky) said the following notable words about him: ‘Meek and humble, never seeking anything for himself, honourable and a lover of righteousness, Vladyka Vladimir gradually and quietly ascended the hierarchical ladder and was immediately exalted by his authority, drawing the hearts of ecclesiastical and patriotic Russia to himself during the days of general instability and treachery, when there were few who remained faithful to their duty and their oath, firm in the defence of the Orthodox Church, the Tsar-Autocrat and the Homeland… when everything began to shake in our Rus’, and many pillars began to waver...’ (speech of Archbishop Anthony of Zhitomir and Volhynia at the triumphal dinner given by Metropolitan Vladimir in honour of Patriarch Gregory of Antioch who was visiting Russia, 22 February, 1913).

“By ‘pillars’ Vladyka Anthony probably had in mind the liberal members of the Most Holy Synod, who did not support their brother, Metropolitan Vladimir...”224

Metropolitan Vladimir’s strong monarchist convictions were apparent already at his ordination, when he said: “A priest who is not a monarchist is unworthy to stand at the Holy Altar. A priest who is republican is always of little faith. A monarch is consecrated to his power by God, a president receives power from the pride of the people; a monarch is powerful through his carrying out of the commandments of God, a president holds on to power by pleasing the mob; a monarch leads his faithful subjects to God, a president leads them away from God.”225

The restoration of order in Russia was accomplished largely through the efforts of one of the great servants of the tsarist regime, the Interior Minister and later Prime Minister Peter Arkadyevich Stolypin. In the Duma his military field tribunals, which decreed capital punishment for the revolutionaries, were often criticized. But he replied to one such critic: “Learn to distinguish the blood on the hands of a doctor from the blood on the hands of an executioner...”226

And so the 1905 revolution was crushed. But the revolutionary spirit remained alive, and the country remained divided. The Empire had struck back; but the bell was tolling for the Empire...

224 Riasophor-Monk Anempodist, “Sviashchennomuchenik mitropolit Vladimir (Bogoiavlenskij) i bor’ba s revoliutsii” (Hieromartyr Metropolitan Vladimir (Bogoavlensky) and the struggle against the revolution), Pravoslavnaia Zhizn’ (Orthodox Life), 53, № 1 (636), January, 2003, pp. 2-10 ©.
225 In Valentina Sologub, Kto Gospoden – Ko Mne! (He who is the Lord’s – Come to me!), Moscow, 2007, p. 45 ©.
The Pre-Conciliar Convention

We have seen that from the beginning of the century a movement for “the liberation of the Church from the State” arose among the Church’s intelligentsia. Paradoxically, it was Tsar Nicholas himself who started the process by removing the phrase about the tsar as “the supreme judge” from the oath that all hierarchs had to swear at their consecration. As we have seen, this movement rapidly developed, from the religio-philosophical meetings of 1901 to the decree of toleration in 1905.

However, while the aim was laudable, and indeed of primary importance, the management of the process presented many problems in view of the revolutionary situation; and the Tsar postponed the convening of a Council to reform the administration of the Church and Church-State relations.

But the political situation began to stabilize, and “already at the end of the same year,” as E.E. Alferev writes, “on December 27 [1905], he addressed a rescript to Metropolitan Anthony of St. Petersburg in which he wrote: ‘I now recognize that the time is quite right to carry out certain transformations in the structure of our native Church… I suggest that you determine the time for the convening of this Council.’

“On the basis of this rescript a Pre-Conciliar Convention was formed for the preparation of the convening of a Council, which soon set about its work. The convention carried out exceptionally important and valuable work demanding much time and labour, but the world war that broke out hindered the convening of the Council during the reign of Emperor Nicholas II. Instead of the peaceful situation which the Sovereign considered necessary for the introduction of such important reforms, it was convened in very unfavourable circumstances, during a terrible war, after the overthrow of the historical state structure of Russia, when the country was seized by revolutionary madness, and its most important decisions were taken to the sound of cannons during the beginning of the civil war.”

The Pre-Conciliar Convention gathered detailed responses from the bishops and leading theologians on the main issues which were to dominate the history of the Orthodox Church in the coming century. The debates during the Convention brought to the fore several of those churchmen who would play such important roles, both for good and for ill, in the coming struggle with the revolution: on the one side, men such as Metropolitan Vladimir (Bogoyavlensky), Archbishop Anthony (Khrapovitsky), Archbishop Theophan (Bystrov) of Poltava and Archbishop Tikhon (Bellavin), and on the

other, Bishop Antoninus (Granovsky), Archbishop Sergius (Stragorodsky) and Bishop Eulogius (Georgievsky).

Thus among the suggestions made to the Convention we find the following one from Archbishop Sergius on January 18, which clearly looks forward to the renovationist movement of the 1920s:

- On the reform of the liturgical language: the future Council must debate the question of the simplification of the language of the Church, Slavonic, and the right accorded to the parish that wants it to serve the Divine offices in that language.
- It must think of abbreviating and simplifying the Typicon, and suppressing certain ritual actions, such as the breathing and spitting during the sacrament of baptism.
- It must think of abolishing the multiple repetitions of the same litanies during the same service, and replacing them by reading aloud the secret prayers during the Liturgy.
- It must think of giving priests [who have been widowed before the age of 45] the right to remarry.”

The first section of the Convention studied the questions of the composition of the future Council and the transformation of the central administration of the Church. The second section studied the question of the division of Russia into metropolitan districts and the transformation of the local Church administration. In June, the question of Georgian autocephaly also began to be discussed by this section. The third section studied Church courts and reviewed the laws of marriage, divorce and mixed marriages. The fourth section studied the questions of the parish, church schools, church property, diocesan congresses and the participation of clergy in public institutions. The fifth section studied the question of the transformation of spiritual-academic institutions. The sixth section studied the questions of the Yedinoverie, the Old Ritualists and some other issues. The seventh section analyzed measures necessary “for the protection of the Orthodox Faith and Christian piety from wrong teachings and interpretations in view of the strengthening of the principles of religious toleration in the empire”.

In May, 1906 a general assembly of the Convention came to a conclusion about the composition of the future Council. It was to be composed of clergy and laity, with a bishop, a priest and a layman being elected from each diocese. But while the clergy and laity were given the right to discuss all questions discussed in Council, the right to compose and confirm conciliar decrees and decisions was reserved for the bishops alone. This became the basis of the composition of the Council in 1917-18.

---

However, very few other recommendations of the sections were put into practice, and the Convention itself was brought to an end in December amidst a general waning of interest in it on the part of the public. In fact, according to F.D. Samarin, the results of the colossal amount of work put into the Convention amounted to nothing. There followed a decade in which the wounds of the Church continued to fester, and the authority of both Church and State continued to decline. In the end the much needed Local Council was convened, in accordance with Divine Providence, only when the Tsar himself had been swept away…

**Georgian Autocephaly**

As we have seen, in the late nineteenth century there arose a movement to preserve Georgia’s heritage and revive Georgian Church autocephaly came into being under the leadership of the poet, historian and philosopher Ilia Chavchavadze, who was assassinated by social democrat revolutionaries in 1907. Georgian State independence was not under consideration, since at a time of increasing nationalist and revolutionary tensions, it would only undermine the foundations of the whole Orthodox empire.\(^{229}\) However, Church autocephaly was a different matter, and on June 2, 1906 this question was reviewed in the Alexander Nevsky Lavra in St. Petersburg during the sessions of the second section of the Preconciliar Convention, “On the settling of ecclesiastical affairs in the Caucasus”.

The Georgians’ case for autocephaly was strong, since nobody denied that the Georgian Church had been autocephalous since the fourth century, and that autocephaly had been abolished without their consent. However, most delegates at the conference argued that in one state there should be only one Church administration, so that the Georgian Church, as existing on the territory of the Russian Empire, should remain part of the Russian Church. Moreover, to encourage a division of Church administrations would encourage political separatism, would undermine the unity of the Empire, and therefore work against the interests of all the Orthodox of the Empire (and beyond it). This view prevailed. The delegates accepted a project put

\(^{229}\) Nevertheless, Tsar Nicholas II did something to make amends for Russia’s violation of the treaty of Georgievsk. In 1911, at the marriage of Princess Tatiana of Russia to Prince Constantine Bagration of Moukhrani, he told the Grand Duke Constantine, the father of the bride, that “they would never look upon her marriage to a Bagration as morganatic, because this House, like the House of Orleans [of France], is descended from a once ruling dynasty” (November 30, 1910 entry, from *The Diaries of Grand Duke Constantine Constantinovich*, Moscow, 1994). Also, on December 5, 1946 Grand Duke Vladimir Kirillovich, head of the Russian Imperial Family, decreed: “I consider it right and proper to recognise the royal status of the senior branch of the Bagration family, as well as the right of the members to bear the title of Prince of Georgia and the style of Royal Highness. The present head of the family is Prince George. If Almighty God, in His Mercy, allows the rebirth of our great empire, I consider it right that the Georgian language should be restored for use in the internal administration of Georgia and in her educational establishments. The Russian language should be obligatory for general relations within the Empire.” (in Sargis, op. cit.)
forward by Protopriest John Vostorgov (the future hieromartyr) giving the Georgian Church greater independence in the sphere of the use of the Georgian liturgical language, of the appointment of national Georgian clergy, etc., but the project for Georgian autocephaly was rejected.  

A minority view was put forward by the Georgian Bishop Kirion, who after the revolution became leader of the Georgian Autocephalous Church. In his report, “The National Principle in the Church”, he argued, as Pavlenko writes, that “Georgia ‘has the right to the independent existence of her national Church on the basis of the principle of nationality in the Church proclaimed at the beginning of the Christian faith.’ What does principle consist of, and when was it proclaimed? ‘It is sufficient to remember,’ writes Bishop Kirion, ‘the descent of the Holy Spirit on the apostles, who immediately began to glorify God in various languages and then preached the Gospel to the pagans, each in their native language.’ But in our [Pavlenko’s] view, references to the preaching of the apostles in connection with the affirmation of the national principle in the Church have no firm foundation. The preaching of the apostles in various languages was necessary in order to unite the peoples in the Truth of Christ, and not in order to disunite them in accordance with the national principle. That is, the principle of nationality is precisely that which Christianity has to overcome, and not that on which the Church must be founded. Since the Bulgarian schism phyletistic argumentation has characteristically sought support in references to the 34th Apostolic canon. ‘The basic canonical rule,’ writes Bishop Kirion, ‘by which the significance of nationality in relation to Church administration is recognised, is the 34th Apostolic canon which is so well known to canonists…

Bishop Kirion also argued that dividing the administration of the Church along national, racial lines had the advantage of preserving the idiosyncracy of each nation. And in support of his argument he cites the 39th Canon of the Council in Trullo in 692, which allowed Archbishop John of Cyprus to retain all his rights as the head of the autocephalous Church of Cyprus while living, not in Cyprus, but in the Hellespont, to which he had been exiled because of barbarian invasions. Bishop Kirion argued that this canon prescribed the

---

231 Pavlenko, op. cit.
preservation of Cypriot idiosyncracy, and so “acquires a very important significance from the point of view of Church freedom”.

However, as Pavlenko points out, in this canon “not a word is said about ‘national religious-everyday and individual particularities’ and the like, but there is mention of the rights of first-hierarchs over bishops and their appointment. ‘Let the customs of each [autocephalous] Church be observed,’ it says in this canon, ‘so that the bishop of each district should be subject to his president, and that he, in his turn, should be appointed from his bishops, according to the ancient custom.’ The émigré Church of Cyprus, of which mention is made in this canon, did not become the national Church of the Cypriots, but took into herself all the peoples of the Hellespont district where they emigrated [the bishop of Cyzicus, who was under the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, was temporarily placed in subjection to the Archbishop of Cyprus]. Where is mention made here of a conciliar sanction for the preservation of ‘local ecclesiastical traditions’ with the aid of administrative isolation?"  

Pavlenko is right to reject the phyletistic argument: one (racially defined) nation – one Church. From the earliest times until the early modern period, the Orthodox Church has been organized on an essentially territorial basis, following the demarcation of states and provinces within states rather than ethnic groups. In more recent centuries state boundaries have tended to correspond more and more closely to ethnic boundaries, so that we now talk of the Greek Church, the Russian Church, the Serbian Church, etc., as if we are talking about the Churches of the ethnic Greeks, Russians and Serbs exclusively. But this is a misleading way of speaking, and does not alter the essential principle, confirmed both in Holy Scripture and in Canon Law, that a local Church is the Church of all the people, of all nationalities, gathered together on one territory. The attempt to substitute the ethnic principle for the territorial principle led to a schism between the Greek and the Bulgarian Churches in 1872. It would lead to a schism between the Russian and the Georgian Churches in 1917. And there would be many more ecclesiastical revolutions based on the racial principle before the twentieth century came to an end...

**The Stolypin Reforms**

We have seen how P.A. Stolypin distinguished himself as Interior Minister crushing the 1905 revolution. However, his most important achievement came when he was prime minister: his land reforms. These were designed to relieve the crushing poverty in the countryside and create a strong, independent peasant class (the “kulaks”, as the Soviets called them).

---

232 Pavlenko, op cit.
As Archpriest Lev Lebedev writes, the land reforms were essentially the brain-child of the Tsar himself: “A special problem of the reign of his Majesty Nicholas II was, of course, the peasant or land question. By the beginning of the 20th century the peasants owned 160 million desyatins of land in Russia (moreover, it was the most fertile), while the landowners owned 52 million and about 30 million were owned by merchants, foreigners, stock companies and city unions. In the Central Black-Earth region more than half of the land was in the hands of the peasantry (in places up to 80%). State and appanage lands consisted mainly of woods and plots that were not suitable for cultivation. However, since the reforms of 1861 peasant landowning suffered from a noticeable inadequacy created artificially by the commune character of land-use. The notorious land field strip system (whereby a peasant received his allotment not in the form of an integral plot, but in the form of strips and bits scattered in various places), and also the periodic re-partitions, the redistribution of allotments by the village mir, made agriculture exceptionally difficult and deprived the peasant of all interest in his plot, which in fact did not belong to him and could be taken from him or substituted by another at any time. In essence, the power of the mir (community) over the peasant took the place of the power of the landowner and often was even worse than it. In right-bank Ukraine, in Belorussia and in the Baltic region there were no mirs, there the peasants were private owners of their allotments. But on the other hand these allotments were significantly smaller than in Great Russia… All this, together with other less significant inadequacies of village life led to the fact that during the times of poor harvests the peasantry suffered greatly and was not able to secure its existence without special subsidies. Moreover, for a time they still had to pay redemption payments, although in truth these were very insignificant. In the provinces where there was famine there appeared revolutionary agitators who called on the peasants to rob the landowners’ agriculture, mills and store-houses and gave them revolutionary literature. They were often successful. Thus in 1902 a wave of peasant disorders with robberies rolled through Kharkov and Poltava provinces. In some cases the army had to be called out. Several people were killed. In the government and the zemstva work of various kinds was done to clarify the needs of village agriculture and the means of its amelioration. His Majesty took the whole land-peasant question very closely to heart. On August 29, 1902 he visited Kursk, where he met deputies of the peasants and nobility. Addressing the Kursk peasants, Nicholas II qualified the Poltava-Kharkov disturbances as inadmissible and said the notable words: ‘Remember that people get rich, not from seizing other people’s good, but from honest labour, thrift and life in accordance with the commandments of God.’ He could have said this (and often said it, directly or indirectly!) to the whole of Russian society and the whole world! In essence this was a short expression of the main idea of the whole of his internal and external politics. But the Tsar understood that the idea had to be ensured by concrete measures. To the same people of Kursk he promised: ‘I will not forget your real needs.’ And he did not forget them. From the beginning of 1903 his Majesty set about a consistent new ‘emancipation’ and
liberation of the peasants with an amelioration of their material and cultural situation. In his manifesto of February 26, 1903, while still keep the mir, measures were announced to ease the exit from it of individual peasants, and the system of bail was rescinded. Also, privileged conditions were created for the resettlement of those who wanted to suitable lands in Siberia. Thus was prefigured the new great reform of agriculture. Immersing himself in a study of the matter, his Majesty departed more and more both from his teachers and from the politics of his father, and even from ‘society’. They were all unanimous in striving to preserve the mir, although for various reasons (some of the liberals and democrats considered it [following Herzen] to be ‘embryonic socialism’). Finally, having thought it all through, his Majesty came to the thought of the necessity of abolishing the village mir altogether. The more so, in that the majority of provincial committees created to discuss the land question had expressed themselves in one way or another against the preservation of the mir. He entrusted the carrying out of this idea to a man exceptionally well chosen – P.A. Stolypin, who was appointed President of the Council of Ministers. Stolypin carried out the reforms in constant consultation with his Majesty, from which they received their name, ‘The Stolypin Reforms’. They began with the law of November 9, 1906, which allowed the peasants freely to leave the mir… and to have their own private agriculture. Immediately two-and-a-half million petitions to leave were submitted. In order to carry out the exit, 483 special commissions and seven thousand land-surveyors were mobilized. Redemption payments were rescinded. At the same time a new impulse was given to the resettlement movement of peasants in the East. Those who wanted were given plots in Siberia, in the Altai and in the Far East at fifteen hectares per person (45 per person), with each family being offered a mortgage at 200 roubles with the opportunity of moving with all their possessions to the new lands at state expense. In Siberia previously prepared warehouses of agricultural instruments awaited the re-settlers. They were sold at extremely low prices. For a long time the re-settlers were freed from all taxes. His Majesty personally owned forty million desyatins of land in Siberia. All these lands Nicholas II handed into the land fund for free, he simply gave them away to the Russian peasantry! Especially valuable gifts were the very extensive fertile lands of the Altai, which had formerly been exclusively the property of the Emperor. In these former possessions of his given away to the peasants his Majesty at his own expense constructed new roads, schools, hospitals and churches… Finally, the third component of the reforms were the enterprises of the State Peasant Bank, which began to snap up landowners’ lands and sell them to the peasants on extremely advantageous conditions to their peasants. The bank offered them up to 90% of the valued of the bought land in credit at a rate of 4.5% at huge instalments. In sum, by 1917 100% of the arable land in the Asiatic part of Russia, and about 90% of it in the European part was either owned or rented by peasants. By 1914 almost all the mir lands had passed into private peasant ownership. The results of the reforms exceeded all expectations. The harvest sharply increased, so that Russia exported up to a
quarter of its bread abroad and became the main supplier of bread to Europe. The wheat harvest rose from about two billion poods in 1894 to four billion in 1913 and 1914. In 1913 the wheat harvest in Russia was about one third higher than those in Argentina, Canada and the USA put together! In 1908 a little more than 858 million pounds of wheat and flour were exported to England alone, and in 1910 – about three billion. The production of rye rose from two billion poods in 1894 to four billion in 1913. Also doubled in this period was the production of cotton, the consumption of sugar and tea per head of population, and other products. Half the world’s trade in eggs belonged to Russia. She possessed 80% of the world’s output of flax. Russia had not known such a rapid rise in agriculture as took place from 1907 to 1911 in connection with the reforms, throughout the whole period of her history. ‘Give us twenty more years of internal and external peace,’ said P.A. Stolypin, ‘and you will not know the present Russia!’ By 1914 the country was already unrecognizable in many things…”

Both friends and foes tended to agree with Stolypin. The Germans did – fear of Russian growth was their main motive for starting World War One. So did Lenin; he calculated that if Stolypin’s plans for the creation of an independent peasantry had been given some more years in which to come to fruition, thereby reducing the flow of poor, discontented peasants into the cities, the revolution would not have taken place. Even so, enough progress had been made to create one of the toughest nuts for the revolution to crack. The peasants – and especially those who had acquired lands in Siberia under Stolypin – rose up in several vast rebellions in the early years of the revolution, and were finally crushed only by the horrors of dekulakization and collectivization in the 1930s... The French economist Edmond Thierry was of the same opinion. In 1914 he published a detailed report for the French ministers that concluded: “If the affairs of the European nations continue in the same way from 1912 to 1950 as they have done from 1900 to 1912, then Russia by the middle of the present century will dominate Europe, both in the political and in the economic and financial spheres.”

Another important initiative of Stolypin’s related to the western provinces of which he was a native (he was a landowner from Kovno), especially Belorussia. Here, although there was a governor appointed from St. Petersburg, political and cultural power belonged to the Poles, and economic power – to the Jews, leaving the Russian peasant in a desperate state. “The political balance of forces in pre-war Belorussia,” writes the Belorussian Ivan Solonevich, “was as follows. The region had been comparatively recently joined to the Empire and was populated by Russian peasants. Besides the peasants, there were almost no Russians. Our Belorussian nobles very easily betrayed both the faith of their fathers and the language of their people and the interests of Russia. The Tyshkeviches, the Mitskeviches and the

---

Senkeviches were all approximately as Belorussian as I. But they were traitors. The people remained without a governing class. Without intelligentsia, without bourgeoisie, without aristocracy, even without a proletariat and without craftsmen. The path to economic advancement was simply blocked by the Jews of the cities and hamlets. Count Muraviev... opened for the Belorussian peasant the path at any rate into the lower levels of the intelligentsia. Our newspaper [financed by Stolypin] depended on these intelligentsia, so to speak, on the Belorussian staff-captains of the time: popular teachers, volost scribes, village priests, doctors, low-ranking officials. Then, as now, we had to fight on two fronts. This mass of people was inclined towards revolution. We had to prove to them that it could defend its political, economic and every other form of life only in a struggle against the Jews and Polonization. The struggle was very difficult. It was very difficult to prove to the readers of Chernyshevsky, Dobroliubov, and the venerated Aladin, Rodichev and Miliukov the completely obvious fact that if the monarchy retreated, they, these readers, would be eaten up by the Jews and Poles. And that it was only in the bound of the empire and the monarchy that these people could defend their national being. This was proven. The Belorussian intelligentsia was converted to the national-imperial point of view..."  

Stolypin moved to strengthen this movement by introducing into the Council for Local Agricultural Affairs a bill for the introduction of self-governing zemstva in the provinces of Vitebsk, Minsk, Mogilev, Kiev, Volhynia and Podolsk. However, the bill was fiercely criticized in the State Council on the grounds that it would violate racial equality in the region. This was doubly ironical, in that Stolypin, on the one hand, wanted to bring the position of the Russian peasant to a position of equality with his Jewish and Polish neighbours, and on the other hand was in favour of removing many of the restrictions on the Jews in the region of the Pale. For, on the one hand, these restrictions were extremely complex, sometimes contradictory and difficult to enforce. And on the other hand, the lack of full equality of rights for the Jews gave them and their supporters in the Duma and the press a powerful weapon with which to beat the government...

The Counter-Revolution

Although the revolution had been crushed, monarchist thinkers felt that the concessions that the Tsar had given in his October Manifesto should be rescinded. For, as Lev Tikhomirov wrote in a letter to Stolypin in 1911, the new political order created in 1905-06, “being ambiguous in concept and deviating from a clear attitude to any Supreme Power, was formed in such a way that in it everyone can get in every one else’s way but there is no one who could force the institutions of state to collaborate. His Majesty the Emperor himself can independently only not allow a law to be enforced, but

235 Solonevich, “Puti, Oshibki i Itogi” (Ways, Mistakes and Conclusions), in Rossia i Revoliutsia (Russia and the Revolution), Moscow, 2007, p. 98 ©.
he cannot independently create a law that is necessary for the country. But... the state, on the contrary, has the task of working, and especially in a country that has been so disturbed during the preceding years of woes and troubles.

“This order, which is extremely bad from the point of view of its apparatus, is, in addition to that, complete antinational, that is, it does not correspond either to the character of the nation or to the conditions of the general situation of the Empire. As a result of this, disorganization in the country is being engendered on all sides. Unifying elements are weakening. A friable, bored, discontented mood has appeared. The Russians are losing their spirit, their faith in themselves, they are not inspired by patriotism. Moreover, class and inter-racial quarrels are necessarily becoming sharper.

“Russia constitutes a nation and a state that are great in instincts and means, but also surrounded by great dangers. It was created by Russians and is preserved only by Russians. Only Russian power brings the remaining elements to some solidarity amongst themselves and with the Empire. ... We have a huge non-Russian population... The strongest of the other races are foreign to our patriotism. They are eternally quarrelling amongst themselves, but are inclined to rebel against the dominion of the Russians. The unifying element, the general bond is we, the Russians. Without us the Empire will disintegrate, and these other races will perish. Therefore we must remember our mission and support the conditions of our strength. We must remember that our state is a matter not simply of national egoism, but a global duty. We occupy a post that is necessary for all. But in order to keep this post we need a one-person Supreme Power, that is, the Tsar, not as the adornment of a pediment, but as a real state power.

“No combinations of popular representation or elective laws can guarantee the supremacy of the Russians. We must understand ourselves. As a people that is essentially statist, the Russians are unfitting for petty political struggles, they can do politics only wholesale, not retail, by contrast with the Poles, the Jews, etc. The aims of the supremacy of such a people (as with the Romans) are attainable only by a one-person Supreme Power that realizes its ideals. With such a power we become stronger and more skilful than all, for no Poles can compare with the Russians in the capacity for discipline and solidarity around a one-person power endowed with a moral character.

“But if it has no centre of unity, the Russian people loses her head and particularist peoples begin to obstruct her. Historical practice has created a Supreme Power in accordance with the Russian character. The Russian people has grown for itself a Tsar in union with the Church. [But] since 1906 that which was proper to the people has been undermined, and it is being forced to live in a way that it is not able to and does not want. This was undoubtedly a huge constitutional mistake, for whatever theoretical preferences there may be, practically speaking state reason requires institutions that conform to the
character of the people and the general conditions of its supremacy. In destroying that, 1906 deprived us of that without which the Empire cannot exist – the possibility of creating a dictatorship immediately. Such a possibility was given first of all by the presence of a Tsar having the right to engage in the situation with all his unlimited Supreme Power.

“The consciousness alone of the possibility of an immediate concentration [of power] filled the Russians with confidence in their strength, while inspiring our rivals with fear and dread. Now that has been taken away. And without our watchfulness there is nobody to keep the remaining races in unity…”

But if the monarchy would not take back its autocratic powers, what was to be done? The answer, in the minds of many monarchists, was the creation of a grass-roots monarchist party - “The Union of the Russian People”, or “the Black Hundreds”, as it was called by its opponents, who reviled it as being the mainstay, not only of monarchy, but also of “anti-semitism” in the Russian people. The Union became an important force in the government’s successful counter-revolution of 1906-07, and was not so much anti-semitic as anti-Judaist, anti-revolutionary and, of course, pro-monarchical.

“The Union of the Russian People” was a mass phenomenon. In 1906-07 it had about 11,000 local sections, and its members comprised several hundreds of thousands of people from all walks of life. The higher ranks of the clergy were divided about the Union. Thus Metropolitan Anthony (Vadkovsky) of St. Petersburg, who was suspected by many of being a closet liberal, opposed it. But Metropolitan Vladimir of Moscow, who and was suspected by many of being a closet liberal, opposed it. But Metropolitan Vladimir of Moscow, Archbishop Tikhon

237 It is ironic that the “anti-semites” were helped in these years by a large loan secured in France by Witte through the mediation of one of the Rothschilds – for which the Alliance Israélite Universelle labelled Rothschild a traitor.
240 Monk Anempodist writes: “Metropolitan Vladimir went on to take part in the movement of the right conservative forces of Russia that was being formed. Thus in 1907 he took part in the work of the All-Russian congress of ‘The Union of the Russian People’. In 1909, while taking part in the work of the First Monarchist congress of Russian People, Metropolitan Vladimir was counted worthy of the honour of passing on a greeting to the congress from his Majesty the Emperor Nicholas II in the following telegram:

"To his Eminence Vladimir, Metropolitan of Moscow. I entrust to you, Vladyko, to pass on to all those assembled in the first capital at the congress of Russian people and members of the Moscow Patriotic Union My gratitude for their loyal feelings. I know their readiness
(Bellavin) of Yaroslavl, Archbishop Anthony (KhраповитсКий) of Volhynia, Bishop Hermogen of Saratov, St. John of Kronstadt, Elder Theodosius of Minvody, Fr. John Vostorgov and many others joined it without doubting.

In general, however, the Union was plagued by poor leadership that gave it a bad name. It was led by A. Dubronin, who was only superficially Orthodox. Thus he was for the tsar - but against hierarchy! And he wanted to rid the empire of “the Germans”, that is, that highly efficient top layer of the administration which proved itself as loyal to the empire as any other section of the population. When interviewed years later by the Cheka, Dubronin declared: “By conviction I am a communist monarchist, that is, [I want] there to be monarchist government under which those forms of government [will flourish] which could bring the people an increase in prosperity. For me all kinds of cooperatives, associations, etc. are sacred.”

Fr. John Vostorgov, one of the founders of the Union, considered Dubronin an enemy of the truth... And in general he stressed that true patriotism can only be founded on true faith and morality. “Where the faith has fallen,” he said, “and where morality has fallen, there can be no place for patriotism, there is nothing for it to hold on to, for everything that is the most precious in the homeland then ceases to be precious.”

On Great Friday, March 31, 1906 Fr. John - who was replacing his great friend, Fr. John of Kronstadt, as the foremost champion of Tsarist Russia - said the following in the cathedral of Christ the Saviour: "Our homeland has entered upon a new path of life, before and ahead of us is - a new Russia.

"Forgive us, forgive us, old, thousand-year-old Russia! Before our eyes they have judged you, condemned you and sentenced you to death... Threatening and merciless judges have spat in your face and have found nothing good in you. The judgement was strict, implacable and merciless. Everything has merged into the cry: 'Take her, crucify her!'

"We also know that nothing human was alien to you; we know that you had many faults. But we also know and see that you made Russia holy, and her people - a God-bearing people, if not in actuality, at any rate in the eternal, undying ideal of the people's soul; you gave birth to and raised a mighty people, preserving it in its bitter fate, in the crucible of its historical trials through a whole series of centuries; you gave birth to and raised an array of saints and righteous ones; you did not perish under the blows, the

faithfully and honourably to serve Me and the homeland, in strict observance of lawfulness and order. St. Petersburg. 30 September. Nicholas.” Riasophor-Monk Anempodist, “Sviaschemomuchenik mitropolit Vladimir (Bogoiaevskii) i bor’ba s revoliutsiiz” (Hieromartyr Metropolitan Vladimir (Bogoiaevsky) and the struggle against the revolution), Pravoslavnia Zhizn’ (Orthodox Life), 53, №1 (636), January, 2003, pp. 2-10 ©.

241 Vostorgov, in Fomin & Fomina, op.cit., p. 400.
heavy blows of destiny, but became stronger under them, strong in faith; with this faith, this great power of spirit, you endured all the burdens, and yet you created, and entrusted to us and left behind, a great kingdom. For all this we bow down to the earth in gratitude…"

The major problem for the monarchists was the paradoxicality of the idea of a monarchical party within a monarchy. Tsarism has the major advantage over other political systems of standing above the various interests and classes, being in thrall to the interests of no single party and reconciling them all in obedience to the tsar. But the October manifesto had appeared to many to divide ultimate power between the Tsar and the Duma. And this made party politics inevitable. So the monarchists were forced to conduct party politics in favour of the idea that the state should not be the product of party politics, but incarnate in the tsar who was above all party politics…

There could be no real unity between those who ascribed ultimate power to the Tsar and those who ascribed it to the Duma. Moreover, the struggle between the “reds” and the “blacks” was not simply a struggle between different interpretations of the October manifesto, or between monarchists and constitutionalists, but between two fundamentally incompatible world-views - the Orthodox Christian and the Masonic-Liberal-Ecumenist. It was a struggle between two fundamentally opposed views of where true authority comes from – God or the people; it was a struggle for the very heart of Russia. As Bishop Andronicus, the future hieromartyr, wrote: “It is not a question of the struggle between two administrative regimes, but of a struggle between faith and unbelief, between Christianity and antichristianity. The ancient antichristian plot, which was begun by those who shouted furiously to Pilate about Jesus Christ: ‘Crucify Him, crucify Him: His blood be on us and on our children’ - continued in various branches and secret societies. In the 16th century it poured into the special secret antichristian order of the Templars, and in the 18th century it became more definite in the Illuminati, the Rosecrucians and, finally, in Freemasonry it merged into a universal Jewish organization. And now, having gathered strength to the point where France is completely in the hands of the Masons, it – Masonry – already openly persecutes Christianity out of existence there. In the end Masonry will be poured out into one man of iniquity, the son of destruction – the Antichrist (II Thessalonians 2). In this resides the solution of the riddle of our most recent freedoms: their aim is the destruction of Christianity in Rus’. That is why what used to be the French word ‘liberal’, which meant among the Masons a ‘generous’ contributor to the Masonic aims, and then received the meaning of ‘freedom-loving’ with regard to questions of faith, has now already passed openly over to antichristianity. In this resides the solution of the riddle of that stubborn battle for control of the school, which is being waged in the zemstvo and the State Duma: if the liberal tendency gains control of the school, the success of antichristianity is guaranteed. In this resides the solution of the riddle of the sympathy of liberals for all kinds of sects in Christianity and
non-Christian religions. And the sectarians have not been slumbering – they have now set about attacking the little children... And when your children grow up and enter university – there Milyukov and co. will juggle with the facts and deceive them, teaching them that science has proved man’s origin from the apes. And they will really make our children into beasts, with just this difference, that the ape is a humble and obedient animal whereas these men-beasts will be proud, bold, cruel and unclean....”242

Archbishop Anthony of Volhynia

One of the best-known “black-hundredists” was Archbishop Anthony (Khrapovitsky) of Volhynia. On all the major issues of the day he was uncompromisingly Orthodox. Thus while condemning the anti-Jewish riots, he also condemned Jewish exploitation. In his Volhynia diocese the Union of the Russian People was led by his disciple, Archimandrite Vitaly (Maximenko). Its astonishing success in uniting all classes in the province in defence of the autocracy showed what could be done with inspired leadership, and how, if such leadership had been found throughout the country, the revolution would not have taken place. Archbishop Anthony wrote: “The Pochaev Lavra has united around itself into the Union of the Russian People almost as many members as all the secular activists throughout Russia – almost two million! It has established several central consumer shops, distributed during the present famine 75 wagons of cheap bread from Chelyabinsk and thereby forced the Jews to lower the price to 18 kopecks per pound, destroying their malicious syndicate. The undoubting devotion of a grateful people and the trust of the village priests arranged matters such during the elections to the second and third Dumas in Volhynia that the elections were decided by Archimandrite Vitaly, while the enraged cadets viciously called him the dictator of the South-Western region.”243

Inevitably he was accused of anti-semitism. He replied: “... It is unpleasant to talk about oneself, but if you ask anyone who is close to me or knows me well: what is he most interested in? they would tell you: monasticism, communion with the Eastern Churches, the struggle with Latinism, the transformation of the theological schools, the creation of a new direction of Orthodox theology [in opposition to scholasticism], the Yedinoverie [Old Ritualists in union with the Orthodox Church], the typicon of Divine services, Slavophilism, Orthodoxy in Galicia... etc. But no one would name Judophobia as one of my most important interests...

242 Bishop Andronicus, “Russkij grazhdanskij stroj zhizni pered sudom khristianina” (The Russian civil order before the judgement of the Christian), Fryazino, 1995, pp. 24-25 ®).
“… Concerning the Jews I delivered and published a sermon in 1903 (against pogroms), thanks to which the pogroms that enveloped the whole of the south-western region did not take place in Volhynia in that year. In 1905 in the sixth week of the Great Fast the Jews in Zhitomir shot at portraits of his Majesty and were beaten for that by the inhabitants of the suburb. The day before Palm Sunday I arrived from Petersburg and in Holy Week again delivered a speech against the pogrom being prepared for the first day of Pascha. This pogrom did not take place, and only after the murder by a Jewish hireling of the popular police-officer Kuyarov on the evening of Thomas Sunday, when I was leaving Zhitomir for Petersburg, did fights begin with the Jews, who later said that ‘the government deliberately summoned our hierarch to Petersburg because while he was in the city they did not beat us’. In 1907 I published… a brochure with the article: ‘The Jewish question and the Holy Bible’, which has now been reissued in Yiddish. All this, however, did not stop the liberals from printing about me that I was going in cross processions to incite pogroms. Meanwhile, all pogroms have ceased in Volhynia since the Pochaev Union of the Russian People was formed in 1906… If they are talking about the limitation of rights [of the Jews], not for the highest motives of defending the poor Little Russians from Jewish exploiters, but out of hatred for the latter, then this is truly disgusting, but if the patriots do not hate the Jews, but love and pity them, but do not want to give horns to a cow that butts, then this is reasonable, just and humane…”244

Vladyka laid the blame for the pogroms, not only on the Jews, but on the whole of liberal society. In 1899 he rebuked the liberal, “unchurched” part of the population: “It is no longer a people, but a rotting corpse, which takes its rotting as a sign of life, while on it, or in it, live only moles, worms and foul insects… for in a living body they would find no satisfaction for their greed, and there would be nothing for them to live on”.245

Nor was he silent about other instigators of violence behind the scenes, such as the Old Ritualists. While sympathising with the Old Ritualists, and serving sometimes according to the Old Rite, in his 1912 encyclical to the Old Ritualists he rebuked them for supporting the revolution: “The spirit of this world… winks at real revolutionaries and the money of your rich men to create the Moscow rebellion of 1905.” 246 And at the Congress of the Yedinoverie in 1912 he made it quite clear that the Old Ritualists who refused to join the Orthodox Church were outside the One True Church.247

244 Pis’ma Blagoveshchenskogo Mitropolita Antonia (Khrapovitskago) (The Letters of his Beatitude Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky)), Jordanville, 1988, pp. 37, 39 ®.
245 Quoted in N. Talberg, Istoria Russkoy Tserkvi (History of the Russian Church), Jordanville, 1959, p. 831 ®.
246 Quoted in “Otnoshenia s Staroobriadchestvom (Relations with Old Ritualism)”, Vozdvizhenie, (Exaltation), Winter, 2000, p. 76 ®.
Archbishop Anthony was a strong supporter of the autocracy. In February, 1907 he wrote about the monarchy: “Perhaps there are countries which are best ruled not by tsars, but by many leaders. But our kingdom, which consists of a multitude of races, various faiths and customs that are hostile to each other, cannot stand only when at its head there stands one Anointed of God, who gives account to nobody except God and His commandments. Otherwise all the races that inhabit the Russian land would go against each other with knives, and would not be pacified until they had themselves destroyed each other, or had submitted to the power of the enemies of Russia. Only the White Tsar is venerated by all the peoples of Russia; for his sake they carry out the civil laws, go into the army and pay their taxes. Our tsars are the friends of the people and preservers of the holy faith, and the present Sovereign Nicholas Alexandrovich is the meekest and quietest of all the kings of the whole world. He is the crown of our devotion to our native land and you must stand for him to your last drop of blood, not allowing anybody to diminish his sacred power, for with the fall of this power, Russia also will fall…

“Russian man, lend your ear to your native land: what does it tell you? ‘From the righteous Princess Olga, from the equal-to-the-apostles Vladímir until the days of Seraphim of Sarov and to the present day and to future ages all the wise leaders of my people think and say the same,’ that is what the land will reply to you... ‘They taught their contemporaries and their descendants one and the same thing: both the princes, and the tsars, and the hierarchs who sat on the Church sees, and the hermits who hid amidst the forest and on the islands of the sea, and the military commanders, and the warriors, and the boyars, and the simple people: they all taught to look on this life as the entrance courtyard into the future life, they all taught to use it in such a way as not to console the flesh, but to raise the soul to evangelical virtue, to preserve the apostolic faith unharmed, to keep the purity of morals and truthfulness of speech, to honour the tsars and those placed in authority by them, to listen to and venerate the sacred monastic order, not to envy the rich, but to compete with the righteous ones, to love to work the land as indicated by God to our race through Adam and Noah, and to turn to other crafts only out of necessity or because of a special talent; not to borrow the corrupt habits of foreigners, their proud, lying and adulterous morals, but to preserve the order of the fatherland, which is fulfilled through chastity, simplicity and evangelical love; to stand fearlessly for your native land on the field of battle and to study the law of God in the sacred books.’ That is what our land teaches us, that is what the wise men and righteous ones of all epochs of our history entrusted to us, in which there was no disagreement between them, but complete unanimity. The whole of Rus’ thinks in the same way. But she knows that only the Anointed of God must preserve this spirit and defend it from enemies visible and invisible by his mighty right hand. And look he hardly stepped back from life when his popular privileges were snatched from him by deception and violence by his enemies and the enemies
of the people. Yes, the Russian people thinks and feels one thing: in its eyes public life is a general exploit of virtue, and not the realm of secular pleasures, it is the laborious increase of the Kingdom of God amongst us ourselves and its implanting in the unenlightened tribes, and not the equalisation of all faiths and superstitions. The Orthodox people knows and feels this. It feels that without one ruling royal right hand it is impossible for our land of many tribes to exist. In it are 102 different faiths, 102 tribes that will now nourish malicious enmity against each other immediately they cease to feel the ruling right hand of the White Tsar above them. Let him hear out the reports of the people’s delegates, let him allow them to express their opinions on various matters of the kingdom. But the final decision will be made by him himself, and he will give an account for this only through his conscience before the Lord God. One only submission, one only limitation of his power is necessary to the people: that openly on the day of his crowning he should confess his Orthodox faith to God and the people in accordance with the Symbol of the Fatherland – so that he should not have human arbitrariness, but the evangelical law of God as his unfailing guide in his sovereign decisions and undertakings. That is the kingdom we need, and this is understood not only by Russian people, but also by people other faiths who live in our land with a healthy people’s reasoning, and not through lies and deceit: both Tatars and Kirgiz and the old Jews who believe in their own way, and the distant Tunguz. All of them know that shaking the Tsar’s Autocracy means beginning the destruction of the whole of Russia, which has been confirmed in the last three years…”

Archbishop Anthony made an especially valuable contribution to the Pre-Conciliar Convention in 1906 in his report “On Freedom of Confession”: “Freedom of confession (not ‘freedom of conscience’: that is a senseless expression),” he wrote, “must of course be preserved in the state: there is no point in keeping anybody by force in the ruling Church; it is also necessary to excommunicate from the Church those who declare themselves to be outside her confession after exhorting them twice. But this is quite another matter than freedom of religious propaganda…”

“Orthodoxy has very little to fear from the preaching of foreign religious dogmas, and hardly any religion would decide to address Orthodox listeners with such preaching; this would mean hoping to draw people from the light of the sun to a dim kerosene lamp. The propaganda of heterodoxy is possible only through cunning, deception and violence. Who does not know by what means the Latins drew to themselves 200,000 Orthodox Christians last year? They persistently spread the rumour that the Royal Family and even St. John of Kronstadt was joining their heresy, assuring the people that supposedly all Catholics would be re-ascribed to the Polish gentry and be given lands, while the Orthodox would be returned to the status of serfs. But that was still only half the sorrow. Representing in themselves almost the whole of the

landowning class in the western and south-western region, the Polish gentry and counts are oppressing the Orthodox in their factories... The peasants there are completely in the hands of these contemporary feudal lords, and when they meet them they kiss their feet.

“And so even now, when there is not yet equality of religious confessions, they are bestowing on the renegades from Orthodoxy both money and forests and lands, while the faithful sons of the Church are being insulted, deprived of employment and expelled together with their earnings from the factories. What will the situation be when there is equality of confessions?

“The Protestants are acting by the same means in the north-western region, as are various sects in the Crimea and New Russia. Orthodoxy and the Orthodox, by contrast, despise such ways of acting. The Muslim or Jew, on accepting holy baptism, is often immediately lynched, that is, killed by his former co-religionists... Can the government leave them defenceless? Thousands of Christians have fallen into Mohammedanism in the last year; even several purely Russian families in Orenburg diocese have done so, having been subjected to threats, bribes and absurd rumours about the imminent re-establishment of the Kirghiz kingdom with its hereditary dynasty, together with expulsion and even the beating up of all Christians.

“If the governments of all cultured countries punish falsification in trade, as well as the spreading of sensational false rumours and deliberate slander, etc., then our government, too, if it is to remain consistent, must protect the Orthodox people from the deceit, blackmail and economic and physical violence of the heterodox. They are able to act only by these means, as did the Catholics during the time of the Polish kingdom, when they seduced the Orthodox into the unia.

“Let us remember one more important circumstance that is completely ignored when talking about religious toleration.

“If our flock were catechized both in the truths of the faith and in how they should look on various faiths, peoples and estates, it would be possible to present them to themselves and to the spiritual influence of their pastors in the struggle for faith and nationality.

“But our government – more precisely, our state – has been attracted in the time of Peter and after by the aims of purely cultural and state centralization, constricting, distorting and even half eclipsing the religious consciousness and religious life of the Orthodox people. In the 17th century the latter had nothing to fear from any propaganda (except that of the Old Ritualists, of course), because, if not each peasant family, at any rate every village had its own teachers of dogmas, who lived the same peasant life as all the other village dwellers. Moreover, discipline in Church and everyday life was as
strong as among the Jewish hasidim or, to take a closer example, our contemporary yedinovertsy, to whom also, thanks to their conditions of life, no propaganda presented any danger.

“But the government of the 18th century tore away the clergy from the people, driving the former into the ranks of a separate caste, and educating it, not in the concepts and everyday discipline of popular Orthodoxy, but in the traditions of the Latin school and scholastic theological theory. The people was further and further estranged from Church literature and Church services, and which is still more sad, remained alone in its religious way of life, in its fasts, its prayers, its pilgrimages. The clergy became more and more learned and cultured, while the people became more and more ignorant and less steeped in Orthodox discipline. That is what happened with the Great Russian people, which was Orthodox from ages past. But what are we to say about the down-trodden, enslaved Western Little Russians and Belorussians, or about the descendants of the formerly baptized non-Russian peoples beyond the Volga and in Siberia?

“All these people, abandoned as regards spiritual development, chained to the land, had, willingly or unwillingly, to be reconciled to the thought that the Tsar, the lords, the bishops and the priests were reading sacred books and studying the holy faith for them, while they themselves would listen to them – learned people who could find the leisure and the means to read.

“The grey village hardly distinguishes between spiritual bosses and secular ones, spiritual books and science from secular ones. Everything that comes from the legislative authorities comes from God; everything that is published in the newspapers comes from the Tsar and the bishops. Look at what views on life our poor people has come up against: the mountains of proclamations, the blasphemous brochures, the caricatures of August Personages and Fr. John of Kronstadt and all the rest with which yester-year’s enlighteners have blessed their homeland.

“This is the clue how the people can believe the Catholic proclamations about his Majesty accepting this religion, and the revolutionary proclamations to the effect that the Tsar has supposedly ordered the landowners to be robbed, etc. And so, having taken into its hand the people’s conscience, can the Russian government renounce Orthodoxy before the people has been catechized in it consciously? If it would like to take an extra-confessional stance, then let it first return to the people the confessional conscience it leased from it, let it give out millions over several years for the establishment of catechists – at least one for every 300 people (now there is one priest for every 2000 Orthodox Christians). But until then it is obliged to protect the Orthodox people from violent deception, from economic compulsion to apostasy.
“We said that an elective authority will not dare to violate the people’s will, but it must get to know it and obey it. Government authority has, of course, lofty privileges, but it too is obliged to go in agreement, if not with everything that is contemporary, but in any case with the historically unchanged will of the people. It is in it that Russia, as a growing collective organism, as a nation, as an idea pouring out in history, is recognized. And what is this people in its history and its present? Is it an ethnographical group or a group, first of all, of self-defence at the level of the state? No, the Russians define themselves as a religious group, as a confessional group, including in this concept both the Georgians and the Greeks who cannot even speak Russian. According to the completely just definition of K. Aksakov and other Slavophiles, the Russian people thinks of itself as the flock of God, the Church, a society of people that accomplishes their salvation with the guidance of its faith and through prayer and labour. The people looks on its life as a cross given it by God, and the whole of its earthly state prosperity it has entrusted to the Tsar. Let the Tsar with his boyars and warriors repel the enemies of his Orthodox country, let him take taxes and recruits for this end, let the Tsar judge his servants and punish thieves, robbers and other evil-doers; all this is of little interest to the Russian man, his work is to struggle in labour and prayer, and to learn virtue from the people of God. And let the Tsar and his warriors take care that nobody hinders him in this.

“True, in this country there are many people who are foreign to the aim of life that is embraced by the whole people, that is, salvation. But they do not hinder Russian people in this, let them without hindrance live in accordance with their ‘pagan habits’ and pray to their gods, until they recognize the true faith. But, of course, not only the personal life of each man, but also the mission of the whole Orthodox country is seen by each Russian as consisting in exalting the light of Orthodoxy both among his own ‘heathen’, and beyond the frontiers of his native land, as is proved for us by the constant missionary colonization by Russians of the East and the North, beginning from the 9th century, and their constant consciousness of their historical duty to liberate their co-religionists from under the Turk and bring down his ‘God-hated kingdom’, for which a litany is raised at the New Year moleben since the days of Ivan III to the days of Nicholas II.

“To renounce this task, which the people has considered for nine centuries to be its most important work, and to establish equality of rights for all faiths in the Russian state – this means to annihilate Russia as an historical fact, as an historical force; it means carrying out a great violation on the thousand-year-old people than the Tatar khans or the usurpers of the Time of Troubles carried out...”

One of Vladyka Anthony’s major concerns was the defence of the Orthodox population of Austria-Hungary. The Hungarian government and

---

the uniates tried by all means to prevent the return of the Carpatho-Russians to their ancestral Orthodox faith. “Vladyka Anthony struggled with the unia and both by the printed word and in his sermons he often addressed this theme. He tried by all means to destroy the incorrect attitude towards the unia which had been established in Russia, according to which it was the same Orthodoxy, only commemorating the Pope of Rome. With profound sorrow and irritation he said: ‘They can in no way accept this simple truth, that the unia is a complete entry into the Roman Catholic church with the recognition of the Orthodox Church as a schism., with the recognition of all the Latin saints and with a condemnation of the Orthodox saints as having been schismatics outside the true Church...’

“...Vladyka Anthony also laboured much to establish in Russian society an Orthodox attitude towards Catholicism. In educated Russian society and in ecclesiastical circles in the Synodal period of the Russian Church the opinion was widespread that Catholicism was one of the branches of Christianity which, as V.S. Soloviev taught, was bound at the end of time to unite into one Christianity with the other supposed branches – Orthodoxy and Protestantism, about which the holy Church supposedly prayed in her litanies: ‘For the prosperity of the Holy Churches of God and for the union of all’.

“The correct attitude towards Catholicism as an apostate heresy was so shaken that the Holy Synod under the influence of the Emperor Peter I and with the blessing of his favourite, the protestantizing Metropolitan Theophan Prokopovich, allowed Swedish prisoners-of-war in Siberia to marry Russian girls with the obligatory conversion to Orthodoxy. Soon this uncanonical practice of mixed marriages became law and spread, especially in the western regions. In his diocese Vladyka Anthony strictly forbade the clergy to celebrate mixed marriages.

“Vladyka Anthony well knew that Catholic influence in the midst of the Russian clergy was introduced through the theological schools: ‘We have lost (an Orthodox attitude towards Catholicism) because those guides by which we studied in school and which constitute the substance of our theological, dogmatic and moral science, is borrowed from the Catholics and Protestants; we are left only with straight heterodox errors which are known to all and have been condemned by ecclesiastical authorities...’

“Seeing the abnormal situation of church life in subjugated Carpathian Rus’, Vladyka Anthony turned to the Ecumenical Patriarch Joachim III with a request to accept the Orthodox Galicians and Carpatho-Russians under his omophorion, since the Russian Synod for political reasons was unable to spread its influence there. The patriarch willingly agreed and appointed Vladyka Anthony as his exarch for Galicia and Carpathian Rus’. The Galicians, after finishing work in the fields and in spite of the great obstacles
involved in crossing the border, sometimes with a direct danger to their lives, made pilgrimages in large groups to the Pochaev Lavra. Many Carpatho-
Russians and Galicians entered the Volhynia theological seminary.

“Under the influence of all these undertakings, the Orthodox movement in these areas began to grow in an elemental manner with each year that passed. This elicited repressions on the part of the Austro-Hungarian government, which tried to suppress the movement. The persecution grew and soon Vladyka was forced to speak out in defence of the persecuted Christians. In August, 1913 he published an encyclical letter in which he eloquently portrayed all the woes and persecutions of the Orthodox population of the western regions. In going through the various instances of Catholics humiliating Orthodox, he cited the following example of the firmness of the persecuted and the cruelty of the persecutors: ‘Virgins who had gathered together to save their souls in fasting and prayer were stripped in winter and driven out onto a frozen lake, like the 40 martyrs of Sebaste, after which some of them soon died. Thus do they torture our Russians in Hungary and Austria in broad daylight in our civilized age…’

“But when massive arrests and tortures of the Orthodox began, and there was a trial of 94 Orthodox in Sihet, Vladyka Anthony composed a special prayer and petitions in the litanies, which were read in all the churches of the Volhynia diocese in the course of the whole period of the trial, which lasted for two months. This was the only voice raised in defence of the persecuted, not only in Russia but also throughout Europe.

“The Austro-Hungarian political circles, in agreement with the Vatican, undertook decisive measures to suppress the incipient mass return to Orthodoxy of the Carpatho-Russians and Galicians. It seems that they undertook diplomatic negotiations in St. Petersburg in order to remove the main cause of the movement that had arisen, Vladyka Anthony, from his Volhynia see.”

On May 20, 1914 Archbishop Anthony was duly transferred from the see of Volhynia to that of Kharkov… However, where human leaders fail, the King of kings intervenes. The First World War removed – temporarily, at any rate – many of the dangers which had arisen in the pre-war period and against which Archbishop Anthony had struggled. Thus patriotic emotion and reverence for the Tsar revived. And concern for the fate of the Orthodox Christians in Serbia and the south-west regions made the struggle, in the minds of many, into a holy war in defence of Orthodoxy against militant Catholicism and Protestantism…

---

The Roots of the Revolution

In 1909 a group of disillusioned ex-Marxists published a collection of essays under the title *Vekhi* (Landmarks), which criticized the revolutionary credo of the intelligentsia from several points of view.

One of the contributors, the philosopher, Simeon Ludwigovich Frank, wrote: “The Symbol of Faith of the Russian intelligent is the good of the people, the satisfaction of the needs of ‘the majority’. The service of this aim is for him the highest and in general the only duty of man, and what is more than this is of the evil one. It is precisely for this reason that he not only simply denies or does not accept other values – he even directly fears and hates them. One cannot serve two gods at the same time, and if God, as Maxim Gorky had already openly made known, was ‘the essence of the people’s soul’, then all the other gods were false gods, idols or devils. Activity guided by love for science or art, life overshadowed by a religious light in the direct sense, that is, communion with God, all this distracts from service to the people, weakens or destroys moralistic enthusiasm and signifies, from the point of view of the intelligent’s faith, a dangerous hunting after mirages. Therefore all this is rejected, partly as stupidity or ‘superstition’, partly as an immoral direction of the will. This, of course, does not mean that the Russian intelligentsia is in fact alien to scientific, aesthetic and religious interests and experiences. It is impossible to kill the spirit and its inveterate demands, and it is natural that living people who have clothed their soul in the moral uniform of the ‘intelligent’ should retain in themselves all the feelings intrinsic to man. But these feelings live in the soul of the Russian intelligent in approximately the same way as the feeling of pity for an enemy lives in the soul of a warrior, or as the striving for the free play of fantasy in the consciousness of a strictly scientific thinker: they live precisely as an unlawful, albeit ineradicable weakness, as something in the best case merely tolerable. Scientific, aesthetic and religious experiences are always referred here, so to speak, to the private, intimate life of a man; more tolerant people look on them as a luxury, an amusement for hours of leisure, as a sweet eccentricity; the less tolerant condemn them in others and hide them with shame in themselves. But the intelligent, as an intelligent, that is, in his conscious faith and public activity, must be alien to them – his world-view and his ideal are hostile to these sides of human life. From science he takes several popularized, distorted or ad hoc positions, and although he often prides himself in the ‘scientificness’ of his faith, he also rejects scientific criticism with annoyance, as well as all the pure, disinterested work of scientific thought; while aesthetics and religion are completely unnecessary for him. All this – pure science, and art, and religion – is incompatible with moralism, with the service of the people; all this relies on love for objective values and, consequently, is alien, and for that reason also hostile, to that utilitarian faith which the Russian intelligent confesses. The religion of the service of earthly needs and the religion of the service of ideal values strike against each other,
and however complex and varied their irrational psychological interweaving in the soul of the intelligent, in the sphere of the intelligent’s consciousness their conflict leads to the complete annihilation and expulsion of ideal demands in the name of the integrity and purity of the moralistic faith.

“Nihilistic moralism is the fundamental and most profound trait of the spiritual physiognomy of the Russian intelligent: from the denial of objective values there proceeds the deification of the subjective interests of one’s neighbour (‘the people’), hence there follows the recognition that the highest and only task of man is the service of the people, and hence in its turn there follows ascetic hatred for everything that hinders or even merely does not assist the realization of this task. Life has no other objective, inner meaning; its only good is to be materially provided for, to be satisfied in one’s subjective demands; therefore man is bound to devote all his strength to the amelioration of the lot of the majority, and everything that distracts from this is evil and must be mercilessly rooted out – that is the strange, logically badly founded, but psychologically strongly welded together chain of judgements that rules the whole behaviour and all the valuations of the Russian intelligent. Nihilism and moralism, lack of faith and a fanatical severity of moral demands, and a lack of principle in a metaphysical sense – for nihilism is also the denial of principled demands, it is an idiosyncratic, rationally unfathomable and at the same time in real life a strong merging together of antagonistic motives into a powerful psychical force. And it is that frame of mind which we call nihilistic moralism.”

If we look more closely at the nature and origins of this atheistic but moralistic, rationalistic but at the same time quasi-mystical faith of the Russian intelligentsia we may find it in the Jewish chiliasm of the early Christian centuries. Thus Lev Alexandrovich Tikhomirov, who in the 1870s was still a revolutionary, but who later repented and became an ardent monarchist, wrote: “In spite of the seeming irreligiousness of the 19th century, in its most passionate dreams it is reminiscent of a moment not so much of cold unbelief, as of an error of religious thought, Jewish messianism or the Christian chiliasm that was born from it. The idea of earthly all-blessedness, whether it is expressed in the expectation of ‘the sensible kingdom of Christ’ or of a sorrowless ‘future order’ in the most various of philosophies, grows on the soil of one and the same psychology. The new chiliasm has consciously abandoned religion. But this difference is not as decisive as it seems. The very dreams about an earthly blessedness are already a rebuke to the weakness of spiritual feeling. On the other hand, the unconscious feeling which makes our rationally unbelieving revolutionaries, not simple epicureans, but fanatical dreamers about their future sorrowless order, bear unmistakable signs of the spiritual strivings of an erring religious quest...

251 Frank, “Etika nigilizma” (The Ethics of Nihilism), in Vekhi (Landmarks), Moscow, 1909, pp. 183-185.
“One may even now foresee some features of a future mystical anarchism, which is still thought now by the revolutionaries to be sick and illogical, but - as in Count L. Tolstoy, for example, - is already making itself talked about, and not only in Russia…

“It is not the inadequacies of the old order, but an insuperable dream about the new order that was and will remain the moving power of the revolution…

“There is nothing that can be done against further corruption until people understand the source of the mistake.

“This mistake consists in the concept of the autonomy of the personality. The false teaching of its supposed autonomy appears first of all as a result of its rebellion against God. Being left without God, and in this condition feeling itself to be autonomous, the personality at first tries to find a full satisfaction of its strivings in this earthly world. But this is impossible. The world is not capable of that. From here there begins the renunciation of the world in the form that it is according to these earthly laws. One after another there appear dreams of ‘the future order’. Trying these orders, the autonomous personality rejects them one after the other, intensifying its rejection of the real world more and more…”

“Among us revolutionary destruction constitutes the faith, hope and duty of every good radical. Everything that is rebellion, protest, overthrow is looked upon as something useful, containing the seed of progress. Destruction is considered still more useful if it is directed against the preservation of the existing order.”

Frank also saw the desire for autonomy as lying at the root of the revolution: “Socialism is at the same time the culmination and the overthrow of liberal democracy. It is ruled by the same basic motive that rules the whole modern era: to make man and mankind the true master of his life, to present him with the possibility of ordering his own destiny on his own authority…”

“Socialism is the last stride in the great rebellion of mankind and at the same time the result of its total exhaustion - the complete spiritual impoverishment of the prodigal son in the long centuries of his wandering far from his father's home and wealth.”

---

252 Tikhomirov, “Bor'ba veka” (The Struggle of the Century), in Kritika Demokratii (A Critique of Democracy), Moscow, 1997, pp. 189-190, 191, 192, 195-196; “Pochemu ia perestal byt' revoliutsionerom” (Why I ceased to be a Revolutionary), Pravoslavnaia Rus' (Orthodox Russia), No 7 (1412), April 1/14, 1990 ®.

Utopianism-chiliasm is based also on a false anthropology that denies the fall of man. For utopia on earth is possible only on the assumption that the men who live in the utopia are sinless and passionless, full of perfect love and humility. To suppose that any class of men, once delivered from injustice and poverty, will automatically behave like angels, is a myth. Still more mythical is the idea that the kingdom of love and brotherhood can be ushered in by hatred and fratricidal war. The means do not justify the ends; and the employment of evil means leads unfailingly to evil ends.

As Solzhenitsyn wrote in *The Gulag Archipelago*, “If only it were all so simple! If only there were evil people somewhere insidiously committing evil deeds and it were necessary only to separate them from the rest of us and destroy them. But the dividing line between good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being, and who is willing to destroy his own heart?”

If the line between good and evil passes, not between classes or nations, but down the middle of each human heart, it follows that the triumph of good over evil is possible only through the purification of the human heart, *every* human heart. And that is a spiritual task which is accomplished by spiritual, not material or political means, by confession of the faith and repentance of sin, not by rebellion against the king and the redistribution of property.

This brings us to a still deeper flaw of utopianism – its materialism. For while the heresy of chiliasm at any rate recognized the existence of God and the spiritual nature of man, utopianism reduces everything to the blind determinism of insensate matter. For the ancient heretics, utopia could only be introduced by God, and was awarded to the righteous in response to the right use of their freewill. For the moderns, there is neither God nor freewill – but utopia will come in any case, as the result of the iron laws of necessity. And this fatalistic faith both gives the revolution its frightening power – for men acquire extraordinary self-confidence when they know that they must win in the end – and guarantees its terrifying cruelty – for without freewill there is no responsibility, and, as one of Dostoyevsky’s characters said, following Nietzsche, “if there is no God, everything is permitted”.

“Cosmic possession,” writes Fr. George Florovsky, “– is how we can define the utopian experience. The feelings of unqualified dependence, of complete determination from without and full immersion and inclusion into the universal order define utopianism’s estimate of itself and the world. Man feels himself to be an ‘organic pin’, a link in some all-embracing chain – he feels unambiguously, irretrievably forged into one whole with the cosmos... From an actor and creator, consciously willing and choosing, and for that reason bearing the risk of responsibility for his self-definition, man is turned into a
thing, into a needle, by which someone sews something. In the organic all-unity there is no place for action – here only movement is possible.”

As another contributor to *Vekhi*, Nicholas Berdyaev, wrote: “Just as pious mystics once strove to make themselves into an image of God, and finally to become absorbed in Him, so now the modern ecstasies of rationalism labour to become like the machine and finally to be absorbed into bliss in a structure of driving belts, pistons, valves and fly-wheels…”

**The Struggle against Rasputin**

As the revolutionary threat receded (temporarily), a new, more subtle and sinister threat appeared: theosophy, occultism, spiritism and pornography flooded into Russia. The most famous and sinister occult figure of the time, whose sexual excesses, both real and imagined, were the talk of Russia, was the peasant and pseudo-elder Gregory Yefimovich Rasputin. His association with the Royal Family was a devil-sent weapon in the hands of the enemies of the Tsar.

The fateful introduction of Rasputin to the Royal Family has been laid at the door of Archbishop Theophan of Poltava, at one time rector of the Petersburg Theological Academy and tutor of the ‘Tsar’s children. However, Archbishop Theophan, witnessing before the Extraordinary Commission into Rasputin’s doings in 1917, rejected this: “How Rasputin came to know the family of the former emperor, I have absolutely no idea.

---


258 In fact, “Rasputin first appeared in St. Petersburg most probably in 1902, having by that time ’won the heart’ of the Kazan bishop Chrisanth who recommended him to the rector of the St. Petersbug Theological Academy, Bishop Sergius [Stragorodsky]. The latter, in his turn, presented Rasputin to the professor, celibate priest Veniamin, and to the inspector of the Academy, Archimandrite Theophan” (Alexander Bokhanov, Manfred Knodt, Vladimir Oustimenko, Zinaida Peregudova, Lyubov Tyutyunnik, *The Romanovs*, London: Leppi, 1993, p. 233).
state that I took no part in that. My guess is that Rasputin penetrated the royal family by indirect means... Rasputin himself never talked about it, despite the fact that he was a rather garrulous person... I noticed that Rasputin had a strong desire to get into the house of the former emperor, and that he did so against the will of Grand Duchess Militsa Nikolayevna. Rasputin himself acknowledged to me that he was hiding his acquaintance with the royal family from Militsa Nikolayevna."

The first meeting between the Royal Family and Rasputin, as recorded in the Tsar’s diary, took place on November 1, 1905. Archbishop Theophan testified: “I personally heard from Rasputin that he produced an impression on the former empress at their first meeting. The sovereign, however, fell under his influence only after Rasputin had given him something to ponder.” According to the Monk Iliodor, Rasputin told him: “I talked to them for a long time, persuading them to spit on all their fears, and rule.”

On hearing that Rasputin had impressed the empress, Grand Duchess Militsa Nikolayevna said to him, as Archbishop Theophan testified: “‘You, Gregory, are an underhand person.’ Militsa Nikolayevna told me personally of her dissatisfaction with Rasputin’s having penetrated the royal family on his own, and mentioned her warning that if he did, it would be the end of him. My explanation of her warning,” said Archbishop Theophan, “... was that there were many temptations at court and much envy and intrigue, and that Rasputin, as a simple, undemanding wandering pilgrim, would perish spiritually under such circumstances.”

It was at about this time that Rasputin left Fr. Theophan’s lodgings and moved in with the woman who was to become one of his most fanatical admirers, Olga Lokhtina. Archbishop Theophan writes: “He only stayed with me a little while, since I would be off at the Academy for days on end. And it got boring for him... and he moved somewhere else, and then took up residence in Petrograd at the home of the government official Vladimir Lokhtin,” who was in charge of the paved roads in Tsarskoe Selo, and so close to the royal family...

Rasputin returned to his family in Pokrovskoe, Siberia, in autumn, 1907, only to find that Bishop Anthony of Tobolsk and the Tobolsk Consistory had opened an investigation to see whether he was spreading the doctrines of the khlysty – perhaps, as was suspected, at the instigation of Grand Duchess Militsa Nikolayevna. Olga Lokhtina hurried back to St. Petersburg and managed to get the investigation suspended. Soon afterwards, testifies Fr. Theophan, “the good relations between the royal family and Militsa, Anastasia Nikolayevna [the sister of Militsa], and Peter and Nikolai Nikolayevich [the husbands of the sisters] became strained. Rasputin himself mentioned it in passing. From a few sentences of his I concluded that he had very likely instilled in the former emperor the idea that they had too much
influence on state affairs and were encroaching on the emperor’s independence.”

The place that the Montenegrin Grand Duchesses had played in the royal family was now taken by the young Anya Vyrubova, who was a fanatical admirer of Rasputin. Another of Rasputin’s admirers was the royal children’s nurse, Maria Vishnyakova. And so Rasputin came closer and closer to the centre of power...

Contrary to the propaganda of the Masons, Rasputin never had sexual relations with any member of the Royal Family. Moreover, his influence on the political decisions of the Tsar was much exaggerated. But he undoubtedly had a great influence on the Tsarina through his ability, probably through some kind of hypnosis, to relieve the Tsarevich’s haemophilia, a tragedy that caused much suffering to the Tsar and Tsarina, and which they carefully hid from the general public. It is this partial success in curing the Tsarevich that wholly explains Rasputin’s influence over the Royal Family...

Bishop Theophan began to have doubts about Rasputin. These doubts related to rumours that Rasputin was not the pure man of God he seemed to be. “Rumours began reaching us,” testified Vladyka, “that Rasputin was unrestrained in his treatment of the female sex, that he stroked them with his hand during conversation. All this gave rise to a certain temptation to sin, the more so since in conversation Rasputin would allude to his acquaintance with me and, as it were, hide behind my name.”

At first Vladyka and his monastic confidants sought excuses for him in the fact that “we were monks, whereas he was a married man, and that was the reason why his behaviour has been distinguished by a great lack of restraint and seemed peculiar to us... However, the rumours about Rasputin started to increase, and it was beginning to be said that he went to the bathhouses with women... It is very distressing... to suspect [a man] of a bad thing...”

Rasputin now came to meet Vladyka and “himself mentioned that he had gone to bathhouses with women. We immediately declared to him that, from the point of view of the holy fathers, that was unacceptable, and he promised us to avoid doing it. We decided not to condemn him for debauchery, for we knew that he was a simple peasant, and we had read that in the Olonets and Novgorod provinces men bathed in the bathhouses together with women, which testified not to immorality but to their patriarchal way of life... and to its particular purity, for... nothing was allowed. Moreover, it was clear from the Lives of the ancient Byzantine holy fools Saints Simeon and John [of Edessa] that both had gone to bathhouses with women on purpose, and had been abused and reviled for it, although they were nonetheless great saints.”
The example of Saints Simeon and John was to prove very useful for Rasputin, who now, “as his own justification, announced that he too wanted to test himself – to see if he had extinguished passion in himself.” But Theophan warned him against this, “for it is only the great saints who are able to do it, and he, by acting in this way, was engaging in self-deception and was on a dangerous path.”

To the rumours about bathhouses were now added rumours that Rasputin had been a khlyst sectarian in Siberia, and had taken his co-religionists to bathhouses there. Apparently the Tsar heard these rumours, for he told the Tsarina not to receive Rasputin for a time. For the khlyst sect, which indulged in orgies in order to stimulate repentance thereafter, were very influential among the intelligentsia, especially the literary intelligentsia, of the time.

It was at that point that the former spiritual father of Rasputin in Siberia, Fr. Makary, was summoned to Tsarskoe Selo, perhaps on the initiative of the Tsarina. On June 23, 1909 the Tsar recorded that Fr. Makary, Rasputin and Bishop Theophan came to tea. There it was decided that Bishop Theophan, who was beginning to have doubts about Rasputin, and Fr. Makary, who had a good opinion of him, should go to Rasputin’s house in Pokrovskoye and investigate.

Bishop Theophan was unwell and did not want to go. But “I took myself in hand and in the second half of June 1909 set off with Rasputin and the monk of the Verkhoturye Monastery Makary, whom Rasputin called and acknowledged to be his ‘elder’”. The trip, far from placating Vladyka’s suspicions, only confirmed them, so that he concluded that Rasputin did not “occupy the highest level of spiritual life”. On the way back from Siberia, as he himself testified, he “stopped at the Sarov monastery and asked God’s help in correctly answering the question of who and what Rasputin was. I returned to Petersburg convinced that Rasputin... was on a false path.”

While in Sarov, Vladyka had asked to stay alone in the cell in which St. Seraphim had reposed. He was there for a long time praying, and when he did not come out, the brothers finally decided to enter. They found Vladyka in a deep swoon.

He did not explain what had happened to him there. But he did relate his meeting with Blessed Pasha of Sarov the next year, in 1911. The eldress and fool-for-Christ jumped onto a bench and snatched the portraits of the Tsar and Tsarina that were hanging on the wall, cast them to the ground and trampled on them. Then she ordered her cell-attendant to put them into the attic.
This was clearly a prophecy of the revolution of 1917. And when Vladyka told it to the Tsar, he stood with head bowed and without saying a word. Evidently he had heard similar prophecies...

On returning from Siberia and Sarov, Vladyka conferred with Archimandrite Benjamin and together with him summoned Rasputin. “When after that Rasputin came to see us, we, to his surprise, denounced him for his arrogant pride, for holding himself in higher regard than was seemly, and for being in a state of spiritual deception. He was completely taken aback and started crying, and instead of trying to justify himself admitted that he had made mistakes. And he agreed to our demand that he withdraw from the world and place himself under my guidance.”

Rasputin then promised “to tell no one about our meeting with him.” “Rejoicing in our success, we conducted a prayer service... But, as it turned out, he then went to Tsarkoye Selo and recounted everything there in a light that was favourable to him but not to us.”

In 1910, for the sake of his health, Vladyka was transferred to the see of Tauris and Simferopol in the Crimea. Far from separating him from the royal family, this enabled him to see more of them during their summer vacation in Livadia. He was able to use the tsar’s automobile, so as to go on drives into the mountains, enjoy the wonderful scenery and breathe in the pure air.

He often recalled how he celebrated the Divine Liturgy in the palace. And how the Tsarina and her daughters chanted on the kliros. This chanting was always prayerful and concentrated.

Vladyka used to say: “During this service they chanted and read with such exalted, holy veneration! In all this there was a genuine, lofty, purely monastic spirit. And with what trembling, with what radiant tears they approached the Holy Chalice!”

“The sovereign would always begin every day with prayer in church. Exactly at eight o’clock he would enter the palace church. By that time the serving priest had already finished the proskomedia and read the hours. With the entry of the Tsar the priest intoned: ‘Blessed is the Kingdom of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.’ And exactly at nine o’clock the Liturgy ended. Nor were there any abbreviations or omissions. And the priest did not give the impression of being in a hurry. The secret lay in the fact that there were no pauses at all. This enabled the Liturgy to be completed within one hour. For the priest this was an obligatory condition. The sovereign always prayed very ardently. Each petition in the litany, each prayer found a lively response in his soul.

“After the Divine service the working day of the sovereign began.”
However, the issue of Rasputin was destined to bring an end to this idyllic phase in the relations between Vladyka Theophan and the Royal Family.

“After a while,” testifies Vladyka, “rumours reached me that Rasputin had resumed his former way of life and was undertaking something against us... I decided to resort to a final measure – to denounce him openly and to communicate everything to the former emperor. It was not, however, the emperor who received me but his wife in the presence of the maid of honour Vyrubova.

“I spoke for about an hour and demonstrated that Rasputin was in a state of spiritual deception... The former empress grew agitated and objected, citing theological works... I destroyed all her arguments, but she... reiterated them: 'It is all falsehood and slander’... I concluded the conversation by saying that I could no longer have anything to do with Rasputin... I think Rasputin, as a cunning person, explained to the royal family that my speaking against him was because I envied his closeness to the Family... that I wanted to push him out of the way.

“After my conversation with the empress, Rasputin came to see me as if nothing had happened, having apparently decided that the empress’s displeasure had intimidated me... However, I told him in no uncertain terms, ‘Go away, you are a fraud.’ Rasputin fell on his knees before me and asked my forgiveness... But again I told him, ‘Go away, you have violated a promise given before God.’ Rasputin left, and I did not see him again.”

At this point Vladyka received a “Confession” from a former devotee of Rasputin’s. On reading this, he understood that Rasputin was “a wolf in sheep’s clothing” and “a sectarian of the Khlyst type” who “taught his followers not to reveal his secrets even to their confessors. For if there is allegedly no sin in what these sectarians do, then their confessors need not be made aware of it.”

“Availing myself of that written confession, I wrote the former emperor a second letter... in which I declared that Rasputin not only was in a state of spiritual deception but was also a criminal in the religious and moral sense... In the moral sense because, as it followed from the ‘confession’, Father Gregory had seduced his victims.”

There was no reply to this letter. “I sensed that they did not want to hear me out and understand... It all depressed me so much that I became quite ill – it turned out I had a palsy of the facial nerve.”

In fact, Vladyka’s letter had reached the Tsar, and the scandal surrounding the rape of the children’s nurse, Vishnyakova, whose confessor was Vladyka,
could no longer be concealed. Vishnyakova herself testified to the Extraordinary Commission that she had been raped by Rasputin during a visit to Verkhoturye Monastery in Tobolsk province, a journey undertaken at the empress’s suggestion. “Upon our return to Petrograd, I reported everything to the empress, and I also told Bishop Theophan in a private meeting with him. The empress did not give any heed to my words and said that everything Rasputin does is holy. From that time forth I did not see Rasputin, and in 1913 I was dismissed from my duties as nurse. I was also reprimanded for frequenting the Right Reverend Theophan.”

Another person in on the secret was the maid of honour Sophia Tyutcheva. As she witnessed to the Commission, she was summoned to the Tsar.

“You have guessed why I summoned you. What is going on in the nursery?”

She told him.

“So you too do not believe in Rasputin’s holiness?”

She replied that she did not.

“But what will you say if I tell you that I have lived all these years only thanks to his prayers?”

Then he “began saying that he did not believe any of the stories, that the impure always sticks to the pure, and that he did not understand what had suddenly happened to Theophan, who had always been so fond of Rasputin. During this time he pointed to a letter from Theophan on his desk.”

“You, your majesty, are too pure of heart and do not see what filth surrounds you.’ I said that it filled me with fear that such a person could be near the grand duchesses.

‘Am I then the enemy of my own children?’ the sovereign objected.

“He asked me never to mention Rasputin’s name in conversation. In order for that to take place, I asked the sovereign to arrange things so that Rasputin would never appear in the children’s wing.”

But her wish was not granted, and both Vishnyakova and Tyutcheva would not long remain in the tsar’s service...

It was at about this time that the newspapers began to write against Rasputin. And a member of the circle of the Grand Duchess Elizabeth Fyodorovna, Michael Alexandrovich Novoselov, the future bishop-martyr of
the Catacomb Church, published a series of articles condemning Rasputin. "Why do the bishops," he wrote, "who are well acquainted with the activities of this blatant deceiver and corrupter, keep silent?... Where is their grace, if through laziness or lack of courage they do not keep watch over the purity of the faith of the Church of God and allow the lascivious khlyst to do the works of darkness under the mask of light?" The brochure was forbidden and confiscated while it was still at the printer's, and the newspaper *The Voice of Moscow* was heavily fined for publishing excerpts from it.

Also disturbed by the rumours about Rasputin was the Prime Minister Peter Arkadievich Stolypin. But he had to confess, as his daughter Maria relates: "Nothing can be done. Every time the opportunity presents itself I warn his Majesty. But this is what he replied to me recently: 'I agree with you, Peter Arkadievich, but better ten Rasputins than one hysterical empress.' Of course, the whole matter is in that. The empress is ill, seriously ill; she believes that Rasputin is the only person in the whole world who can help the heir, and it is beyond human strength to persuade her otherwise. You know how difficult in general it is to talk to her. If she is taken with some idea, then she no longer takes account of whether it is realisable or not... Her intentions are the very best, but she is really ill..."

In November, 1910, Bishop Theophan went to the Crimea to recover from this illness. But he did not give up, and inundated his friend Bishop Hermogen with letters. It was his aim to enlist this courageous fighter against freethinking in his fight against Rasputin. But this was difficult because it had been none other than Vladyka Theophan who had at some time introduced Rasputin to Bishop Hermogen, speaking of him, as Bishop Hermogen himself said, "in the most laudatory terms." Indeed, for a time Bishop Hermogen and Rasputin had become allies in the struggle against freethinking and modernism.

Unfortunately, a far less reliable person then joined himself to Rasputin’s circle – Sergius Trophanov, in monasticism Iliodor, one of Bishop Theophan’s students at the academy, who later became a co-worker of Dzerzhinsky, a Baptist, married and had seven children. In an interview with the newspaper *Rech’* (January 9, 1913) Fr. Iliodor said: "I used to be a magician and fooled the people. I was a Deist." He built a large church in Tsaritsyn on the Volga, and began to draw thousands to it with his fiery sermons against the Jews and the intellectuals and the capitalists. He invited Rasputin to join him in Tsaritsyn and become the elder of a convent there. Rasputin agreed.

However, Iliodor’s inflammatory sermons were not pleasing to the authorities, and in January, 1911 he was transferred to a monastery in Tula diocese. But he refused to go, locked himself in his church in Tsaritsyn and declared a hunger-strike. Bishop Hermogen supported him, but the tsar did not, and ordered him to be removed from Tsaritsyn.
But at this point Rasputin, who had taken a great liking to Iliodor, intervened, and as Anya Vyubova testified, “Iliodor remained in Tsaritsyn thanks to Rasputin’s personal entreaties”. From now on, Olga Lokhtina would bow down to Rasputin as “Lord of hosts” and to Iliodor as “Christ”...

When Rasputin’s bad actions began to come to light, Hermogen vacillated for a long time. However, having made up his mind that Vladyka Theophan was right, and having Iliodor on his side now too, he decided to bring the matter up before the Holy Synod, of which he was a member, at its next session. Before that, however, he determined to denounce Rasputin to his face. This took place on December 16, 1911. According to Iliodor’s account, Hermogen, clothed in hierarchical vestments and holding a cross in his hand, “took hold of the head of the ‘elder’ with his left hand, and with his right started beating him on the head with the cross and shouting in a terrifying voice, ‘Devil! I forbid you in God’s name to touch the female sex. Brigand! I forbid you to enter the royal household and to have anything to do with the tsarina! As a mother brings forth the child in the cradle, so the holy Church through its prayers, blessings, and heroic feats has nursed that great and sacred thing of the people, the autocratic rule of the tsars. And now you, scum, are destroying it, you are smashing our holy vessels, the bearers of autocratic power... Fear God, fear His life-giving cross!”

Then they forced Rasputin to swear that he would leave the palace. According to one version of events, Rasputin swore, but immediately told the empress what had happened. According to another, he refused, after which Vladyka Hermogen cursed him. In any case, on the same day, December 16, five years later, he was killed...

Then Bishop Hermogen went to the Holy Synod. First he gave a speech against the khlysty. Then he charged Rasputin with khlyst tendencies. Unfortunately, only a minority of the bishops supported the courageous bishop. The majority followed the over-procurator in expressing dissatisfaction with his interference “in things that were not of his concern”.

Vladyka Hermogen was then ordered to return to his diocese. As the director of the chancery of the over-procurator witnessed, “he did not obey the order and, as I heard, asked by telegram for an audience with the tsar, indicating that he had an important matter to discuss, but was turned down.”

The telegram read as follows: “Tsar Father! I have devoted my whole life to the service of the Church and the Throne. I have served zealously, sparing no effort. The sun of my life has long passed midday and my hair has turned white. And now in my declining years, like a criminal, I am being driven out of the capital in disgrace by you, the Sovereign. I am ready to go wherever it
may please you, but before I do, grant me an audience, and I will reveal a secret to you.”

But the Tsar rejected his plea. On receiving this rejection, Bishop Hermogen began to weep. And then he suddenly said: “They will kill the tsar, they will kill the tsar, they will surely kill him.”

The opponents of Rasputin now felt the fury of the Tsar. Bishop Hermogen and Iliodor were exiled to remote monasteries (Iliodor took his revenge by leaking forged letters of the Empress to Rasputin). And Vladyka Theophan was transferred to the see of Astrakhan. The Tsar ordered the secular press to stop printing stories about Rasputin. Before leaving the Crimea, Vladyka called on Rasputin’s friend, the deputy over-procurator Damansky. He told him: “Rasputin is a vessel of the devil, and the time will come when the Lord will chastise him and those who protect him.”

Later, in October, 1913, Rasputin tried to take his revenge on Vladyka by bribing the widow of a Yalta priest who knew Vladyka, Olga Apollonovna Popova, to say that Vladyka had said that he had had relations with the empress. The righteous widow rejected his money and even spat in his face...

Pierre Gilliard, the Tsarevich’s tutor, said: “The illness of the Tsarevich cast a shadow over the whole of the concluding period of Tsar Nicholas II’s reign, and... was one of the main causes of his fall, for it made possible the phenomenon of Rasputin and resulted in the fatal seduction of the sovereigns who lived in a world apart, wholly absorbed in a tragic anxiety which to be concealed from the eyes of all.”

Following this line of argument, Kerensky said: “Without Rasputin, there could have been no Lenin”...

But no, Rasputin was not the cause of the Russian revolution. God would not have allowed the greatest Christian empire in history to fall because of the sinfulness of one man! Nevertheless, Rasputin’s influence on the Empress because of his seeming ability to stem the haemophiliac blood-flows of the Tsarevich did undermine the popularity of the Monarchy at a critical time.

Moreover, Rasputin was a symbol of the situation of Russia in her last days. The Tsarevich represented the dynasty, and therefore Russia herself, losing blood, that is, spiritual strength, as a result of her sins. Rasputin represented the enemies of Russia, who offered their own pseudo-spiritual remedies. But Russia was not cured, but died. “And the child, “who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron... was caught up to God and His throne” (Revelation 12.5)...

259 Quoted in Massie, op. cit.
The Name-Worshipping Heresy

At the beginning of the 20th century the Greek and Russian monks on Mount Athos were not on friendly terms. “The Greeks cannot speak with equanimity about the Russians,” wrote I.I. Sokolov, “while the Russians do not speak with approval about the Greeks. The former complain about the unlawful seizure by the Russians of Greek monasteries, cells and lands, while the Russians speak about violence and oppression on the part of the Greeks. And as time passes, mutual dissatisfaction grows, and spitefulness flames up more strongly. We can say that now [at the beginning of the 20th century] we are witnessing a repetition, to some degree, of what happened in the 1870s, during the infamous Greek-Russian law-suit to do with the St. Panteleimon monastery. There can be no doubt that leaven from this suit has not died out, and now in the quarrel between the Greek and Russian monks on Athos we must see a reflection of the earlier turmoil. Ten years ago one could see a certain calm in the mutual dissatisfaction of the Athonite population, but it turns out that this was the calm before a storm that has now broken out ‘in the great wilderness of Athos’ to quite a significant degree. What is it about?

“In the gradual increase in the numbers of Russian monks on Athos the Greeks see a blow to Hellenism. There was a time, and not so long ago, not more than 30-40 years ago, when there were very few Russian monks on Athos; they had no constant, well-organised refuge, they were poor, and deprived of influence on Athonite affairs. Now their position has changed unrecognisably by comparison with the past. There are now more Russian monks than the Greeks themselves. They have well constructed monasteries and cells, and the main thing – they are rich and do not spare money on acquiring new possessions. They are gradually increasing in numbers and are ready to take over the whole of the Holy Mountain, and squeeze the Greeks completely out. This Russian advance on Athos is based, according to the opinion of the Greeks, on national-political motives: it is the march of Panslavism against Hellenism. It is well-known how attached the Greeks are to their nation, how they preserve all the centres of Hellenism, how they defend every pound of their native soil. And here we are talking about one of the most prominent refuges of Hellenism, the acropolis of the Greek nation, where the Hellenist standard was unfurled already in Byzantine times, and did not disappear in the Turkish era as a consequence of the special international-political position of Athos. Hence arises the enmity which appears in the fact that the Greek monasteries try not to sell to the Russian monks a single clump of land, surround the use of the cells with various obstacles, deprive the elders in the cells of the right of bequeathing them to their disciples, charge inordinate prices for cells and kalyvas, etc. Is such an attitude of the Greeks to the Russians just?

“We think that the enmity of the Greeks towards the Russians is unjustly motivated by considerations of a political nature. The political slant given to
Russian monasticism on Athos is an artificial, false thing, which does not correspond to the real strivings of the Russians on Athos. Panslavism, which the Greeks talk about in relation to the Russian Athonites, is a myth, an empty word, having no definite content. It was created by the immoderately passionate fantasy of the Athonite — or more accurately, of the Athenian intriguers from the Greeks, who see enemies of Hellenism in its most recent formation everywhere: this is a common phenomenon among peoples that are feverish with political tendencies after their birth or rebirth to new public life. The Greeks saw the advance of Panslavism into the East already in the 1870s, when the notorious St. Panteleimon’s case flared up, but even they did not have a clear idea about it, which is why Panslavism was for them some kind of scarecrow. In this respect the matter has not changed even at the present time. Moreover, it would be strange to impute political tendencies to people coming from our remote village and settlements, who have set off for Athos with exclusively religious aims. After all, Russian Athos can without exaggeration be called ‘the peasants’ kingdom’. There are very few intelligentsy here — perhaps 50 out of 4000 monks in all. There are also few from the ranks of the upper and lower middle classes, who differ very little from the peasants, so that on Athos the peasantry is the dominant and even the all-engulfing element. The inhabitants of our villages and settlements set off for Athos exclusively for religious motives — to pray and save themselves: what have they to do with politics? And then politicising requires a corresponding intellectual preparation, which the Greek monks possess, but the Russians do not. Justice requires us to say that among the Russian monks of Athos there are very few educated people, the majority are semi-literate: what have they to do with politics? While the leaders of the monks, penetrated with the same ideas of prayer and salvation, are so burdened with the administration of the brotherhood and the complex monastic economy that politics is impossible for them…”

However, while this semi-literacy of the Russian monks made involvement in politics difficult for them, it presented another danger that was soon to reveal itself — a weakness in theological debate and vulnerability to heresy… This danger became a reality with the publication, in 1907, by Schema-monk Hilarion, of a book on the Jesus prayer entitled *On the Mountains of the Caucasus*. This book was at first well-received and passed the spiritual censor; but later its claim that the name of God is God — more precisely, that the Name of God as uttered in the Jesus prayer is not only holy and filled with the grace of God, but is holy *in and of itself*, being *God Himself* — elicited criticism. Soon monastic opinion in Russia was polarised between those who, like the monks of the Kiev Caves Lavra, approved of the book and its name-worshipping thesis (*imiabozhie* in Russian), and those, like the monks of the Pochaev Lavra and the Optina Desert, who rejected it. The heresy was

---

condemned as a form of pantheism by the Ecumenical Patriarchate in 1912 and 1913. It was also condemned by the Russian Holy Synod in its Epistle of May 18, 1913 and Decree of August 27, 1913 (No. 7644).\textsuperscript{261}

However, as Vladimir Gubanov writes, “the illiterate G.E. Rasputin interceded for the heretical name-worshippers and even tried to incite the empress to attack the fighters against the heresy of name-worshipping.”\textsuperscript{262} In 1914 the leading heretics, including Hieroschemamonk Anthony (Bulatovich), author of \textit{An Apology of Faith in the Name of God and the Name of Jesus} (1913), were justified by the Moscow Diocesan Court, which declared: “... The Synodal Office has found that in the confessions of faith in God and in the Name of God coming from the named monks, in the words, ‘I repeat that in naming the Name of God and the Name of Jesus as God and God Himself, I reject both the veneration of the Name of God as His Essence, and the veneration of the Name of God separately from God Himself as some kind of special Divinity, as well as any deification of the very letters and sounds and any chance thoughts about God’ – there is contained information allowing us to conclude that in them there is no basis for leaving the Orthodox Church for the sake of the teaching on the Names of God.’ (decree № 1443 of May 8, 1914)

Of course, this decree did not constitute a “justification” of the name-worshippers’ teaching, especially in view of the fact that on the same day the Office, led by Metropolitan Macarius, affirmed that name-worshipping – “the new false-teachings on the names of God proclaimed by Schema-Monk Hilarion and Anthony Bulatovich” – was a heresy (decree № 1442 of May 8, 1914). Moreover, in rejecting “any deification of the very letters and sounds and any chance thoughts about God”, Bulatovich was obliged also to renounce his words in the \textit{Apology}: “Every mental representation of a named property of God is the Name of God [and therefore, according to the name-worshippers, God Himself]”, “the contemplation of the His name is God Himself”, “the conscious naming of God is God Himself”, “Every idea about God is God Himself”, “we call the very idea of God – God”. But did he in fact repent?

Unfortunately, the repentance of the name-worshippers turned out to be fictional. Bulatovich did not repent, but concealed his heresy behind ambiguous words and phrases. Thus on May 18, 1914, in a letter to Metropolitan Macarius, Bulatovich thanked him for his “justification”, and nobly deigned to declare that he was now ready to return into communion with the Orthodox Church (!). And he added: “Concerning the Name of God and the Name of Jesus Christ, we, in accordance with the teaching of the Holy


\textsuperscript{262} Gubanov (ed.), Nikolai II-i i Novie Mucheniki, St. Petersburg, 2000, p. 770 ®.
Fathers, confessed and confess the Divinity and the Divine Power of the Name of the Lord, but we do not raise this teaching to the level of a dogma, for it has not yet been formulated and dogmatised in council, but we expect that at the forthcoming Council it will be formulated and dogmatised. Therefore we, in accordance with the teaching of the Holy Fathers, in the words of the ever-memorable Father John of Kronstadt said and say that the Name of God is God Himself, and the Name of the Lord Jesus is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, understanding this not in the sense of a deification of the created name, but understanding it spiritually, in the sense of the inseparability of the God-revealed Truth, Which is the Action of the Divinity.”

These words of Bulatovich show that he was not sincere in his signature below the Confession of faith in God and in the Name of God, but deceived Metropolitan Macarius (who was probably under pressure from the Over-Procurator Sabler, who was in turn under pressure from the fervent name-worshippers Gregory Rasputin). “Mixing truth with unrighteousness” (Rom. 1.18), Bulatovich mixed Orthodoxy with heresy. Thus Orthodoxy recognises that there is a “Divine Power” in the name of Jesus, but does not recognise that it is “Divinity”. Again, Orthodoxy recognises that in prayer the name of God is indeed inseparable from God, but it does not confuse the two, as does Bulatovich. For while a shadow is inseparable from the body that casts it, this is not to say that the shadow is the body. Finally, Bulatovich’s “dogma” is still not “formulated and dogmatised in council” – because it is not a dogma, but heresy!

The Holy Synod accepted that Bulatovich and his fellows had not really repented, so they set aside decree № 1442 of the Moscow Synodal Office, and confirmed the sentences against the name-worshippers (decree № 4136 of May 10-24, 1914), which confirmation was again confirmed by decree № 2670 of March 10, 1916. “In this decree of the Most Holy Synod,” wrote the future Hieromartyr Basil (Zelentsov), Bishop of Priluki, “we find a confirmation of the basic rule that the name-worshippers must be received into ecclesiastical communion and admitted to the sacraments of the Church only on the unfailing condition that they reject the false teaching of name-worshiping and witness to their faithfulness to the dogmas and teaching of the Church and to their obedience to Church authority.”

Although name-worshipping was on the agenda of the 1917-18 Council and a subcommission to study it under the leadership of Archbishop Theophan of Poltava and Fr. Sergius Bulgakov was formed, the subcommission did not have time to complete its work before the Council was terminated by the Bolsheviks. However, on October 8/21, 1918, Patriarch Tikhon and the Most Holy Synod declared: “The Most Holy Synod does not change its former judgement on the error itself [of name-worshipping]... and has in no way changed its general rule, according to which the name-worshippers, as having been condemned by the Church authorities, can be
received into Church communion… only after they have renounced name-worshipping and have declared their submission to the Holy Church… The petition of Hieroschemamonk Anthony to allow him to serve is to be recognised as not worthy of being satisfied so long as he continues to disobey Church authority and spread his musings which have been condemned by the Church hierarchy to the harm of the Church”.

After this decision, the leading name-worshipper, Anthony Bulatovich, broke communion for the second time with the Russian Church and was shortly afterwards killed by robbers.

In spite of all these condemnations, the name-worshipping movement did not die out; it survived in the Caucasus and South Russian regions (where the Tsar had transported the rebellious monks); and the sophianist heretics Florensky and Bulgakov also confessed name-worshipping in the inter-war period. In modern times the heresy has enjoyed a revival in intellectualist circles in Russia, especially in the works of Hieromonk Gregory (Lourié) of St. Petersburg, who supports the heretical views of Bulatovich, considers Bulatovich himself to be a saint, and those who oppose his ideas, including several hieromartyrs of the Russian Church, to be “enemies of the Name”!

One reason for the failure to stamp out the heresy was the comparatively weak defence of the truth produced by the Greek and Russian theologians. Others were: the aura of martyrdom which was attached to the name-worshippers as a result of their forcible expulsion from Mount Athos to Russia on a Russian cruiser, and the fact that the heresy coincided with the end of the Balkan wars and the transfer of Mount Athos from Turkish to Greek dominion after the Treaty of Bucharest, which meant that mutual suspicions between the Greeks and the Russians concerning the status of Athos hindered a united and thorough approach to the problem. Many took up the cause of the name-worshippers as part of their general attack on the Russian Holy Synod, and the whole debate soon acquired political overtones, with the democratic and socialist left generally taking the side of the name-worshippers and the monarchists - the side of the Orthodox.²⁶³

Patriarch Tikhon indicated that the controversy needed further study “in essence” at a future Pan-Russian (or Ecumenical) Council. But this did not mean, as some have claimed, that the Church had not delivered its verdict on the question. She has delivered her verdict: but the reasons for that verdict need to be more extensively elaborated, and the “positive” teaching of the Church on the relationship between the uncreated and the created in prayer needs to be expounded still more clearly and thoroughly.

²⁶³ Constantine Papoulides, Oi Rossoi onomolatroi tou Agiou Orous (The Russian Name-Worshippers of the Holy Mountain) Thessaloniki, 1977 (in Greek).
Symbolism and Futurism

Just as the ascetic name-worshippers of Mount Athos wished to identify the Divinity with a created name, so the decadent artists of the Symbolist movement in Russia wanted to capture the Divinity in artistic symbols. For them, symbolism took the place of religion; it was a new kind of religion. “In the Symbolist aesthetic,” as J.W. Burrow writes, “the intense focusing on the thing taken as a symbol, the perception of its numinous aura, gave access to another, as it were, parallel, invisible world of light and ecstasy.”

This “parallel, invisible world of light and ecstasy” was demonic. Thus the Symbolist painter Michael Vrubel achieved fame with a large mosaic-like canvas called “Seated Demon” (1890), and went mad while working on the dynamic and sinister “Demon Downcast” (1902).

Symbolist ideas are most vividly expressed in the music and thought of the composer Alexander Scriabin, who in his First Symphony praised art as a kind of religion. Le Divin Poem (1902-1904) sought to express the evolution of the human spirit from pantheism to unity with the universe. Poème de l’extase (1908) was accompanied by the elaborately selected colour projections on a screen. In Scriabin's synthetic performances music, poetry, dancing, colours, and scents were used so as to bring about supreme, final ecstasy. Similar ideas on the stage fusion of all arts were elaborated by the poet Andrej Bely and the painter Vassily Kandinsky.

Another of Diaghilev’s composer-protégés, Sergei Prokofiev, was also influenced by Symbolism - and Mary Baker Eddy’s Christian Science. Among the propositions of his theory of creative action were: “1. I am the expression of Life, i.e. of divine activity. 2. I am the expression of spirit, which gives me power to resist what is unlike spirit… 9. I am the expression of perfection, and this leads me to the perfect use of my time…”

These strivings for mangodhood - but in defiance of the God-Man - among Russia’s creative intelligentsia were associated by them with a revolutionary future that rejected the past more or less totally. Hence the brief fashion for

---

the European movement of Futurism with its radical rejection of the past and all past and present ideas of what is beautiful and tasteful. In reality, however, these strivings were as unoriginal as the revolution itself proved to be, and were rather a sign that Russia’s future would consist, not in producing a radically new civilization, but in a catastrophic regression to her pre-Christian, pagan past.

This is most evident in perhaps the most shocking of all the works of Russian art in the period: Igor Stravinsky’s ballet, The Rite of Spring. As Oliver Figes writes, “the idea of the ballet was originally conceived by the painter Nikolai Roerich... a painter of the prehistoric Slavs and an accomplished archaeologist in his own right. He was absorbed in the rituals of neolithic Russia, which he idealized as a pantheistic realm of spiritual beauty where life and art were one, and man and nature lived in harmony. Stravinsky approach Roerich for a theme and he came to visit him at the artists’ colony of Talashkino, where the two men worked together on the scenario of ‘The Great Sacrifice’, as The Rite of Spring was originally called. The ballet was conceived as a re-creation of the ancient pagan rite of human sacrifice. It was meant to be that rite – not to tell the story of the ritual but (short of actual murder) to re-create that ritual on the stage and thus communicate in the most immediate way the ecstasy and terror of the human sacrifice...

“Artistically, the ballet strived for ethnographic authenticity. Roerich’s costumes were drawn from peasant clothes in Tenisheva’s collection at Talashkino. His primitivist sets were based on archaeology. Then there was Nijinsky’s shocking choreography – the real scandal of the ballet’s infamous Paris première at the Théâtre des Champs-Elysées on 29 May 1913. For the music was barely heard at all in the commotion, the shouting and the fighting, which broke out in the auditorium when the curtain first went up. Nijinsky had choreographed movements which were ugly and angular. Everything about the dancers’ movements emphasized their weight instead of their lightness, as demanded by the principles of classical ballet. Rejecting all the basic positions, the ritual dancers had their feet turned inwards, elbows clutched to the sides of their body and their palms held flat, like the wooden dolls that were so prominent in Roerich’s mythic paintings of Scythian Russia. They were orchestrated, not by steps and notes, as in conventional ballets, but rather moved as one collective mass to the violent off-beat rhythms of the orchestra. The dancers pounded their feet on the stage, building up a static energy which finally exploded, with electrifying force, in the sacrificial dance. This rhythmic violence was the vital innovation of Stravinsky’s score. Like most of the ballet’s themes, it was taken from the music of the peasantry. There was nothing like these rhythms in Western art music (Stravinsky said that he did not really known how to notate or bar them) – a convulsive pounding of irregular downbeats, requiring constant changes in the metric signature with almost every bar so that the conductor of the orchestra must throw himself about and wave his arms in jerky motions, as if performing a
shamanic dance. In these explosive rhythms it is possible to hear the terrifying beat of the Great War and the Revolution of 1917...”\textsuperscript{269}

\textit{The Beilis Trial}

In 1911, a Christian boy, Andrew Yuschinksy, was killed. In connection with this, in 1913, the trial took place in Kiev of a Jew named Beilis, which became an international cause célèbre. The verdict of the court was that the boy had been ritually murdered, but Beilis was acquitted.\textsuperscript{270}

Now stories of ritual murder of Christian children by Jews have surfaced in many countries in many ages, leading to many formal trials and convictions. These are completely dismissed by western authors, who speak about the “blood libel” against the Jews. However, the Orthodox Church has canonized at least one victim of such a murder, Child-Martyr Gabriel of Zverki, Belorussia, for whose feast Archbishop Anthony (Khраповицкий) wrote a service in 1908.\textsuperscript{271}

\textsuperscript{269} Figes, \textit{Natasha’s Dance}, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 279, 280-282.
\textsuperscript{270} On this trial see Danilushkin, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 784-793; Solzhenitsyn, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 444-451.
\textsuperscript{271} S.V. Bulgakov, \textit{Nastol’naia Kniga dlya Svyashchennogo-Tserkovno-Sluzhitelia} (\textit{Handbook for Church Servers}), Kharkov, 1900, p. 143. For ritual murders demonstrated in court, see V. Dal’, \textit{Rozyskanie o ubiyenii evreev khristianskikh mladentsev i upotreblenii krovi ikh} (\textit{Investigation into the Killing by Jews of Christian Children and the Use of their Blood}), St. Petersburg, 1844; V. Rozanov, \textit{Obyazatel’noe i osyazatel’noe otnoshenie evreev k krovi} (\textit{The Senses of Smell and Touch of the Jews towards Blood}), St. Petersburg, 1913. Over a hundred well-documented cases of the murder of Christian children by the Jews for ritual purposes in various countries are cited by Oleg Platonov, who goes on to cite the detailed account of Monk Neophytus, who until the age of 38 was a Jewish rabbi, as giving especially valuable evidence, not only of the real existence of this horrific practice, but also of the religious rationale behind it (\textit{Ternovij venets Rossii} (\textit{Russia’s Crown of Thorns}), Moscow, 1998, pp. 748-754.

In 1855 Bishop Porphyrius (Uspensky) of Chigirinsk wrote to the director of the Department of foreign confessions, Khruschev: “Just as the Christian peoples have retained many pagan superstitions, so the Jews – it goes without saying, not all of them – continue to shed the blood of children and youths who are not of their tribe according to very ancient tradition, which points to the redemption of their whole race in a bloody human sacrifice... In the East everyone is convinced that the killing of Christian boys by the Jews is ordered in such a way that this evil is accomplished in one year in Thessalonica, for example, in another in Damascus, in a third in Spain, or Russia, or Wallachia, etc., and that the towels soaked in the blood of the unfortunate victim are burned, and their ashes are scattered to all the synagogues so that they can be baked into the paschal bread... Judge, after this, how difficult it is to catch the terrible crime... I sorrow over the existence of such a horror among the Jews... And Jews have penetrated onto Athos, and one of them in the rank of hieromonk and spiritual father killed monks coming to him for confession, and hid their corpses under his floor...” (in Fomin, S. and Fomina, T., \textit{op. cit.}, vol. II, p. 632)

Lisa Palmieri-Billig (“Historian gives credence to blood libel”, \textit{The Jerusalem Post}, February 7 and 8, 2007) writes: “An Israeli historian of Italian origin has revived ‘blood libel’ in an historical study set to hit Italian bookstores on Thursday. Ariel Toaff, son of Rabbi Elio Toaff, claims that there is some historic truth in the accusation that for centuries provided incentives for pogroms against Jews throughout Europe.
Archbishop Anthony’s attitude to Jewish blood rituals in general, and the Beilis trial in particular, was expressed in an interview he gave to A. Chizhevsky. After reminding his readers of how, at the request of Rabbi Skomorovsky, he had twice, in 1903 and 1905, spoken up against the antisemite pogroms in Zhitomir, he went on: “But in both of the above-mentioned cases of my conversation with the rabbi, I decisively refused to say that I did not recognize the existence of ritual murders carried out by Jews, but on the contrary I expressed to my interlocutor my conviction that these murders exist, perhaps as belonging to one or another sect of the Jewish religion, perhaps as a secret of the highest spiritual government of the Jews, but there undoubtedly have been cases of ritual murders both in recent times and in antiquity.

“When my Jewish academic acquaintances pointed to the fact that Jewish law forbids the drinking of the blood even of animals, so that the thought of their mixing Christian blood with the paschal matsa was absurd, I replied that what seemed more probable to me was the link between the ritual killings and, not the Jewish feast of Pascha, but the feast that precedes it of ‘Purim’, in which the story of Esther, Haman and Mordecai is remembered, when the Persian king, having executed the enemy of the Jews, Haman, allowed them, who had not long before been condemned to general killing, to kill their enemies themselves. Purim in 1911 [the year of the ritual killing of Andrew Yushchinsky] took place on March 14 and 15, while the Jewish Pascha was from March 15-18...

“Already in deep antiquity the Jews were causing various disorders against various symbols hostile to them during this feast. Thus in 408 and 412 the Byzantine emperor issued two special decrees forbidding the Jews from

---

“Toaff’s tome, Bloody Passovers: The Jews of Europe of Ritual Murders, received high praise from another Italian Jewish historian, Sergio Luzzatto, in an article in the Corriere della Serra entitled ‘Those Bloody Passovers’.

“Luzzatto describes Toaff’s work as a ‘magnificent book of history... Toaff holds that from 1100 to about 1500... several crucifixions of Christian children really happened, bringing about retaliations against entire Jewish communities – punitive massacres of men, women, children. Neither in Trent in 1475 nor in other areas of Europe in the late Middle Ages were Jews always innocent victims.’

“‘A minority of fundamentalist Ashkenazis... carried out human sacrifices,’ Luzzatto continued.

“Toaff offers as an example the case of Saint Simonino of Trent in March 1475, shortly after a child’s body was found in a canal near the Jewish area of Trent, the city’s Jews were accused of murdering Simonino and using his blood to make mazot.

“After a medieval trial in which confessions were extracted by torture, 16 members of Trent’s Jewish community were hanged.

“Toaff reveals that the accusations against the Jews of Trent ‘might have been true’.

“Toaff refers to kabbalistic descriptions of the therapeutic uses of blood and asserts that ‘a black market flourished on both sides of the Alps, with Jewish merchants selling human blood, complete with rabbinic certification of the product – kosher blood.’"
celebrating Purim and mocking Christian crosses instead of Haman. I think that Christian children were also killed on this feast…”

The Beilis trial polarized Russian society and, through the Jewish press, had international ramifications. Liberal opinion throughout the world pilloried Russia, which was now the country, supposedly, not only of the cruellest tyranny and retrograde religion, but also of systematic persecution and slander of the Jews. Unfortunately, these criticisms, though unjust, helped to create the very phenomenon they decried. Racial anti-semitism, as opposed to religious anti-Judaism and anti-Talmudism, had been rare in Russia – rarer than in most western countries. But in the decade that followed the Beilis trial, under the stress of war and revolution, real anti-semitism took root in Russia, with massacres far exceeding anything seen in the times of the tsars...

Russia and the Balkans

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

The idea of the Third Rome has been subjected to much mockery and revilement as if it were just an excuse for nationalist ambition. But exactly the reverse is true: in acknowledging themselves to be the successors of the Byzantines, “the Second Rome”, the Russians took upon themselves an

272 Archbishop Anthony, in Zhizn’ Volynii (The Life of Volhynia), № 221, 2 September, 1913®.
273 As regards freedom, it is a paradoxical but true fact that Russia in the last decades before the revolution was one of the freest countries in the world. Thus Duma deputy Baron A.D. Meyendorff admitted: “The Russian Empire was the most democratic monarchy in the world” (Lebedev, op. cit., p. 405). This view was echoed by foreign observers, such as Sir Maurice Baring: “There is no country in the world, where the individual enjoys so great a measure of personal liberty, where the ‘liberté de moeurs’ is so great, as in Russia; where the individual man can do as he pleases with so little interference or criticism on the part of his neighbours, where there is so little moral censorship, where liberty of abstract thought or aesthetic production is so great.” (in Eugene Lyons, Our Secret Allies, 1953).
internationalist obligation: to fight for the protection of all Orthodox Christians throughout the inhabited world. In some, rare cases – Georgia and Bessarabia - this involved annexation of the territory involved. In most cases, however, it involved shedding blood for their fellow Orthodox Christians with no territorial or economic gain whatsoever, as in the liberation of Bulgaria from the Turks in 1877. To a large extent the history of Russia from the fifteenth century onwards can be seen as a slow but inexorable advance to the fulfilment of the ideal of Christian Rome: the liberation of all fellow Orthodox Christians living under the yoke of heretical or pagan rulers.

The cost was enormous. It has been calculated that, quite apart from losses in terms of men killed, Russians taken into slavery by the Turks from the 15th to the 18th century inclusive numbered between three and five million, while the population of the whole of Russia in the time of Ivan the Terrible (16th century) numbered less than five million souls.\textsuperscript{274} Nor, of course, did it end in the 18th century: Russia fought the enormously costly Crimean War for the sake of the Holy Places in Jerusalem, and the war of 1877-78 for the sake of the Balkan Slavs. And yet losses of men killed or driven into slavery abroad were only the beginning of the cost. Both the institution of serfdom, which so upset the liberals, and that of military service from youth until (virtually) death, were the results, not of the despotic cruelty of the tsars, but of sheer military necessity – a necessity that the Russians (and not only the tsars, but also the peasants, who prayed every day for the liberation of those under the Turkish yoke) felt obliged to submit to as long as “the Hagarenes” lorded it over the heartlands of Orthodox Christianity.

Russia’s victory over the Ottoman empire in 1877-78 fundamentally changed the political situation in the Balkans. The Turks were now in slow, uneven, but inexorable retreat from Europe, while all the Orthodox nations acquired independent nation-states. However, freedom (although there was still no freedom for those living in Thrace and Anatolia, and for the Arab Orthodox of the Middle East) did not immediately bring prosperity, and certainly not peace...

One problem was that the peasantry, the majority of the population in all the Balkan countries, was no less oppressed by heavy taxes and indebtedness under the national regimes than it had been under the Turks. This led to peasant rebellions in several countries: in Serbia in 1883, in Bulgaria in 1899 and, most seriously, in Romania in 1907, where 120,000 troops were called out and 10,000 peasants were killed.\textsuperscript{275} There was simply not enough land to support a rising population, and many thousands of able-bodied men – men

The slaves included some who have been numbered among the saints, such as St. John the Russian (imprisoned in Turkey itself) and St. Paul of Cairo.

who were greatly needed at home – were forced to emigrate, especially in Greece and Montenegro.

A second problem was tension between the newly independent states. Thus in 1885 Serbia invaded Bulgaria (the Bulgars won), and towards the end of the century the Serbs, the Bulgars and the Greeks were fighting proxy wars against each other for control of Macedonia. Only rarely did the Orthodox nations unite against their common foe, the Turks, as in the First Balkan War of 1912: more often it was Orthodox against Orthodox, as in the Second Balkan War of 1913, when Greeks, Serbs and Romanians united against the Bulgars (who were defeated). Inter-Orthodox rivalries were exacerbated by the fact that, as a result of the Treaty of Berlin, Austria-Hungary gained a protectorate in Bosnia and greater influence in the area as a whole. This meant that Serbia was forced to seek good relations with Austria (until the dynastic coup of 1903 brought in a pro-Russian dynasty), while Bulgaria remained under the influence of the other great power in the region, Russia.

Each of the Orthodox nations, inspired by its recent acquisition of independence, strove to extend its boundaries at the expense of its neighbours. Strong national feeling had served them well in preserving their integrity during the centuries of the Ottoman yoke. But it served them less well when that yoke was crumbling, and the virus of nationalism reinvigorated their enemies as well. Thus the winds of nationalism began to blow in Albania and Kosovo, which Serbs regard as their national heritage and which had not hitherto had a strong national movement. Even the Turks, stung by their defeats, began to abandon the ideal of a multi-national and multi-cultural empire and look for a “Turkey for the Turks” ideology.

More fundamentally, the Balkan nations had no coherent political ideology. Orthodoxy was in decline, and the traditional Orthodox “symphony of powers” had not been revived. Instead, weak autocratic rulers (Nicholas of Montenegro was a partial exception) worked uneasily or not at all with embryonic parliaments imbued with western ideas of democracy and socialism. The most shocking example of this internal disorder was the killing of King Alexander and Queen Draga of Serbia in Belgrade in 1903, which, according to Rebecca West, was the real trigger that led to the shots at Sarajevo in 1914, the First World War and the Russian revolution…

276 “…When Alexander and Draga fell from that balcony the whole of the modern world fell with them. It took some time to reach the ground and break its neck, but its fall started then… Peter Karageorgevitch came to the throne under every possible disadvantage. He was close on sixty and had never seen Serbia since he left it with his exiled father at the age of fourteen; he had been brought up at Geneva under the influence of Swiss liberalism and had later become an officer in the French Army; he had no experience of statecraft, and he was a man of modest and retiring personality and simple manners, who had settled down happily at Geneva, to supervise the education of his three motherless children and pursue mildly bookish interest. It appears to be true that though he had told the conspirators of his readiness to accept the Serbian throne if Alexander Obrenovitch vacated it, he had had no
Now in order to counter the increasing economic and military power of the German empire, and the threat posed to the Balkan Slavs by the German-Austrian alliance, Russia had formed an alliance with France in 1894, which was joined in 1907 by Britain.

“The division of Europe into two military alliances,” writes Dominic Lieven, “made it almost certain that any conflict between great powers would engulf the entire continent. Nevertheless, in the first decade of Nicholas’s reign Russia’s relations with Berlin and Vienna were friendly. This was in part because much of Petersburg’s attention was devoted to the Far East, which in turn made it easier to agree with Austria on a policy of supporting the status quo in the Balkans.

“Russia’s defeat by Japan in 1904-05 and the subsequent Russian revolution of 1905-06 changed matters very much for the worse. Awareness of idea that they proposed to do anything more violent than force an abdication; after all, his favourite author was John Stuart Mill. The Karageorgevitch belief in the sacredness of the dynasty brought him back to Belgrade, but it might have been safely wagered that he would need all the support he could get to stay there. He was entirely surrounded by the conspirators whose crime he abhorred, and he could not dismiss them, because in sober fact they numbered amongst them some of the ablest and most public-spirited men in Serbia; and with these fierce critics all about him perfectly capable of doing what they had done before, he had to keep order in a new and expanding country, vexed with innumerable internal and external difficulties.

“But Peter Karageorgevitch was a great king. Slowly and soberly he proved himself one of the finest liberal statesmen in Europe, and later, in the Balkan wars which drove the Turk out of Macedonia and Old Serbia he proved himself a magnificent soldier. Never was there worse luck for Europe. Austria, with far more territory than she could properly administer, wanted more and had formed her Drang nach Osten, her Hasten to the East policy. Now the formidable new military state of Serbia was in her way, and might even join with Russia to attack her. Now, too, all the Slav peoples of the Empire were seething with discontent because the free Serbians were doing so well, and the German-Austrians hated them more than ever. The situation had been further complicated since Rudolf’s day because the Empire had affronted Slav feeling by giving up the pretence that Bosnia and Herzegovina were provinces which she merely occupied and administered, and formally annexing them [in 1908]. This made many Slavs address appeals to Serbia, which, as was natural in a young country, sometimes answered boastfully.

“The situation was further complicated by the character of the man who had succeeded Rudolf as the heir to the Imperial Crown, the Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Este. This unlovable melancholic had upset all sections of the people by his proposals, drafted and expressed without the slightest trace of statesmanship, to make a tripartite monarchy of the Empire, by forming the Slavs into a separate kingdom. The reactionaries felt this was merely an expression of his bitter hostility towards the Emperor and his conservatism; the Slavs were unimpressed and declared they would rather be free, like Serbia. The reaction of Austria to this new situation was extravagant fear. The Austrian Chief of General Staff, Conrad von Hötzendorf, was speaking for many of his countrymen and most of his class when he ceaselessly urged that a preventive war should be waged against Serbia before she became more capable of self-defence. He and his kind would not have felt this if Alexander Obrenovitch had not been murdered and given place to a better man, who made a strong and orderly Serbia...” (Black Lamb and Grey Falcon, Edinburgh: Canongate, 2006, pp. 11-13)
Russian impotence encouraged first Germany and then Austria to defend their interests in the Moroccan Crisis of 1905-06 and in the 1908-09 Bosnian crisis [when Austria annexed Bosnia and Russia was powerless to do anything about it] in a more aggressive manner than would otherwise have been the case. In Berlin’s defence, however, it does need to be stressed that Germany did not seize the opportunity offered by Russia’s weakness to impose its domination on Europe, as it could easily have done at any time between 1905 and 1909. The Russian government, acutely aware both of its international vulnerability and of its lack of prestige at home, became over-fearful of Austrian aggression in the Balkans after 1909, against which it helped to organize a league of Balkan states. The latter’s existence in turn contributed to instability in the Balkan peninsula and to Russo-Austrian tensions. The tsarist regime’s position was also challenged by the emergence of liberal-nationalist political parties in Russian which asserted their patriotic credentials by stressing Russia’s mission in the Balkans and contrasting their own support for that mission with the government’s caution and cowardice.277 Under all these pressures, a gap opened between Petersburg’s strong rhetorical defence of its international interests and its actual willingness to stand up for these interests when challenged. Russia’s rivals were thereby rather encouraged to discount Petersburg’s pronouncements and to believe that pressure would bring rewards. This mattered in 1914.”278

It mattered because in 1914, while Germany and Austria thought that Russia would bow to pressure as she had done in the Bosnian crisis of 1909, Russia felt she could not bow to such pressure a second time – not only because of the objective threat to Serbia, but also because her prestige as the protector of Orthodoxy in the Balkans would be destroyed, and because the liberal-nationalist parties in Russia would not allow it...

277 “Between 1907 and 1914 the outlines of a coalition between sections of Russia’s economic, political and intellectual elites based on a combination of liberal and nationalist ideas began to emerge. It encompassed a number of leading Moscow industrialists, some of Russia’s greatest liberal intellectuals and many Duma leaders. By 1914 this shadowy coalition had important friends in both the army and the bureaucracy. Prince Grigori Trubetskoy, who ran the Foreign Ministry’s department of Near Eastern and Balkan affairs, was closely linked to the Moscow industrialists and to Peter Struve, the leading intellectual spokesman for the coalition of the liberal-conservative and nationalist elites. Even Alexander Krivoshein, the Minister of Agriculture, was a potential ally of this coalition. His ministry, and indeed he himself, maintained cordial relations with the Duma and the zemstvos. On the whole, they enjoyed a good press. And Krivoshein was not merely inclined towards pro-Slav nationalist sympathies, he had also married a daughter of one of Moscow’s leading industrialist families. It needs to be stressed that this coalition was still in embryo in 1907-9 and that Germany’s own aggressive policies played a role in bringing it to life in later years. Nevertheless the Germans were not wrong to watch Russian domestic developments with great concern in the pre-war era. The idea that the liberal-nationalist, anti-German and pro-Slav coalition represented the wave of the future was not unreasonable and was widely believed both in Russia and abroad…” (Lieven, Nicholas II, pp. 191-192). (V.M.)

German Nationalism

If nationalist pressures were beginning to play an important role in Russian foreign policy, as they had already, and to a much greater degree, in the foreign policies of the Balkan states, we must not neglect to describe the growth of nationalism in the most powerful state in Europe – Germany.

German nationalism was first elicited by Prussia’s defeat at the hands of Napoleon at the battle of Jena in 1806. This engendered a feeling of resentfulness and a desire to show that Germany was the equal of France not only militarily but also culturally, a desire that was finally satisfied by the victory over France at Sedan in 1870 and the foundation of the German Empire under Prussia’s leadership. Germany’s victory over France in 1870 both calmed the wounded pride elicited by the defeats inflicted by Napoleon and stoked up a new pride in the new, united nation-state and a new belief in its rights in relation to its neighbours.

Later, however, a general feeling of dissatisfaction set in in Germany. Many were unhappy at the triumph of Prussia and its regimented, despotic spirit. Engels had welcomed Bismarck’s success in reducing German “particularism”, but “the main disadvantage,” he said, “and it is a very big one, is the inevitable swamping of Germany by the Prussian spirit”. The liberals were unhappy that Germany was not a fully parliamentary state, but was still largely controlled by the king, the army and the Prussian aristocracy. Antisemites like Paul de Lagarde, on the other hand, were unhappy that Germany was becoming too liberal, and that the new unified German state was the “little” one, excluding Austria. The Catholics were unhappy with Bismarck’s Kulturkampf legislation for obligatory civil marriage and the prohibition of the Jesuit order, resistance to which caused most Prussian bishops and thousands of priests to be thrown into prison. Over all this was a vaguer feeling that something was rotten in the house of Germany with its “hard-boiled Realpolitik and oppressive piety, ostentatious theatrical poses, self-righteous nationalism combined with internal discord, and finally materialism, overwhelmed by the successes of the natural sciences, but yet prepared suddenly to change into cheap mysticism”.279

The feeling began to spread that only war could clear the atmosphere. Thus while Germany’s problem in 1806 had been defeat in war, the temptation after 1870 was victory and the hubris that came from it. War had humbled the old enemy and united the nation (almost): why should it not continue to cure the nation’s ills?

The roots of war-worship were to be found in Germany’s not-so-distant past. Thus in his treatise On War (1832) the Prussian general Karl von

Clausewitz had famously declared that “war is the continuation of politics by other means”. Gradually the idea became entrenched that war is a cleansing process sweeping away the decadence that comes from too much peace. And there were more mystical reasons for supporting war. Thus Hegel considered that “the German spirit is the spirit of the new world. Its aim is the realization of absolute Truth as the unlimited self-determination of freedom.” Clearly war could not be taboo to “unlimited self-determination”…

As Barbara Ehrenreich writes: “In the opinion of Hegel and the later theorists of nationalism, nations need war – that is, the sacrifice of their citizens – even when they are not being menaced by other nations. The reason is simple: The nation, as a kind of ‘organism’, exists only through the emotional unity of its citizens, and nothing cements this unity more decisively than war. As Hegel explained, peace saps the strength of nations by allowing citizens to drift back into their individual concerns: ‘In times of peace civil life expands more and more, all the different spheres settle down, and in the long run men sink into corruption, their particularities become more and more fixed and ossified. But health depends upon the unity of the body and if the parts harden, death occurs.’ Meaning, of course, the death of the nation, which depends for its life on the willingness of the citizens to face their own deaths. War thus becomes a kind of tonic for nations, reviving that passion for collective defence that alone brings the nation to life in the minds of its citizens. Heinrich von Treitschke, the late-nineteenth-century German nationalist, put it excitedly: ‘One must say in the most decided manner: “War is the only remedy for ailing nations!” The moment the State calls, “Myself and my existence are at stake!” social self-seeking must fall back and every party hate be silent. The individual must forget his own ego and feel himself a member of the whole… In that very point lies the loftiness of war, that the small man disappears entirely before the great thought of the State...’”

Fortunately, while Bismarck was no liberal, he was not a warmonger, defining politics, contrary to Clausewitz, as “the art of the possible”. He did not look for Lebensraum in the East or in the Balkans (they were not worth “the bones of a Pomeranian grenadier”), which meant that he tried hard to avoid conflict with Russia. Nor did he join in the scramble for colonies overseas. Moreover, his nationalism was a provincial, Prussian one rather than a pan-German one. Bismarck renounced the idea of a “greater Germany” that included Austria, which would really have destroyed the balance of power and created the political revolution that Disraeli feared. In any case, not having Austria was no disadvantage in terms of power, because Prussia without Austria was so much more powerful than all the other German princes put together that the new state, in spite of the resentment of its junior members at the preponderance of Prussia, was never in danger of fissiparous disintegration in the way that Austro-Hungary had been and continued to be.

---

As for Austria, she was henceforth bound to depend on her more powerful “sister” if she was to retain her power in the face of Russia, and could be relied on not to enter into alliances with other great powers. With her complex mixture of nationalities, Germanic, Hungarian, Slav and Latin, she was weak; so it was not in Germany’s interests that she should be dissolved into her constituent nationalities, thereby creating conflicts and involving the great powers on different sides of the conflicts. So Bismarck did not encourage Austria’s forays into the Balkans, which might have involved Russia on the side of the Slavs and Germany on the side of Austria - which is precisely what happened in 1914... So while Bismarck was at the helm of the German state, it was not likely that she would engage in rash military enterprises. Nevertheless, he did encourage militarism as a cultural tendency. And as Russia grew stronger, the idea was born in militaristic circles of a quick war against Russia in order to bring her down to size...

These ideas gained currency especially after William II came to the throne in 1888. Bismarck was dismissed, and a treaty with Russia was allowed to lapse. “The monarch,” writes Spellman, was moving Germany “into an aggressive and expansionist posture...”

The Young Turks

At the same time that Russia was organizing a coalition of Balkan states to counter Austrian aggression, important changes were taking place in the other great power in the region – Turkey... Two conflicting legal systems operating in the Ottoman Empire: the Islamic Sharia law combined with the Sultan’s personal decrees, and the liberal system, introduced under pressure from the Western powers, whose main idea was the equality of all citizens, both Muslim and Christian. The liberal legislation, which was incorporated into the Constitution in 1876, was displeasing to Muslims and Christians alike. For, on the one hand, the Muslims felt that they were losing their superiority to the “infidel”. And on the other hand, the Christians were worried about losing some of the exemptions they enjoyed under the old “millet” system. For “in some ways,” as Taner Akçam writes, “Christians were better off than the average Turkish peasant, given their exemption from military service, and often the support of a foreign consulate, which excluded them from Ottoman courts, protected their homes from being searched by the authorities and freed them from Ottoman taxes. ‘The maligned Turkish peasant, at the other end of the social scale, was generally no better off than the ordinary non-Muslim and as much oppressed by maladministration... He was as much in need of reformed government as the Church, but [he] had neither treaty, foreign power, nor patriarch to protect him, and his lot was generally unknown in Europe.’”

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

The Union and Progress movement, otherwise known as the Young Turks, declared: “We can compromise with the Christians only when they accept our position of dominance.” One of their leaders, Namik Kemal, spoke of the Turks as “occupying the pre-eminent position in the Ottoman collective... on account of their great numbers and abilities, excellent and meritorious qualities such as ‘breadth of intelligence’, ‘cool-headedness’, ‘tolerance and repose’”. Another leader, Ali Suavi, declared that “the Turkish race [is] older and superior... on account of its military, civilizing and political roles”. Although this ideology was secular and nationalist, rather than religious, in its motivation, “and the beginning and end of their thoughts were with rescuing the state”, at this stage it did not openly avow its secular nature. Thus in 1904 Yusuf Akçura wrote: “Let’s not err in praying in the name of Turkishness, Ottomanism, or Islam, which our friend has mistakenly taken as distinct from one another.”

Paradoxically, however, the nationalists were strongly influenced by western ideas, such as Social Darwinism and the German concept of the nation as defined essentially by race, blood and culture. Also typically western was their enthusiasm for science – it was Ottoman backwardness in science that explained its weakness in relation to the West, and their characterization of their struggle as one of “freedom” against the oppression of a backward and tyrannical old regime. Thus the aim of Ataturk’s “Motherland and Freedom Society”, which was founded in Syria in 1906 and was later merged into the Committee of Union and Progress, was, as he told his friends, nothing less than to liberate the Homeland from tyranny and enable the Turks to rule themselves: “Today, they wish to separate the Rumelia region in Macedonia from the homeland. Foreigners are now exercising their partial and actual influence and control over parts of the country, The Padishah is one who capable of committing all evils, who thinks of nothing but his pleasures and the sultanate. The people are being crushed under tyranny and oppression. There is death and collapse in a country in which there is no freedom. The reason for all advancement and formation is liberty. Today history is burdening us, her sons, with some major tasks. I have established a society in Syria. We have started the struggle against tyranny and oppression. I came to set up the foundations of this society here as well. It is imperative to work in secrecy and awaken the organization. I expect self-

283 Akçam, op. cit., p. 39.
284 Akçam, op. cit., pp. 44, 41.
sacrifice from all of you. I invite you to the task of rebelling against this damned oppression, tearing down this rotten, worn-out administration, so that the people can rule themselves – in short, to save the motherland.”

“The Young Turks,” writes Dominic Lieven, “were the products of the Western-style schools and colleges created by the Ottoman regime from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. The movement’s core often consisted of army officers but included many civilian professionals as well. They had many similarities with Russian revolutionaries of their time and with later Third World radicalism. Their great enemy was their country’s backwardness, which they blamed on the Ottoman regime and, usually, on religion, which they saw as the main cause of the people’s ignorance, sloth and conservatism. Their own creed was a rather crude belief in science and materialism, combined with a linguistic and ethnic Turkish nationalism based on European models. They were populists but also great Jacobin elitists, convinced that it was the new Westernized elite’s duty to lead the nation to prosperity and power. They were seldom themselves of traditional upper-class origin, and their radicalism owed much to the sense that their own profession merit went unnoticed by a regime whose rulers promoted clients on the basis of personal connection and political loyalty. The initial base of the Young Turk movement was Macedonia, where its rank and file developed a powerful sense of Turkish solidarity and nationalism in response to pressure by Bulgarian nationalist bands on the Muslim population. The development of mass Turkish nationalism in the Anatolian heartland came later: it was partly a product of the Greek invasion of Anatolia in 1920 and partly the creation of the schools and propaganda of Atatürk’s republican regime of the 1920s and 1930s. In this pattern whereby mass nationalism spread from the borderlands to a people’s core territories, the Turkish experience was relatively common. It was in the borderlands that a people often had most cause to meet and clash with foreigners, and it was here too that insecurity and disputes over frontiers had most resonance.

“Once in power, the Young Turks’ official policies and pronouncements were imperial and Ottoman: in other words, they stressed their loyalty to the supranational empire, the Islamic faith and the bonds that united Turks and Arab in common loyalty to dynasty and religion. In their private conversations and plans, however, Turkish nationalism was a more dominant theme. The Young Turks in reality looked down on the Arabs as backward, poor fighters and potential traitors to the empire, quite unlike non-Turkish Balkan Muslims (e.g. Albanians) whom the Turks in general respected and trusted, seeing them as potential members of the Turkish national community.”

---

286 The sultan whom the Young Turks had deposed, Abdulhamid, had had an important advantage in keeping Turk and Arab together in his position as caliph of all Muslims. Moreover, he had sought to bring Arabs into his court and administration. So “when the
“These views were no secret to many Arab leaders and caused great distrust. The Young Turk regime was committed to military power, centralization and efficiency. In pursuit of these goals it sought a near-monopoly of power. Its leaders hoped to extend the centre’s control over the provinces, to increase and equalize military and fiscal burdens, and to spread the Turkish language and a common, basically Turkish, imperial patriotism. Imperial realities quickly persuaded them, however, that some concessions to Arab notables’ determination to control their own provinces were essential; otherwise these notables, especially in Syria, would swing overwhelmingly to the camp of Arab nationalism which in some regions was already beginning to emerge as a threat by 1914.\textsuperscript{287} The result was the granting of considerable autonomy to the Arab provinces in 1913. Whether in reality a peacetime Young Turk regime in Constantinople would have been willing and able to maintain a \textit{modus vivendi} with Arab provincial elites remains uncertain, since the war and the empire’s collapse came before the new policy had time to take effect.”\textsuperscript{288}

On July 23, 1908 the Young Turks imposed a constitution on the empire. In 1909 the Sultan was deposed. And by 1913 the government had come under the complete control of the Committee of Union and Progress. The new government was Masonic. Both its leader, Mehment Talaat Pasha (Grand Master of the Turkish Grand Orient), and its most famous member, Kemal Ataturk (initiated into an Italian lodge in Macedonia), were Freemasons…\textsuperscript{289}

Young Turks subsequently purged these Arab placements in the name of progressive politics and administrative efficiency they contributed greatly to growing distrust of the new regime in the Arab provinces…” (Lieven, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 137-138). (V.M.)

\textsuperscript{287} In fact, already after the establishment of the constitutional government in 1908 a number of sheikhs in Tripoli and Benghazi rebelled. They said that the caliph’s authority had been reduced by the advent of the new government. Atatürk was sent to pacify the sheiks and “re-established the state’s authority only after speaking with them in a convincing manner” (Aksit, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 26).

\textsuperscript{288} Lieven, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 134-135.

\textsuperscript{289} Some words on the origin of Masonry in the Ottoman empire. As the Ottoman empire declined in power, it became more and more cosmopolitan, liberal and ecumenist, at least in the capital; and Freemasonry played no small part in this process. Thus Philip Mansel writes: “From 1884 the \textit{Cercle d’Orient}, one of the main centres of news and gambling in the city, was housed in a magnificent building on the Grande Rue de Fera. It was open to men of every race and religion, and viziers were members \textit{ex officio}. Freemasons had existed in Constantinople since the eighteenth century; the Bektashi order had remarkable, and remarked on, similarities with the Masons, perhaps due to contacts with France through Bonneval Pasha. The masonic message of universal fraternity and abolition of religious and national differences seemed especially appropriate to the Ottoman Empire. The lodge \textit{Le Progrès}, founded in 1868, held meetings in Ottoman and Greek. It was joined by men of different religions… In another lodge called the \textit{Union d’Orient}, in 1866, a French atheist cried, perhaps for the first time in Constantinople: ‘God does not exist! He has never existed.’” (\textit{Constantinople}, London: Penguin, 1995, p. 293)

An important member of \textit{Le Progrès} was the wealthy Greek banker and believer in the Ottoman Empire Cleanti Scalieris (Kleanti Skalyeri in Turkish), who was born into a noble family in Constantinople in 1833. According to Jasper Ridley, he was “initiated in 1863 into a
The Balkan Wars

One result of the Young Turk revolution in 1908 was the stirring of unrest in Albania. Now, as Jason Tomes writes, “it was easy for the rest of the world to overlook the Albanians, given that the Ottoman Empire categorised subjects by religion only. Muslim Albanians were labelled Turks and Orthodox Albanians assumed to be Greeks. At the Congress of Berlin (1878), Bismarck insisted: ‘There is no Albanian nationality.’ Partisans of Serbia and Bulgaria emphasised that Albanians volunteered to fight on the Turkish side in Balkan wars. What sort of oppressed nationality assisted its oppressors?

“Albanians believed themselves to be the aborigines of the Balkans, beside whom all other Europeans were newcomers. Their ancestors do appear to have occupied the same mountain valleys throughout recorded history. They were sometimes identified with the semi-mythical Pelasgians (mentioned by Homer) or the ancient Illyrians. Whatever their origins, Albanians had never paid much heed to those who successively claimed to rule over them: Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Normans, Serbs, Bulgars, Venetians, and then Turks. In places where the state meant nothing, who cared if the state were foreign?”

In fact, the Albanians were in general quite content with Turkish rule, because, being mainly Muslims, they were given leading posts in the Empire, and could lord it over both the Serbs in Kosovo and the Bulgarians in Macedonia.

---

lodge which had been established in Constantinople by the French Grand Orient. He was friendly with Midhat Pasha, a high official in the Sultan’s government who was secretly the leader of the Young Turks. Midhat Pasha had been initiated as a Freemason while he was a student in England. After he returned to Turkey he was appointed Governor of the Danube region, and established a regime in which there was no religious persecution. In 1872 he was for a short time Grand Vizier, the head of the Turkish government.

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

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

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

This, continues Tomes, “helps to explain why Albania was apparently unmove by the tide of Balkan nationalism. The nineteenth century had transformed south-eastern Europe with the creation of Greece, Serbia, Romania and Bulgaria as modern states, but the majority of Albanians seemed as content (or discontent) with Turkish rule in 1900 as they had been a hundred years earlier. The handful of brave intellectuals who wanted to teach in the Albanian language were clearly cultural nationalists, yet even they eschewed early independence, knowing that the fall of the Ottoman Empire would probably entail their ‘liberation’ by the Slavs.”

But the winds of nationalism began to blow even among the Albanians. “In 1910,” writes Mark Mazower, “an uprising in northern Albania was only defeated with the aid of 20,000 Ottoman troops. And the next year – as Italy went to war with the Ottoman Empire in Libya and contemplated an invasion of Albania – an even larger revolt saw the rebels call for the first time for the recognition of Albania as a separate nation and for virtual self-government. ‘The formation of a commission at Dibra to consider a demand for the recognition of Albanians in official registers as “Albanians” and not as “Moslems” or “non-Moslems” is especially significant, noted the British Ambassador in Constantinople. ‘The notables forming the commission are apparently themselves Moslems and that they should even consider a proposal to demand a national instead of a religious status is an entirely new and very remarkable development...’”

One of the leading nationalists was the future King Zog - Ahmed Bey Zogolli, a clan leader from the Mati region of central Albania. Sent by his mother to Istanbul, he became an admirer of Napoleon Bonaparte and involved in student politics at about the time of the Young Turk revolution in July, 1908. This “galvanized those with any interest in politics, as prisons were thrown open, women tore off their veils, and banners extolled ‘Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, Justice’. A new parliament was elected (including Albanian deputies) with the aim of radical reform. When the Sultan obstructed it, he was swept aside. Zogolli, with his head full of Napoleonic France, shared in the euphoria. Everything that he had learnt convinced him of the merits of modernisation, and even his countrymen back home assumed that change could only be for the better. Like them, he did not appreciate that the Young Turk ‘Union and Progress’ movement would be far from congenial to Albanians.

“The new regime set out to revive the Ottoman Empire by imposing uniformity. Turkish law, regular taxation, military service, and the Arabic alphabet would be enforced from Baghdad to Shkodra. Faced with the threat of effective Ottoman rule, the Albanians predictably revolted, demanding the right to remain a law unto themselves. Every spring, our years running, a

291 Tomes, op. cit., p. 13.
major clan or region rebelled and suffered violent reprisals (including Mati in 1909). It was not until 1911, however, that the Albanians scented success, as the Italo-Turkish War weakened their opponents.

“Despite his sympathy for some Young Turk ideas, Ahmed never doubted where his loyalties lay. He had kept himself informed of events, not from the newspapers (which were censored), but from speaking to Albanians newly arrived in the city. In late 1911 or 1912, he abandoned his studies, slipped away to Salonika, and met up with a cousin at school there. Together they made for Mati to play their part in the imminent historic developments. Recalling this reunion with his mother over twenty years later, King Zog came close to tears. In a few days, he ceased to be a schoolboy and became a chieftain. Ahmed Bey Zogolli, in his native valley, passed for a man of the world at sixteen. Battle-scarred warriors bowed before him and elders deferred to his learning. But there was only one place where he could really prove his worth: on the field of battle. When the northern clans launched a fresh revolt in April 1912, it swept the land as never before and Mati joined in the conflict. This time the Albanians were victorious. The Turks, tired of conflict, conceded autonomy. Ahmed had fought in no more than a skirmish, but, if he wanted to see serious action, he had not long to wait. The First Balkan War broke out on 8 October, 1912, his seventeenth birthday. The Balkan League of Montenegro, Serbia, Greece and Bulgaria turned on the Ottoman Empire with the goal of driving the Turks from Europe once and for all.

“Most Albanians reacted to this with a dramatic turn about face. They had just been fighting the Turks themselves to block unwelcome reforms. Now they had to fight ‘liberation’ by Greeks and Slavs. Serbia was demanding access to the sea, which could only mean part of Albania. Greece said that the south was ‘Northern Epirus’ and claimed all its Christians as Greeks.293 King Nicholas of Montenegro swore that Shkodra was the sacred burial place of his forefathers. Under simultaneous attack from north, south and east, Albanians could scarcely stay neutral. Zogolli sent a request to the Prefect of Dibra for arms and ammunition. In return, he rallied Mati in defence of the Ottoman Empire...”294

Paradoxically, the union of the Balkan Orthodox against the Ottomans and Albania was opposed by Orthodox Russia. Edvard Radzinsky writes: “The tsar understood how that impudent disruption of the status quo in the Balkans would ignite an explosion of indignation among the great powers. The minister of foreign affairs was instructed to persuade Montenegro to end

293 The Greeks claimed southern Albania, or northern Epirus, as they called it, for themselves, on the basis that it had been within the ancient Greek and Byzantine cultural sphere, and bishops from Epirus (northern and southern) had taken part in the First and Fourth Ecumenical Councils. (V.M.)
its occupation of the fortress [of Shkodra or Scutari]. But [King Nikolai] knew of the bellicose mood in Petersburg and of the support of Grand Duke Nikolai, the ‘dread uncle’, and he callously continued the siege of Scutari.

“And then more threatening news came from the dangerous Balkans. On 5 (18 NS) October Serbia and Bulgaria entered the war against Turkey, followed by Greece the day after. And the Turkish army sustained defeat after defeat. News of the successes of the Balkan alliance – of their brothers in the faith – against the Turkish Moslems gave rise to an outpouring of joyous nationalism in Russia. There were continual demonstrations in Petersburg bearing the slogan, ‘A Cross of Holy Sophia’... Everyone was again caught up in the old dream of the Russian tsars: of taking Constantinople back by force from Turkey – Constantinople, the ancient capital of Byzantium, from which Rus’ had adopted its Christian faith.

“The response was immediate. The Austrians and Germans threatened war.

“And again the Balkan boiler was about to blow up the whole world.

“And then the tsar suddenly demonstrated character: he resolutely moved against public opinion. He demanded that the minister of foreign affairs put pressure on Montenegro. And on 21 April 1913 the Montenegrin king, after many hours of persuasion, consented to withdraw from Scutari in return for monetary indemnification. And the Russian foreign minister, Sergei Sazonov, announced with relief, ‘King Nikola was going to set the world on fire to cook his own little omelette.’ This was in reply to the constant reproaches that Russia had once again betrayed its Balkan brothers.”

Radzinsky attributes the tsar’s sudden firmness (which was not, as he implies, out of character) to the fact that Rasputin and the Empress were against the war. “And the tsar was forced to submit...”

295 Radzinsky, op. cit., pp. 188-189.
But this is to ignore the fact that the tsar had already shown similar firmness during the Bosnian annexation crisis of 1909, and that his behaviour was perfectly consistent with his beliefs – that it was not in Russia’s interests to go to war to defend the territorial ambitions of the Balkan Slavs. Only in 1914 would he be forced to submit to the call for war. But the situation then, as we shall see, was different: Russia was not called to help the Serbs in some madcap aggression, but to defend them from annihilation in a just war...

The First Balkan War ended in victory and substantial territorial gains for the Balkan Orthodox. But Bulgaria was unhappy with the distribution of the spoils of victory, especially in Macedonia, and attacked Greece and Serbia. This led to the outbreak of the Second Balkan War in 1913, which ended with the victory of Greece, Serbia, Romania and Turkey against Bulgaria.

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

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

\[\text{The sea of fire which boils in my breast}
\text{And calls for vengeance with the savage waves of my soul,}
\text{Will be quenched when the monster of Sofia is still,}
\text{And thy life blood extinguishes my hate.}\]

When Christians hate each other so much, it is hardly to be expected that non-Christians will be treated any better. Thus, “ethnic cleansing”, which had been very common before the Balkan Wars, revived during them. As Tim Judah writes, “The Carnegie Endowment’s account of the crushing of the Albanian revolt in Kosovo is also important because in 1913 as in 1941 or the 1990s it was quite clear to all involved what the purpose of ethnic cleansing was:

“‘Houses and whole villages are reduced to ashes, unarmed and innocent populations massacred en masse, incredible acts of violence, pillage and brutality of every kind – such were the means which were employed by the Serbo-Montenegrin soldiery, with a view to the entire transformation of the ethnic character of regions inhabited exclusively by Albanians.

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

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

297 Judah, op. cit., pp. 85-86.
It is sometimes asserted that the Christian commandment to love our enemies cannot be applied in a war situation. Certainly, it is necessary to obey lawful authorities and fight the enemies of the State. At the same time, personal hatred and unnecessary cruelty are forbidden both in war and peace. Even in the Old Testament, and even in relation to non-Jews, cruelty was forbidden: “You shall not wrong a stranger or oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. You shall not afflict any widow or orphan. If you do afflict them, and they cry out to Me, I will surely hear their cry, and My wrath will burn, and I will kill you with the sword, and your wives shall become widows, and your children fatherless” (Exodus 22.21-24). Unfortunately, the Orthodox peoples were to learn the truth of these words very soon. Thus the Balkan Wars of 1912-13 constituted a political and military victory for the Balkan Orthodox (except Bulgaria), but a spiritual defeat for Orthodoxy - and therefore a significant factor hastening the catastrophe of World War One and the Russian revolution.

The plight of Bulgaria was particularly tragic. Spurred on by their Austrian King Ferdinand, the Bulgars went to war against their Orthodox brothers in both 1913 and 1915. The words of Tsar Nicholas on the betrayal of the Bulgars, whom the Russians had liberated in 1877-78, were deeply felt.298

Although possibly biased by the sufferings of the Serbs at the hands of the Bulgars, the Serbian Bishop Nikolai Velimirovich’s explanation of the Bulgarian defection is insightful: “The Bulgarians... did not acquire freedom through their own efforts, and did not have kings coming from their own people. They were spoiled, instructed and nursed by Russia. And like every spoiled child, they are indiscreet. Having Austrians on their throne for the last thirty-seven years, the Bulgars have completely adapted to the Austrian way of thinking both in politics and in deeds. Russia gave the Bulgarians only a body, while their spirit was breathed into them by Austria.

“The kings always played an important part in political intrigues. Imperialist Germany understood this better than the democratic countries of France and England. Germany was convinced that it was better to have one

298 Tsar Nicholas wrote on October 6, 1915: “Impossible as it has seemed, but treacherously preparing from the very beginning of the war, Bulgaria has betrayed the Slav cause. The Bulgarian army has attacked Our faithful ally Serbia, [which is already] bleeding profusely in a struggle with a strong enemy. Russia and Our allied Great Powers tried to warn Ferdinand of Coburg against this fatal step. The fulfilment of an age-old aspiration of the Bulgar people – union with Macedonia – has [already] been guaranteed to Bulgaria by a means more in accord with the interests of the Slav world. But appeals by the Germans to secret ambitions and fratricidal enmity against the Serbs prevailed. Bulgaria, whose [Orthodox] faith is the same as Ours, who so recently has been liberated from Turkish slavery by the brotherly love and the blood of the Russian people, openly took the side of the enemies of the Christian faith, the Slav world and of Russia. The Russian people react with bitterness to the treachery of a Bulgaria which was so close to them until recently, and draw their swords against her with heavy hearts, leaving the fate of these traitors to the Slav world to God’s just retribution” (http://www.lib.byu.edu/~rdh/wwi/1915/nickbulg.html).
king who was a German than one dreadnought in the Middle East. It seems to me that today [during the First World War] both England and France have become convinced that one king who is a German in the Balkans (it is not important whether he is called Ferdinand or something else) is a more destructive power than batteries of howitzers.”  

The Balkan Wars had another unfortunate consequence for the Orthodox: the creation of an independent Albanian state on December 20, 1912. The Russians agreed to this only reluctantly, and secured most of Kosovo with its mixed Serb and Albanian population for Serbia.

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

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

Sarajevo, 1914

“In the period 1911-14,” writes Dominic Lieven, “the Ottoman empire appeared to be on the verge of disintegration. Defeat by the Italians in 1911-12...”

299 Velimirovich, Dusha Serbii (The Soul of Serbia), Moscow, 2007, p. 528 (in Russian).
and then by the Balkan League in 1912-13 was accompanied by political turmoil in Constantinople. The fate of the Ottoman lands and of the Balkans affected the interests of all the major European powers and had major implications for the European balance of power. As regards the Balkans, the powers most involved were Austria and Russia. Both general staffs attached great importance to the support of the Balkan states’ armies in the event of a European war. The likelier the latter became, the more this priority obsessed Petersburg and Vienna. For the Russians, Constantinople and the Straits possessed huge strategic and economic importance. In the event of a great power rival controlling the Straits, Russia’s Black Sea trade and ports would be at the latter’s mercy, as would the grain exports on which the empire’s commerce and finances rested. Constantinople was also important to Austria, but still more so was the threat of Balkan nationalism to domestic stability within the multi-ethnic Habsburg Empire. The Balkan wars of 1912-13 had greatly enlarged Serbian and Rumanian territory, together with the ambitions and self-confidence of Serbian and Rumanian nationalists. The Habsburg Monarchy contained large and discontented Serbian and Rumanian minorities. In 1914 Vienna feared that it would soon lose all its influence over the independent Balkan states, which in turn would contribute to its inability to control the Slav and Rumanian populations of the Monarchy. In more general terms, the rulers of the Habsburg state believed that a reassertion of the empire’s power and vitality was essential in order to overawe its potential foreign and domestic enemies, and to contradict the widely prevalent assumption that the Monarchy was moribund and doomed to disappear in the era of nationalism and democracy. The Austrian ultimatum to Serbia of July 1914 was, of course, also designed to punish Belgrade for the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand: more basically, however, it aimed to turn Serbia into an Austrian protectorate and to reassert the Habsburg regime’s power and prestige both in the Balkans and at home.  

“The Balkan Wars,” writes Niall Ferguson, “had revealed both the strengths and the limits of Balkan nationalism. Its strength lay in its ferocity. Its weakness was its disunity. The violence of the fighting much impressed the young Trotsky, who witnessed it as a correspondent for the newspaper Kievskaia mysl. Even the peace that followed the Balkan Wars was cruel, in a novel manner that would become a recurrent feature of the twentieth century. It no longer sufficed, in the eyes of nationalists, to acquire foreign territory. Now it was peoples as well as borders that had to move. Sometimes these movements were spontaneous. Muslims fled in the direction of Salonika as the Greeks, Serbs and Bulgarians advanced in 1912; Bulgarians fled Macedonia to escape from invading Greek troops in 1913; Greeks chose to leave the Macedonian districts ceded to Bulgaria and Serbia by the Treaty of Bucharest. Sometimes populations were deliberately expelled, as the Greeks were from Western Thrace in 1913 and from parts of Eastern Thrace and Anatolia in 1914. In the wake of the Turkish defeat, there was an agreed

301 Lieven, “Russia, Europe and World War I, op. cit., p. 42.
population exchange: 48,570 Turks moved one way and 46,764 Bulgarians the other across the new Turkish-Bulgarian border. Such exchanges were designed to transform regions of ethnically mixed settlement into the homogeneous societies that so appealed to the nationalist imagination. The effects on some regions were dramatic. Between 1912 and 1915, the Greek population of (Greek) Macedonia increased by around a third; the Muslim and Bulgarian population declined by 26 and 13 per cent respectively. The Greek population of Western Thrace fell by 80 per cent; the Muslim population of Eastern Thrace rose by a third. The implications were distinctly ominous for the many multi-ethnic communities elsewhere in Europe…

“The alternative to outright war was to create a new South Slav state through terrorism. In the wake of the annexation of Bosnia, a rash of new organizations sprang up, pledged to resisting Austrian imperialism in the Balkans and to liberate Bosnia by fair means or foul…”

David Stevenson writes: “On 28 June 1914 in Sarajevo, the capital of the Austro-Hungarian province of Bosnia, a nineteen-year-old Bosnian Serb, Gavrilo Princip, shot and killed the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the heir to the Austrian throne, and the Archduke’s wife, the Duchess of Hohenberg. Franz Ferdinand was an unattractive man, authoritarian, choleric, and xenophobic, but he was devoted to the Duchess, whom he had married against the wishes of the Emperor Franz Joseph, her aristocratic pedigree falling short of Habsburg requirements. Visiting Sarajevo, and the army’s annual manoeuvres, would be a rare occasion when she could ride in public with him. Yet this act of kindness courted disaster. A date heavy with symbolism, 28 June was the anniversary of the Battle of Kosovo in 1389, a catastrophe for the medieval kingdom of Serbia in whose aftermath a Serb had assassinated the Turkish sultan. Despite the emergence of a terrorist movement that targeted Habsburg officials, security arrangements for the state visit were extraordinarily lax. On the fateful day, despite a bomb attempt against the motor-car procession by another member of Princip’s group, the Archduke continued his tour, making an unscheduled change of itinerary to console an injured victim. It brought his vehicle right by Princip, who did not miss his chance.

“These details matter because although in summer 1914 international tension was acute, a general war was not inevitable and if one had not broken out then it might not have done so at all. It was the Habsburg monarchy’s response to Sarajevo that caused a crisis. Initially all it seemed to do was order an investigation. But secretly the Austrians obtained a German promise of support for drastic retaliation. On 23 July they presented an ultimatum to their neighbour, Serbia. Princip and his companions were Bosnians (and therefore Habsburg subjects), but the ultimatum alleged they had conceived their plot in Belgrade, that Serbian officers and officials had supplied them

---

with their weapons, and that Serbian frontier authorities had helped them across the border. It called on Serbia to denounce all separatist activities, ban publications and organizations hostile to Austria-Hungary, and co-operate with Habsburg officials in suppressing subversion and conducting a judicial inquiry. The Belgrade government’s reply, delivered just within the forty-eight hours deadline, accepted nearly every demand but consented to Austrian involvement in a judicial inquiry only if that inquiry was subject to Serbia’s constitution and to international law. The Austrian leaders in Vienna seized on this pretext to break off relations immediately, and on 28 July declared war. The ultimatum impressed most European governments by its draconian demands, although if Serbian complicity was indeed as alleged the substance of the document was arguably moderate…”

This last remark is false: the Austrian document was immoderate in the extreme and demanded an interference in the affairs of a sovereign state that was unjustified even if the Austrian charge – that Belgrade had supported the terrorists – had been true. But it was not. As Rebecca West writes: “It is clear, and nothing could be clearer, that certain Serbian individuals supplied the [Bosnian] conspirators with encouragement and arms. But this does not mean that the Serbian Government was responsible…

“There were overwhelming reasons why the Serbian Government should not have supported this or any other conspiracy. It cannot have wanted war at that particular moment. The Karageorges must have been especially anxious to avoid it. King Peter had just been obliged by chronic ill-health to appoint his son Alexander as regent and it had not escaped the attention of the Republican Party that the King had had to pass over his eldest son, George, because he was hopelessly insane. Mr. Pashitch and his Government can hardly have been more anxious for a war, as their machine was temporarily disorganized by preparations for a general election. Both alike, the royal family and the Ministers, held disquieting knowledge about the Serbian military situation. Their country had emerged from the two Balkan wars victorious but exhausted, without money, transport, or munitions, and with a peasant army that was thoroughly sick of fighting. They can have known no facts to offset these, for none existed. Theoretically, they could only rely on the support of France and Russia, and possibly Great Britain, but obviously geography would forbid any of these powers giving her practical aid in the case of an Austrian invasion.

“In fact, the Karageorges and the Government knew perfectly well that, if there should be war, they must look forward to an immediate defeat of the most painful sort, for which they could receive compensation only should their allies, whoever they might be, at some uncertain time win a definite victory. But if there should be peace, then the Karageorges and the Government could consolidate the victories they had won in the Balkan

---

wars,... develop their conquered territory [the Serbs had doubled their territory and increased their population from 2.9 to 4.4 million], and organize their neglected resources. Admittedly Serbia aimed at the ultimate absorption of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and the South Slav provinces of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. But this was not the suitable moment. If she attained her aims by this method she would have to pay too heavy a price, as, in fact, she did. No country would choose to realize any ideal at the cost of the destruction of one-third of her population. That she did not so choose is shown by much negative evidence. At the time the murder was committed she had just let her reservists return home after their annual training, her Commander-in-chief was taking a cure at an Austrian spa, and none of the Austrian Slavs who had fought in the Balkan War and returned home were warned to come across the frontier. But the positive evidence is even stronger. When Austria sent her ultimatum to Serbia, which curtly demanded not only the punishment of the Serbians who were connected with the Sarajevo attentat, but the installation of Austrian and Hungarian officers in Serbia for the purpose of suppressing Pan-Slavism, Mr. Pashitch bowed to all the demands save for a few gross details, and begged that the exceptions he had made should not be treated as refusals but should be referred for arbitration to The Hague Tribunal. There was not one trace of bellicosity in the attitude of Serbia at this point. If she had promoted the Sarajevo attentat in order to make war possible, she was very near to throwing her advantage away.\textsuperscript{304}

Moreover, the Serbs had warned the Austrian minister in charge of the Sarajevo visit that a plot was afoot. And, as Stevenson admits, “the summary time limit gave the game away, as did the peremptory rejection of Belgrade’s answer. The ultimatum had been intended to start a showdown...”\textsuperscript{305} In any case, justice required that the trial of the assassins should take place before it could be concluded that the Serbian Government was guilty. But in fact the trial began a full ten weeks after Austria declared war on Serbia. And then nothing implicating the Serbian government was discovered. As Princip said: “Anyone who says that the inspiration for this attentat came from outside our group is playing with the truth. We originated the idea, and we carried it out. We loved the people. I have nothing to say in my defence.”\textsuperscript{306}

In a deeper sense, however, the Serbian nation was guilty of having encouraged, over a period of generations, that nationalist-revolutionary mentality which, among other factors, brought down the civilized world. Thus it is fact denied by nobody that Princip and his fellow conspirators were helped by the secret nationalist society known as the “Black Hand”. “This society,” writes West, “had already played a sinister part in the history of Serbia. It was the lineal descendant of the group of officers who had killed King Alexander and Queen Draga and thus exchanged the Obernovitch

\textsuperscript{305} Stevenson, \textit{op. cit.}
\textsuperscript{306} West, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 376.
dynasty for the Karageorgevitch. The Karageorges, who had played no part in this conspiracy, and had had to accept its results passively, have never resigned themselves the existence of the group, and were continually at odds with them. The ‘Black Hand’ was therefore definitely anti-Karageorgevitch and aimed at war with Austria and the establishment of a federated republic of Balkan Slavs. Their leader was a man of undoubted talent but far too picturesque character called Dragutin Dmitriyevitch, known as ‘Apis’, who had been for some time the head of the Intelligence Bureau of the Serbian General Staff.”

‘Apis’, besides taking part in the regicide of 1903, confessed to participation in plots to murder King Nicholas of Montenegro, King Constantine of Greece, Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany and King Ferdinand of Bulgaria! That such a murderous fanatic should be in charge of Serbia’s military intelligence tells us much about the influence within Serbia of the nationalist-revolutionary heresy. “In fact,” as Stevenson writes, “Serbia’s army and intelligence service were out of control.” They were brought back under control only three years later, after the nation had gone through fire and water. In 1917 ‘Apis’ was tried and executed...

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

307 West, op. cit., p. 358.
308 West, op. cit., p. 369.
309 Stevenson, op. cit., Oleg Platonov claims that “in the course of the investigation into the case of the murder of the Archduke Ferdinand it emerged that the assassins Princip and Gabrilovich were Masons. The plan of the assassination was worked out by the political organization, ‘The People’s Defence’. Later, already in 1926, a representative of the Masonic circles of Serbia, Lazarevich, at a masonic banquet in the House of the Serbian Guard in Belgrade, officially recognized that ‘Masonry and “The People’s Defence” are one and the same’” (Ternovij Venets Rossii (Russia’s Crown of Thorns), Moscow, 1998, p. 344 (in Russian)).
310 Stevenson, op. cit.
This “intolerable problem” was the South Slav problem, which the Austro-Hungarian state, being composed of a patchwork of small peoples, all striving for advantages against each other, found “peculiarly intractable”, and which it feared “might set a precedent for the other subject peoples. The Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes were beginning to co-operate as the Yugoslav enthusiasts intended. By 1914 a terrorist campaign had started in Croatia as well as Bosnia. But the most exasperating characteristic of the agitation was Serbia’s support for it, at any rate after the 1903 coup that installed King Peter in Belgrade. Previously a secret treaty had given Austria-Hungary a veto over Serbian foreign policy. Now Serbia became more independent and its stance more nationalist. In the ‘pig war’ of 1906-11 Austria-Hungary retaliated by boycotting Serbia’s exports of livestock, but the Serbs found alternative markets and turned from Vienna to Paris as their main artillery supplier. Similarly, despite Austrian hopes in 1908 that annexing Bosnia-Herzegovina would dispel South Slav dreams of unification, covert Serb support for Bosnian separatism persisted. The next upheaval came in 1912-13, when Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece, and Montenegro defeated Turkey in the First Balkan War before Bulgaria attacked its former allies and was defeated in its turn in the Second. Austrian pressure limited the Serbs’ success by forcing them to evacuate the Adriatic coast (where they had hoped to win sea access) and by sponsoring the creation of Albania as a new state to counterbalance them. None the less, the wars heightened the threat on Austria-Hungary’s south-eastern borders. Turkey and Bulgaria were weakened as potential Austrian allies, and in the second war Romania fought alongside Serbia. From being Austria-Hungary’s secret partner, Bucharest became another enemy, eyeing the Romanian speakers in Transylvania. Finally, Franz Joseph’s new foreign minister, Leopold Berchtold, concluded from the Balkan Wars that working with the other powers through the Concert of Europe achieved little. He got results when in spring 1913 he threatened to use force unless Serbia’s ally, Montenegro, transferred the town of Scutari to Albania, and again in October when he demanded that Serbia itself should evacuate Albanian territory. By this stage many Austro-Hungarian leaders agreed with Conrad that only violence could solve the Serbian problem. The main exception were [the Hungarian leader Stephen] Tisza and Franz Ferdinand – and after the Sarajevo assassinations, Tisza alone.

“This context helps to explain why the Austrians used the assassinations to force a war they already considered unavoidable. The outrage confirmed Berchtold and Franz Joseph in support of Conrad’s views. Tisza was won over by an agreement that Austria-Hungary would not annex more South Slavs, by evidence that Romania would stay neutral, and - above all – by new that Germany encouraged military action. Given Russia’s position, this latter was indispensable. Austria-Hungary had long competed with the Russians in south-eastern Europe, but in 1897 the two powers reached an understanding to keep the Balkans ‘on ice’, and for a decade, while the Russians focussed their attention on Asia, they kept to it. Here again, however, the Bosnian
annexation crisis, if a short-term triumph, exacerbated Austria-Hungary’s plight in the longer term. In 1908 the Russians, still reeling from their defeat by Japan, could do nothing to support their fellow Slavs in Serbia, but they did not forget their humiliation. In 1912, by contrast, they helped to create the Serb-Bulgarian ‘Balkan League’ that attacked Turkey in the First Balkan War, and they mobilized thousands of troops in order to deter Austria-Hungary from intervening. Although the Russians urged Serbia to compromise in the Scutari and Albanian crises of 1913, they were clearly becoming more assertive. By 1914 almost all the Austro-Hungarian leaders expected war against Serbia to mean a war against Russia as well, and without German encouragement they would not have risked one. And whereas the Austrians were so focused on their Balkan dilemmas that they accepted a general European war without even seriously discussing it, the Germans were much more conscious of what they were doing. It is ultimately in Berlin that we must seek the keys to the destruction of peace…

“Before dispatching their ultimatum to Belgrade the Austrians sent the head of Berchtold’s private office, Count Hoyos, to Germany. Hoyos convened a memorandum from Berchtold and a letter from Franz Joseph, both of which strongly hinted at war with Serbia without being explicit. But when the German Emperor Wilhelm II met Hoyos on 5 July, he responded that Austria-Hungary must ‘march into Serbia’, with Germany’s backing even if war with Russia resulted. The next day the German chancellor (head of government), Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg, reaffirmed the message. Following this secret assurance – usually referred to as the ‘blank cheque’ – Wilhelm went cruising in the Baltic, while Bethmann and his foreign minister Gottliev von Jagow urged the Austrians first to send the ultimatum and then to declare war without delay, while advising them to disregard British proposals to refer the crisis to a conference. Only on 28-29 July, after Austria-Hungary had declared war on Serbia, did the Germans urge Vienna to compromise. But once it became clear that Russia was supporting Serbia and had started military preparations the Germans plunged ahead, issuing ultimatums to Russia and its ally, France, on 31 July and declaring war on them on 1 and 3 August respectively. By simultaneously demanding that Belgium should allow free passage for German troops they also brought in Britain, which declared war on Germany on 4 August. Germany willed a local war between Austria-Hungary and Serbia, deliberately raised a continental war against France and Russia, and finally actually started one…”

This important conclusion is confirmed by other historians. Thus Fritz Fischer writes: “The official documents afford ample proof that during the July crisis the emperor, the German military leaders and the foreign ministry were pressing Austria-Hungary to strike against Serbia without delay, or alternatively agree to the despatch of an ultimatum to Serbia couched in such sharp terms as to make war between the two countries more than probable,

311 Stevenson, op cit., pp. 14-16.
and that is doing so they deliberately took the risk of a continental war against Russia and France.”

Further proof of the guilt of the German-speaking powers, and of the sincere desire of the Orthodox powers to avert war by all honourable means, is contained in the telegrams exchanged between Tsar Nicholas and the Serbian regent, Prince Alexander in the last hours before the catastrophe. Prince Alexander, who had commanded the First Serbian Army in the Balkan wars and later became king, wrote to Tsar Nicholas: “The demands of the Austro-Hungarian note unnecessarily represent a humiliation for Serbia and are not in accord with the dignity of an independent state. In a commanding tone it demands that we officially declare in Serbian News, and also issue a royal command to the army, that we ourselves cut off military offensives against Austria and recognize the accusation that we have been engaging in treacherous intrigues as just. They demand that we admit Austrian officials into Serbia, so that together with ours they may conduct the investigation and control the execution of the other demands of the note. We have been given a period of 48 hours to accept everything, otherwise the Austro-Hungarian embassy will leave Belgrade. We are ready to accept the Austro-Hungarian demands that are in accord with the position of an independent state, and also those which would be suggested by Your Majesty; everyone whose participation in the murder is proven will be strictly punished by us. Certain demands cannot be carried out without changing the laws, and for that time is required. We have been given too short a period... They can attack us after the expiry of the period, since Austro-Hungarian armies have assembled on our frontier. It is impossible for us to defend ourselves, and for that reason we beseech Your Majesty to come as soon as possible to our aid…”

To this the Tsar replied on July 14/27: “In addressing me at such a serious moment, Your Royal Highness has not been mistaken with regard to the feelings which I nourish towards him and to my heart-felt disposition towards the Serbian people. I am studying the present situation with the most serious attention and My government is striving with all its might to overcome the present difficulties. I do not doubt that Your Highness and the royal government will make this task easier by not despising anything that could lead to a decision that would avert the horrors of a new war, while at the same time preserving the dignity of Serbia. All My efforts, as long as there is the slightest hope of averting bloodshed, will be directed to this aim. If, in

---

312 Fischer, *Germany’s Aims in the First World War*, 1961, chapter 2. Again, as J.M. Roberts points out, it was Germany that first declared war on France and Russia when neither country threatened her; and by August 4 Germany had “acquired a third great power [Britain] as an antagonist, while Austria still had none… In the last analysis, the Great War was made in Berlin…” (*The Penguin History of Europe*, London: Penguin, 1997, pp. 510-511). And David Fromkin writes: “The generals in Berlin in the last week of July were agitating for war – not Austria’s war, one aimed at Serbia, but Germany’s war, aimed at Russia… Germany deliberately started a European war to keep from being overtaken by Russia…” (*Europe’s Last Summer*, London: Vintage, 2005, pp. 272, 273).
spite of our most sincere desire, success is not attained, Your Highness can be assured that in no case will Russia remain indifferent to the fate of Serbia.”

“The Austrian ultimatum to Serbia faced the Russian government with a terrible dilemma. In 1914 Russia’s rulers did not want war. Whatever hankering Nicholas II may ever have had for military glory had been wholly dissipated by the Japanese war. That conflict had taught the whole ruling elite that war and revolution were closely linked. Though war with Germany would be more popular than conflict with Japan had been, its burdens and dangers would also be infinitely greater. Russian generals usually had a deep respect for the German army, to which on the whole they felt their own army to be inferior. Above all, Russian leaders had every reason to feel that time was on their side. In strictly military terms, there was good reason to postpone conflict until the so-called ‘Great Programme’ of armaments was completed in 1917-18. In more general terms, Russia already controlled almost one-sixth of the world’s land surface, whose hitherto largely untapped potential was now beginning to be developed at great speed. It was by no means only Petr Stolypin who believed that, given 20 years of peace, Russia would be transformed as regards its wealth, stability and power. Unfortunately for Russia, both the Germans and the Austrians were well aware of all the above facts. Both in Berlin and Vienna it was widely believed that fear of revolution would stop Russia from responding decisively to the Austro-German challenge: but it was also felt that war now was much preferable to a conflict a decade hence.

“In fact, for the Russian government it was very difficult not to stand up to the Central Powers in July 1914. The regime’s legitimacy was at stake, as were the patriotism, pride and self-esteem of the key decision-makers. Still more to the point was the conviction that weakness would fatally damage Russia’s international position and her security. If Serbia became an Austrian protectorate, that would allow a very significant diversion of Habsburg troops from the southern to the Russian front in the event of a future war. If Russia tamely allowed its Serbian client to be gobbled up by Austria, no other Balkan state would trust its protection against the Central Powers. All would move into the latter’s camp, as probably would the Ottoman Empire. Even France would have doubts about the usefulness of an ally so humiliatingly unable to stand up for its prestige and its vital interests. Above all, international relations in the pre-1914 era were seen to revolve around the willingness and ability of great powers to defend their interests. In the age of imperialism, empires that failed to do this were perceived as moribund and ripe for dismemberment. In the judgement of Russian statesmen, if the Central Powers got away with the abject humiliation of Russia in 1914 their appetites would be whetted rather than assuaged. At some point in the near future vital interest would be threatened for which Russia would have to fight, in which case it made sense to risk fighting now, in the hope that this would deter Berlin and Vienna, but in the certainty that if war ensued Serbia
and France would fight beside Russia, and possibly Britain and certain other states as well.”\textsuperscript{313}

Austria invaded Serbia the next day, which was followed by Russia’s partial mobilization. However, the Tsar made one last appeal to the Kaiser: “I foresee that very soon I shall be overwhelmed by the pressure brought upon me and forced to take extreme measures which will lead to war.” On July 30 the Kaiser replied that he was neutral in the Serbian question (which he was not). Sazonov then advised the Tsar to undertake a full mobilization because “unless he yielded to the popular demand for war and unsheathed the sword in Serbia’s behalf, he would run the risk of a revolution and perhaps the loss of his throne”. With great reluctance, the Tsar gave the order on July 31. Although he knew that resisting popular national feeling could lead to revolution, he also knew an unsuccessful war would lead to it still more surely. So the decisive factor in his decision was not popular opinion, but Russia’s ties of faith with Serbia. And if one good thing came out of the First World War it was the strengthening of that bond both during and after it. For as Prince Alexander replied to the Tsar: “Difficult times cannot fail to strengthen the bonds of deep attachment that link Serbia with Holy Slavic Rus’, and the feeling of eternal gratitude for the help and defence of Your Majesty will be reverently preserved in the hearts of all Serbs.”

Nor did the Tsar’s support for Serbia fail during the war. In 1915, tens of thousands of Serbs began to die after their forced march to the Albanian coast. Their allies looked upon them with indifference from their ships. The Tsar informed his allies by telegram that they must immediately evacuate the Serbs, otherwise he would consider the fall of the Serbs as an act of the greatest immorality and he would withdraw from the Alliance. This telegram brought prompt action, and dozens of Italian, French and English ships set about evacuating the dying army to Corfu. But western propagandists could not forgive the Tsar for his intercession and rumours that he wanted a separate peace began to seep out.

As the Serbian Bishop Nicholas (Velimirovich) of Zhicha, wrote: “Great is our debt to Russia. The debt of Serbia to Russia, for help to the Serbs in the war of 1914, is huge – many centuries will not be able to contain it for all following generations. This is the debt of love, which without thinking goes to its death, saving its neighbour. ‘There is no greater love than this, that a man should lay down his life for his neighbour.’ These are the words of Christ. The Russian Tsar and the Russian people, having taken the decision to enter the war for the sake of the defence of Serbia, while being unprepared for it, knew that they were going to certain destruction. The love of the Russians for their Serbian brothers did not fear death, and did not retreat before it. Can we ever forget that the Russian Tsar, in subjecting to danger both his children and millions of his brothers, went to his death for the sake of the Serbian people,

\textsuperscript{313} Lieven, “Russia, Europe and World War I”, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 42-43.
for the sake of its salvation? Can we be silent before Heaven and earth about the fact that our freedom and statehood were worth more to Russia than to us ourselves? The Russians in our days repeated the Kosovo tragedy. If the Russian Tsar Nicholas II had been striving for an earthly kingdom, a kingdom of petty personal calculations and egoism, he would be sitting to this day on his throne in Petrograd. But he chose the Heavenly Kingdom, the kingdom of sacrifice in the name of the Lord, the kingdom of Gospel spirituality, for which he laid down his own head, for which his children and millions of his subjects laid down their heads…”314

According to the witness of Grand Duchess Elizabeth Fyodorovna, herself a German by birth, the Tsar had not wanted war. She blamed her cousin, Kaiser Wilhelm, “who disobeyed the bidding of Frederick the Great and Bismarck to live in peace and friendship with Russia.”315

The First World War

Germany declared war on Russia on July 19 / August 1, the feast of St. Seraphim of Sarov, the great prophet of the last times…

The First World War was the great watershed in modern European history. In 1914 Europe was a family of nations united by a single royal dynasty and a cosmopolitan elite confessing what most considered, according to ecumenist fashion, to be a single Christianity, albeit divided into Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant varieties, that tried to maintain the pax Europaica throughout the world. The family was German in origin, being made up of branches of the Saxe-Coburg dynasty. Thus even the matriarch of the family, Queen Victoria of England, once told King Leopold of the Belgians: “My heart is so German…”316 For many generations, the Russian tsars and princes had taken brides from German princely families; Nicholas II, though thoroughly Russian in spirit, had much more German blood than Russian in his veins; and the Tsaritsa Alexandra and her sister Grand Duchess Elizabeth were Hessian princesses.317 In the summer of 1914 many hoped that the family links between the Kaiser and the Tsar would prevent war. And they did talk,

---

314 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 (in Russian).
316 Ferguson, op. cit., p. 97.
317 However, as Metropolitan Anastasy (Gribanovsky) pointed out, the sisters were more English than German in their tastes and upbringing, taking after their English mother rather than their German father (“Homily on the Seventh Anniversary of the Martyric End of Emperor Nicholas II and the Entire Royal Family”, Orthodox Life, vol. 31, no. 4, July-August, 1981).
even after the outbreak of war – but to no avail, because in the last resort family unity counted for less for the Kaiser than nationalist pride…318

The same could be said of the confessional links. Tsar Nicholas II became the godfather of the future King Edward VIII at his Anglican baptism – and in 1904 Kaiser Wilhelm was invited to be godfather of the Tsarevich Alexis.319 But these spiritual links counted for less than the Orthodox faith: Tsar Nicholas went to war with Catholic Austria in order to defend his Orthodox Serbian co-religionists. And in this we may see one providential reason for the war. It was not so much a war between Slavdom and Germanism, as between Orthodoxy and Westernism, and saved the Orthodox, not only from violent conquest by those of another race, but also, and primarily, from peaceful, ecumenist merging with those of another faith.

The religious nature of the war was understood by many Russians. In 1912 the country had celebrated the one hundredth anniversary of the Battle of Borodino, and in 1913 – the three-hundredth anniversary of the establishment of the Romanov dynasty. These were patriotic celebrations, but also religious ones; for both the commemorated events had taken place on the background of great threats to the Orthodox Faith from western nations. When the Tsar, however reluctantly, declared war on August 1, 1914, this was again seen as the beginning of a great patriotic and religious war.

Thus on that day, as Lubov Millar writes, “large patriotic crowds gathered before the Winter Palace, and when the Emperor and Empress appeared on the balcony, great and joyful ovations filled the air. When the national anthem was played, the crowds began to sing enthusiastically.

“In a sitting room behind this balcony waited Grand Duchess Elizabeth, dressed in her white habit; her face was aglow, her eyes shining. Perhaps, writes Almedingen, she was thinking, ‘What are revolutionary agents compared with these loyal crowds? They would lay down their lives for Nicky and their faith and will win in the struggle.’ In a state of exaltation she made her way from the Winter Palace to the home of Grand Duke Constantine, where his five sons – already dressed in khaki uniforms – were preparing to leave for the front. These sons piously received Holy Communion and then went to the Romanov tombs and to the grave of Blessed Xenia of Petersburg before joining their troops.”320

The great tragedy of the war was that this truly patriotic-religious mood did not last, and those who rapturously applauded the Tsar in 1914 were baying for his blood only three years later…

319 Ferguson, op. cit., p. 100.
320 Millar, op. cit., p. 171.
In the defeat of Germany and Austria, which started the war, we must see the judgement of God against those who were, after all, the aggressors and initiators of the conflict. But all the participant nations, with the possible exception of the United States, were significantly weaker, spiritually as well as politically, as a result of it. In a deeper sense, however, the judgement fell hardest on the Orthodox, for “judgement begins at the household of God”. Thus the Russians were deprived of victory by revolution from within, and came to almost complete destruction afterwards; the Serbs suffered proportionately more than any other country, even if they were on the winning side in the end; the Romanians were crushed by the Germans before also appearing on the winning side; the Bulgarians betrayed their Russian benefactors but still appeared on the losing side. Only the Greeks emerged from the war relatively unscathed – but their judgement would come only a few years later. So the First World War was a judgement on the whole of European civilization, and first of all on the Orthodox nations who had allowed Europeanism gradually to replace their God-given inheritance...

The First World War was, for Bishop Nikolai Velimirovich, a struggle between the All-Man, Christ, and the Superman of Nietzsche, between the doctrine that Right is Might and the opposite one that might is right. For German Christianity with its all-devouring scientism and scepticism had already surrendered to Nietzscheanism: “I wonder… that Professor Harnack, one of the chief representatives of German Christianity, omitted to see how every hollow that he and his colleagues made in traditional Christianity in Germany was at once filled with the all-conquering Nietzscheanism. And I wonder… whether he is now aware that in the nineteen hundred and fourteenth year of our Lord, when he and other destroyers of the Bible, who proclaimed Christ a dreamy maniac [and] clothed Christianity in rags, Nietzscheanism grew up [as] the real religion of the German race.”

Moreover, the Germans had adopted the doctrine of Social Darwinism. Thus Conrad von Hötendorff, chief of the Austrian general staff at the outbreak of war believed that the struggle for existence was “the basic principle behind all the events on this earth”. Militarism was the natural consequence of this philosophy: “Politics consists precisely of applying war as method”.

In another place Bishop Nikolai spread the blame more widely on Europe as a whole: “The spirit was wrong, and everything became wrong. The spirit of any civilization is inspired by its religion, but the spirit of modern Europe was not inspired by Europe’s religion at all. A terrific effort was made in many quarters to liberate Europe from the spirit of her religion. The effort-makers forgot one thing, i.e. that no civilization ever was liberated from

---

religion and still lived. Whenever this liberation seemed to be fulfilled, the respective civilization decayed and died out, leaving behind barbaric materialism in towns and superstitions in villages. Europe had to live with Christianity, or to die in barbaric materialism and superstitions without it. The way to death was chosen. From Continental Europe first the infection came to the whole white race. It was there that the dangerous formula [of Nietzsche] was pointed out: ‘Beyond good and evil’. Other parts of the white world followed slowly, taking first the path between Good and Evil. Good was changed for Power. Evil was explained away as Biological Necessity. The Christian religion, which inspired the greatest things that Europe ever possessed in every point of human activity, was degraded by means of new watchwords: individualism, liberalism, conservatism, nationalism, imperialism, secularism, which in essence meant nothing but the dechristianization of European society, or, in other words, the emptiness of European civilization. Europe abandoned the greatest things she possessed and clung to the lower and lowest ones. The greatest thing was – Christ.

“As you cannot imagine Arabic civilization in Spain without Islam, or India’s civilization without Hinduism, or Rome without the Roman Pantheon, so you cannot imagine Europe’s civilization without Christ. Yet some people thought that Christ was not so essentially needed for Europe, and behaved accordingly without Him or against Him. Christ was Europe’s God. When this God was banished from politics, art, science, social life, business, education, everybody consequently asked for a God, and everybody thought himself to be a god… So the godless Europe became full of gods!

“Being dechristianized, Europe still thought to be civilized. In reality she was a poor valley full of dry bones. The only thing she had to boast of was her material power. By material power only she impressed and frightened the unchristian (but not antichristian) countries of Central and Eastern Asia, and depraved the rustic tribes in Africa and elsewhere. She went to conquer not by God or for God, but by material power and for material pleasure. Her spirituality did not astonish any of the peoples on earth. Her materialism astonished all of them… What an amazing poverty! She gained the whole world, and when she looked inside herself she could not find her soul. Where has Europe’s soul fled? The present war will give the answer. It is not a war to destroy the world but to show Europe’s poverty and to bring back her soul. It will last as long as Europe remains soulless, Godless, Christless. It will stop when Europe gets the vision of her soul, her only God, her only wealth.”

The disciple and admirer of Bishop Nikolai, Archimandrite Justin (Popovich), attributed the cause of God’s wrath against Christian Europe in the two world wars to its betrayal of True Christianity and its embracing an antichristian humanistic metaphysics of progress. The end of such a

---

metaphysic could only be death, death on a massive scale, death with no
redeeming purpose, no resurrection in Christ: “It is obvious to normal eyes:
European humanistic culture systematically blunts man’s sense of
immortality, until it is extinguished altogether. The man of European culture
affirms, with Nietzsche, that he is flesh and nothing but flesh. And that
means: I am mortal, and nothing but mortal. It is thus that humanistic Europe
gave itself over to the slogan: man is a mortal being. That is the formula of
humanistic man; therein lies the essence of his progress.

“At first subconsciously, then consciously and deliberately, science,
philosophy, and culture inculcated in the European man the proposition that
man is completely mortal, with nothing else left over... Humanistic man is a
devastated creature because the sense of personal immortality has been
banished from him. And without that sentiment, can man ever be complete?

“European man is a shrunken dwarf, reduced to a fraction of man’s
stature, for he has been emptied of the sense of transcendence. And without
the transcendent, can man exist at all as man? And if he could, would there be
any meaning to his existence? Minus that sense of the transcendent, is he not
but a dead object among other objects, and a transient species among other
animals?

“...[Supposedly] equal to the animals in his origin, why should he not also
assimilate their morals? Being part of the animal world of beasts in basic
nature, he has also joined them in their morals. Are not sin and crime
increasingly regarded by modern jurisprudence as an unavoidable by-
product of the social environment and as a natural necessity? Since there is
nothing eternal and immortal in man, ethics must, in the final analysis, be
reduced to instinctive drives. In his ethics, humanistic man has become equal
to his progenitors, monkeys and beasts. And the governing principle of his
life has become: homo homini lupus.

“It could not be otherwise. For an ethic that is superior to that of the
animals could only be founded on a sentiment of human immortality. If there
is no immortality and eternal life, neither within nor around man, then
animalistic morals are entirely natural and logical for a bestialized humanity:
let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die (cf. I Corinthians 15.32).

“The relativism in the philosophy of European humanistic progress could
not but result in an ethical relativism, and relativism is the father of anarchism
and nihilism. Wherefore, in the last analysis, the practical ethic of humanistic
man is nothing but anarchy and nihilism. For anarchy and nihilism are the
unavoidable, final and apocalyptic phase of European progress. Ideological
anarchism and nihilism, ideological disintegration, necessarily had to
manifest themselves in practical anarchism and nihilism, in the practical
disintegration of European humanistic man and his progress. Are we not
eyewitnesses to the ideological and practical anarchism and nihilism that are devastating the European continent? The addenda of European progress are such that, no matter how they might be computed, their sum is always anarchism and nihilism. The evidence? Two world wars (actually European wars).

“European man is stupid, catastrophically stupid, when, while disbelieving in God and the immortality of the soul, he still professes belief in progress and life’s meaning and acts accordingly. What good is progress, if after it comes death? What use are the world, the stars, and cultures, if behind them lurks death, and ultimately it must conquer me? Where there is death, there can be no real progress. If there is any, it can only be the cursed progress of the mill of death, which ought to be demolished totally and without a trace…”

The unprecedented destructiveness of the war had been predicted by Engels as early as 1887: “Prussia-Germany can no longer fight any war but a world war; and a war of hitherto unknown dimensions and ferocity. Eight to ten million soldiers will swallow each other up and in doing so eat all Europe more bare than any swarm of locusts. The devastation of the Thirty Years War compressed into the space of three or four years and extending over the whole continent; famine, sickness, want, brutalizing the army and the mass of the population; irrevocable confusion of our artificial structure of trade, industry and credit, ending in general bankruptcy; collapse of the old states and their traditional statecraft, so that crowns will roll by dozens in the gutter and no one can be found to pick them up. It is absolutely impossible to predict where it will end and who will emerge from the struggle as victor. Only one result is absolutely certain: general exhaustion and the establishment of conditions for the final victory of the working class.”

And truly: after the war, everything was different. The Russian empire was gone, and with its disappearance all the islands of Orthodoxy throughout the world began to tremble and contract within themselves. Also gone were the German and Austrian empires, and the very principle of monarchy was fatally undermined, surviving in a truncated form for a short time only in Orthodox Eastern Europe. Christianity as a whole was on the defensive; in most places it became a minority religion again, and in some it was fiercely persecuted, as if the Edict of Milan had been reversed and a new age of the catacombs had returned. The powerful, if superficial pax Europaica had been succeeded by a new age of barbarism, in which nations were divided within and between themselves, and new pagan ideologies held sway.

---

324 Popovich, The Orthodox Church and Ecumenism, Thessaloniki, 1974, translated in Orthodox Life, September-October, 1983, pp. 26-27.
The nature of the war itself contributed to this seismic change. It was not like almost all the wars of earlier centuries – short, fought between professional armies, with only limited effects on the civilian population. It was the first (with the possible exception of the Napoleonic wars) of the total wars, making possible the appearance of the totalitarian age. Its length, the unprecedented numbers of killed and wounded, and the sheer horror of front-line combat succeeded in depriving it, after the patriotic elan of the first month or two, of any chivalric, redemptive aspects – at any rate, for all but the small, truly Orthodox minority who fought for the true Faith, the Tsar and the Fatherland. Its main legacy was simply hatred – hatred of the enemy, hatred of one’s own leaders – a hatred that did not die after the war’s end, but was translated into a kind of universal hatred that presaged still more horrific and total wars to come.

During and after the war, writes Piers Brendon, “rebels and insurrectionaries mounted attacks on every aspect of an old order that had so patently failed. Its famed douceur de vivre had culminated in a stupendous conflict. Its religion had bestowed divine sanction on the carnage. Its industrial achievements had made possible assembly-line massacres. Its mass media of communication had manufactured propaganda on an unprecedented scale. A botched civilisation, as Ezra Pound called it, had begotten scientific barbarism. Barbarism bred more barbarism, which in Russia took the form of Bolshevism. The point was well made by Boris Pasternak, who (in Doctor Zhivago) blamed the war for shifting the world from a ‘calm, innocent measured way of living to blood and tears, to mass insanity and to the savagery of daily, hourly, legalised, rewarded slaughter’. Moral disintegration followed, in which individuals lost the power to speak, and even to know, the truth. ‘It was then that falsehood came into our Russia.’”

And yet this statement is at best only half true. For neither was the previous way of life “innocent”, nor did falsehood first come into Russia with the war, as we have seen. The war came rather, not as the beginning, but as the culmination of, and judgement on, a long, centuries-old accumulation of falsehood, which now overwhelmed the last fortress of Christian truth in the world, Orthodox Russia.

The war ended on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month – a fitting symbol of almost the last moment before the judgement that strikes at the midnight of human history. For Europeans it was truly a last chance, a last chance to take stock of where their humanistic metaphysic of progress led and to return to the Orthodox roots of Christian Europe. But in order to do that, they would have to look with new eyes on their faithful ally, Russia – and not seek to undermine and destroy her...

---

On the Eve of Victory

The war began badly for Russia, and in August, 1915, after a series of heavy defeats, the Tsar took control of the army as Supreme Commander. Almost everyone was appalled at the decision, but “God’s will be done,” wrote the Tsar to the Tsaritsa after arriving at headquarters. “I feel so calm” – like the feeling, he said, “after Holy Communion”.

“In the autumn,” writes Robert Massie, “the Tsar brought his son, the eleven-year-old Tsarevich, to live with him at Army Headquarters. It was a startling move, not simply because of the boy’s age but also because of his haemophilia. Yet, Nicholas did not make his decision impetuously. His reasons, laboriously weighed for months in advance, were both sentimental and shrewd.

“The Russian army, battered and retreating after a summer of terrible losses, badly needed a lift in morale. Nicholas himself made constant appearances, and his presence, embodying the cause of Holy Russia, raised tremendous enthusiasm among the men who saw him. It was his hope that the appearance of the Heir at his side, symbolizing the future, would further bolster their drooping spirits. It was a reasonable hope, and, in fact, wherever Alexis appeared he became a center of great excitement...”

Taking advantage of the Tsar’s absence at the front, the liberals on the home front formed a “progressive bloc” designed to force the tsar to give them “a government responsible to the people” – that is, to give power to themselves in a constitutional monarchy. However, while things got worse in the rear they got better at the front. Thanks to organizational changes introduced by the Tsar, the crisis in supplies that had contributed so significantly to the defeats of 1915 was overcome. In 1916 the Brusilov offensive threw back the enemy, and the British military attaché in Russia said that Russia’s prospects from a military point of view were better in the winter of 1916-17 than a year before. This estimate was shared by Grand Duke Serge Mikhailovich, who was at Imperial Headquarters as Inspector-General of Artillery. As he said to his brother, Grand Duke Alexander: “Go back to your work and pray that the revolution will not break out this very year. The Army is in perfect condition; artillery, supplies, engineering, troops – everything is ready for a decisive offensive in the spring of 1917. This time we will defeat the Germans and Austrians; on condition, of course, that the rear will not deprive us of our freedom of action. The Germans can save themselves only if they manage to provoke revolution from behind...”

“By 1916,” writes David Stevenson, “Russia, exceptionally among the belligerents, was experiencing a regular boom, with rising growth and a

327 Massie, op. cit., p. 282.
328 Millar, op. cit., p. 182.
bullish stock exchange: coal output was up 30 per cent on 1914, chemicals output doubled, and machinery output trebled. Armaments rode the crest of the wave: new rifle production rose from 132,844 in 1914 to 733,017 in 1915, and 1,301,433 in 1916; 76mm field guns from 354 to 1,349 to 3,721 in these years; 122mm heavy guns from 78 to 361 to 637; and shell production (of all types) from 104,900 to 9,567,888 to 30,974,678. During the war Russia produced 20,000 field guns, against 5,625 imported; and by 1917 it was manufacturing all its howitzers and three-quarters of its heavy artillery. Not only was the shell shortage a thing of the past, but by spring 1917 Russia was acquiring an unprecedented superiority in men and materiel.”

“The price of this Herculean effort, however, was dislocation of the civilian economy and a crisis in urban food supply. The very achievement that moved the balance in the Allies’ favour by summer 1916 contained the seeds of later catastrophe.” Fr. Lev Lebedev cites figures showing that the production for the front equalled production for the non-military economy in 1916, and exceeded it in 1917. This presaged complete economic collapse in 1918; so if Russia did not defeat Germany in 1917 she was bound to lose the war.

Nevertheless, from a purely military point of view there were good reasons for thinking that Russia could defeat her enemies in 1917. Thus Dominic Lieven denies that there was “any military reason for Russia to seek a separate peace between August 1914 and March 1917. Too much attention is usually paid to the defeats of Tannenburg in 1914 and Gorlice-Tarnow in 1915. Russia’s military effort in the First World War amounted to much more than this. If on the whole the Russian army proved inferior to the German forces, that was usually true of the French and British as well. Moreover, during the Brusilov offensive in 1916 Russian forces had shown themselves quite capable of routing large German units. Russian armies usually showed themselves superior to Austrian forces of comparable size, and their performance against the Ottomans in 1914-16 was very much superior to that of British forces operating in Gallipoli, Egypt and Mesopotamia. The Russian defence industry performed miracles in 1916 and if there were legitimate doubts as to whether this level of production could be fully sustained in 1917, the same was true of the war economies of a number of other belligerents. It is true that Rumania’s defeat necessitated a major redeployment of troops and supplies to the southern front in the weeks before the revolution and that this, together with a particularly severe winter, played havoc with railway movements on the home front. Nevertheless, in military terms there was absolutely no reason to believe that Russia had lost the war in February 1917.

“Indeed, when one raised one’s eyes from the eastern front and looked at the Allies’ overall position, the probability of Russian victory was very great,

329 Stevenson, op. cit., p. 237.
330 Stevenson, op. cit., p. 237.
331 Lebedev, op. cit., p. 465.
so long as the home front could hold. Although the British empire was potentially the most powerful of the Allied states, in 1914-16 France and Russia had carried the overwhelming burden of the war on land. Not until July 1916 on the Somme were British forces committed en masse against the Germans, and even then the British armies, though courageous to a fault, lacked proper training and were commanded by amateur officers and generals who lacked any experience of controlling masses of men. Even so, in the summer of 1916 the combined impact of the Somme, Verdun and the Brusilov offensive had brought the Central Powers within sight of collapse. A similar but better coordinated effort, with British power now peaking, held out excellent prospects for 1917. Still more to the point, by February 1917 the German campaign of unrestricted submarine warfare made American involvement in the war in the immediate future a near certainty: the Allied superiority in resources would thereby become overwhelming.

"Once stalemate set in on the battlefield in 1914, the First World War became as much as anything a contest over which belligerent’s home front would collapse first. This fate befell Russia in large part because even its upper and middle classes, let alone organized labour, were more hostile to the existing regime and less integrated into the legal political order than was the case even in Italy, let alone in France, Germany or Britain in 1914. In addition, opposition to the regime was less divided along ethnic lines than was the case in Austria-Hungary, and Russia was more geographically isolated from military and economic assistance from its allies than was the case with any of the other major belligerents. Nevertheless, unrest on the domestic front was by no means confined to Russia. The Italian home front seemed on the verge of collapse after the defeat of Caporetto in 1917 and the French army suffered major mutinies that year. In the United Kingdom the attempt to impose conscription in Ireland made that country ungovernable and led quickly to civil war. In both Germany and Austria revolution at home played a vital role in 1918, though in contrast to Russia it is true that revolution followed decisive military defeats and was set off in part by the correct sense that the war was unwinnable.

"The winter of 1916-17 was decisive not just for the outcome of the First World War but also for the history of twentieth-century Europe. Events on the domestic and military fronts were closely connected. In the winter of 1915-16 in both Germany and Austria pressure on civilian food consumption had been very severe. The winter of 1916-17 proved worse. The conviction of the German military leadership that the Central Powers’ home fronts could not sustain too much further pressure on this scale was an important factor in their decision to launch unrestricted submarine warfare in the winter of 1916-17, thereby (so they hoped) driving Britain out of the war and breaking the Allied blockade. By this supreme piece of miscalculation and folly the German leadership brought the United States into the war at precisely the
moment when the overthrow of the imperial regime was preparing Russia to leave it...” 332

Russia was not defeated militarily from without, but by revolution from within. And yet the losses sustained by Russia during the war had a significant bearing on the outcome of the revolution. For in the first year almost all the old cadres, from privates to colonels, had been killed – that is, the best and the most loyal to the Tsar. The pre-revolutionary aristocracy of Russia was almost completely wiped out in the first two years of the war. 333

From 1916, to fill up the losses in the ranks of the junior and middle commanders, the officer schools were forced to take 9/10ths of their entrance from non-noble estates. These new commanders were of much lower quality than their predecessors, who had been taught to die for the Faith and the Fatherland. Especially heavy losses were suffered in the same period by the military chaplains. The older generation of clergy had enjoyed considerable spiritual authority among the soldiers. But they were replaced by less experienced men enjoying less authority. 334

The critical factor was the loss of morale among the rank and file. In general, the appeals of the socialists and Bolsheviks before the war that the workers of different countries should not fight each other had not been successful. Patriotic feelings turned out to be stronger than class loyalties. 335

However, the terrible losses suffered in the war, the evidence of massive corruption and incompetence in arms deliveries, the propaganda against the Tsar and the return of Bolshevik agitators began to take their toll. “... Evidence suggests that many soldiers were convinced by 1915 that they could not beat the Germans, and that by the end of 1916 they were full of despondency and recrimination against the authorities who had sent them into war without the wherewithal to win. The evidence that victory was as remote as ever, despite Brusilov’s initial successes and another million casualties, produced a still uglier mood. Soldiers’ letters revealed a deep anxiety about the deteriorating quality and quantity of their provisions (the daily bread ration was reduced from three pounds to two, and then to one, during the winter), as well as anger about rocketing inflation and scarcities that endangered their loved ones’ welfare. Many wanted to end the war whatever the cost, and over twenty mutinies seem to have occurred in

332 Lieven, “Russia, Europe and World War I”, op. cit.
333 Sergius Vladimirovich Volkov, “Pervaia mirovaia vojna i russkij ofitserskij korpus”, Nasha Strana, N 2874, August 29, 2009, p. 3 ©.
335 Masonic loyalty also played a part here. Oleg Platonov points out “that all the main Masonic orders of the warring countries were in favour of war: the Great national lodge of England, the Grand Orient of France, the Grand Orient of the nations of Russia, the Old Prussian lodges and the Great lodge of Hamburg. The latter was the foundation of the Great Serbian lodge, members of which were involved in the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand in Sarajevo” (op. cit., p. 344).
October-December 1916 (the first on this scale in any army during the war), some involving whole regiments, and in each case taking the form of a collective refusal of orders to attack or to prepare to attack. 336

The Germans were well aware of this, which is why they smuggled Lenin and a lot of money into Russia in a sealed train. This plan went back to 1915, when Alexander Helphand, code-named Parvus, a German agent whose business activities profited from the blockade-driven trade between Denmark and Germany, persuaded the German Foreign Ministry that they might engineer a mass strike in Russia. In March, 1917, despite the obvious paradox and equally obvious dangers in Imperial Germany sponsoring Marxism, Arthur Zimmermann convinced the Kaiser and the army that the Bolsheviks’ leader, Lenin, who was living in exile in Switzerland, should be smuggled back into Russia. 337 The Germans must have known that if Lenin, a sworn enemy of all governments, were to succeed in Russia, they would have created a scourge for their own backs. But they knew that the Russian offensive of spring, 1917, if combined with simultaneous attacks from the west, would very likely be successful. So their only hope was the disintegration of Russia from within...

**The Actors in the Revolution: (1) The Jews**

If the root of the revolution was a nihilistic-messianic-chiliastic kind of faith built out of many strands of European and Jewish thought, the actual composition of forces that brought about the revolution was no less varied. We need to distinguish between at least three levels at which the revolution took place. First, there was the level of the out-and-out revolutionaries, intelligently supported by many from the industrial proletariat and the revolutionary-minded peasantry, who were aiming to destroy Russian tsarism and Russian Orthodox civilization completely before embarking on a world revolution that would dethrone God and traditional authority from the hearts and minds of all men everywhere. This level was led by Lenin, Trotsky and Stalin; it was composed mainly of Jews, but also contained numbers of Russians, Latvians, Georgians, Poles and other nationalities. They were possessed by the revolutionary faith to the greatest extent, and owed no allegiance to any nation or traditional creed or morality.

Secondly, there was the level of the Freemasons, the mainly aristocratic and middle-class Duma parliamentarians and their supporters in the country at large, who were not aiming to destroy Russia completely, but only to remove the tsar and introduce a constitutional government on the English model. This level was led by Guchkov, Rodzyanko and Kerensky; it was composed mainly of Russians, but also contained most of the intelligentsia of

the other nations of the empire. They believed in the revolutionary faith, but still had moral scruples derived from their Christian background.

Thirdly, there were the lukewarm Orthodox Christians, the great mass of ordinary Russians, who did not necessarily want either world revolution or a constitutional government, but who lacked the courage and the faith to act openly in support of Faith, Tsar and Fatherland. It is difficult to say what proportion of the population belonged to this level; but it is certain that if very many Russians had not become lukewarm in their faith, God would not have allowed the revolution to take place. After the revolution, many from this level, as well as individuals from the first two levels, seeing the terrible devastation that their lukewarmness had allowed to take place, bitterly repented and returned to the ranks of the confessing Orthodox Christians.

The extraordinary prominence of Jews in the revolution is a fact that must be related, at least in part, to the traditionally anti-Russian and anti-Christian attitude of Jewish culture, which is reflected in both of its major political offspring – Bolshevism and Zionism. For, as Chaim Weitzmann, the first president of Israel, showed in his *Autobiography*, the atheist Bolshevik Jews and the theist Zionist Jews came from the same milieu, often the very same families. Thus Weitzmann’s own mother was able to witness her sons’ triumph both in Bolshevik Moscow and Zionist Jerusalem...338

Liberals ascribed the revolutionary character of the Jews to antisemitism, and, in the Russian case, to pogroms and the multitude of restrictions placed on the Jews by the Russian tsars. However, as we have seen, far fewer Jews died in the pogroms than Russian officials in terrorist attacks (1845 by the year 1909), while the restrictions were placed on the Jews in order to protect the Russian peasant, who was ruthlessly exploited by them. As the future Hieromartyr John Vostorgov said in 1906: “The Jews are restricted in their rights of residence not as a confessional unit, but as a predatory tribe that is dangerous in the midst of the peaceful population because of its exploitative inclinations, which... have found a religious sanction and support in the Talmud... Can such a confession be tolerated in the State, when it allows its followers to practise hatred and all kinds of deceit and harm towards other confessions, and especially Christians? ... The establishment of the Pale of Settlement is the softest of all possible measures in relation to such a confession. Moreover, is it possible in this case not to take account of the mood of the masses? But this mood cannot be changed only by issuing a law on the complete equality of rights of the Jews. On the contrary, this can only strengthen the embitterment of the people...”339

“Let us remember,” writes Solzhenitsyn: “the legal restrictions on the Jews in Russia were never racial [as they were in Western Europe]. They were applied neither to the Karaites [who rejected the Talmud], nor to the mountain Jews, nor to the Central Asian Jews.” In other words, restrictions were placed only on those Jews who practised the religion of the Talmud, because of its vicious anti-Christianity and double morality. Moreover, the restrictions were very generously applied. The boundaries of the Pale (a huge area twice the size of France) were extremely porous, allowing large numbers of Jews to acquire higher education and make their fortunes in Great Russia – to such an extent that by the time of the revolution the Jews dominated Russian trade and, most ominously, the Russian press.

Stolypin wanted to remove the restrictions on the Jews. But in this case the Tsar resisted him, as his father had resisted Count Witte before him. This was not because the Tsar felt no responsibility to protect the Jews; he spoke about “my Jews”, as he talked about “my Poles”, “my Armenians” and “my Finns”. And his freedom from anti-semitism is demonstrated by his reaction to the murder of Stolypin by a Jewish revolutionary, Bogrov, in Kiev on September 1, 1911. As Robert Massie writes: “Because Bogrov was a Jew, the Orthodox population was noisily preparing a retaliatory pogrom. Frantic with fear, the city’s Jewish population spent the night packing their belongings. The first light of the following day found the square before the railway station jammed with carts and people trying to squeeze themselves on to departing trains. Even as they waited, the terrified people heard the clatter of hoofs. An endless stream of Cossacks, their long lances dark against the dawn sky, rode past. On his own, Kokovtsev had ordered three full regiments of Cossacks into the city to prevent violence. Asked on what authority he had issued the command, Kokovtsev replied: ‘As head of the government.’ Later, a local official came up to the Finance Minister to complain, ‘Well, Your Excellency, by calling in the troops you have missed a fine chance to answer Bogrov’s shot with a nice Jewish pogrom.’ Kokovtsev was indignant, but, he added, ‘his sally suggested to me that the measures which I had taken at Kiev were not sufficient… therefore I sent an open telegram to all governors of the region demanding that they use every possible means – force if necessary – to prevent possible pogroms. When I submitted this telegram to the Tsar, he expressed his approval of it and of the measure I had taken in Kiev.’”

---

341 As Witte recorded in his Memoirs: “‘Are you right to stand up for the Jews?’ asked Alexander III. In reply Witte asked permission to answer the question with a question: ‘Can we drown all the Russian Jews in the Black Sea? If we can, then I accept that resolution of the Jewish question. If not, the resolution of the Jewish question consists in giving them a chance to live. That is in offering them equal rights and equal laws.’” (Radzinsky, op. cit., p. 69). But Witte’s reply misses the point, as if the choice lay between killing all the Jews or giving them complete equality. No State can give complete freedom to a section of the population that does not respect the law and endangers the lives or livelihoods of the majority.
342 Massie, op. cit., p. 229.
In the end, the Pale of Settlement was destroyed, not by liberal politicians, but by right-wing generals. In 1915, as the Russian armies retreated before the Germans, some Jews were accused of spying for the enemy and were shot, while the Jewish population in general was considered unreliable. And so a mass evacuation of the Jews from the Pale was ordered by the authorities. But the results were disastrous. Hordes of frightened Jews fleeing eastwards blocked up vital roads along which supplies for the front were destined. Landing up in large cities such as Moscow and Petrograd where there had been no large Jewish population before, these disgruntled new arrivals only fuelled the revolutionary fires. And so was created precisely the situation that the Pale of Settlement had been designed to avert…

The Actors in the Revolution: (2) The Freemasons

“At this time,” writes Eduard Radzinsky, “as once before in the nineteenth century, the opposition was allying itself increasingly in secret masonic lodges, which flourished in Russia after the 1905 revolution. By 1917 they had united society’s liberal elite, which was fed up with the Rasputin business. The paradox of the situation was that on the eve of 1905, when the police had frightened Nicholas with masons, masonry scarcely existed in Russia. Now, on the eve of 1917, when masonry had become a real force, the police knew little about it. Meanwhile the Masonic lodges included among their members tsarist ministers, generals, members of the State Council, Duma figures, prominent diplomats, industrialists…”

If the October revolution was engineered by Bolshevik Jews, the February revolution which preceded it and made it possible was engineered by Masonic Russians. I.L. Solonevich sees the Masonic aristocracy as no less guilty of the revolution than the Jews: “The whole of the nineteenth century was filled with the struggle of the autocracy against the aristocratic elite. In this struggle both warring sides perished. However, the monarchy perished with some chance of resurrection, but the aristocracy – with absolutely no chance (I am speaking of the destruction of the aristocracy as a ruling class).

“The roots of this struggle go deep into the past – perhaps as far as Kalita and the Terrible one. But we shall not descend to the depths of the ages. We shall only recall that while the mystical beginning of the Russian revolution is usually ascribed to the Decembrists, there were no Jews among them. Then there came Belinsky and Chernyshevsky and Bakunin and Herzen and Plekhanov and Lavrov and Milyukov and Lenin and many other sowers of ‘the rational, the good and the eternal’. In the course of a whole century they shook and undermined the building of Russian statehood. All this work was covered by the moral authority of Prince Peter Alexeyevich Kropotkin, who had not been bought by the Jews, and Count Leo Nikolayevich Tolstoy, who,

although taking no bribes from the Jews, undermined both the State and the Church and even the family very thoroughly.

“And any Berdichev chemist from the [Jewish] Bund or from the Bolsheviks, in his struggle against the order created by history, could have taken me by the lapel and said: ‘Listen, are you an intelligent person? Can’t you see that I am walking in the steps of the best lights of Russian thought?’

“And what could I as ‘an intelligent person’ reply to this chemist? Truly he was walking in their steps! And Chernyshevsky really was a ‘light’…

“If we, out the whole of this extraordinarily complicated combination of factors that was making and supporting the revolution, concentrate our fire only on one – on Jewry, - then we have lost the plot. It’s all not so simple. They say: the [American] Jew Jacob Schiff gave money for the Russian revolution. Yes, he did. But [the Old Ritualist] Savva Morozov also gave money for the same revolution. And Germany gave more than any – not the Germany of Weimar and Ebert, and still less Hitler, but the Germany of the Hohenzollerns… It’s not a secret to anybody that all these ‘entrenched truths’ were published on German money, while in the Kshesinskaya palace German marks were valued above all… But if you simplify the matter to such a degree that one can make a revolution in the world with money, then the October revolution was made on German money. À la guerre comme à la guerre. However, it was with the closest and most powerful participation of almost the whole of Russian Jewry…

“And so: the elite of the aristocracy laid the main weight of the struggle against the monarchy on their own shoulders. Then they were joined by the ‘raznochintsy’, and by the very last decades of the past century this anti-monarchist front received powerful support from the whole of Russian Jewry.”

Fr. Lev Lebedev writes: “Soon after the manifesto of October 17, 1905 which gave certain freedoms, legal Masonic lodges, which before had been banned, began to appear. And although, practically speaking, secret Masonry never ceased to exist in Russia, the absence of legal lodges was for the Masons a great obstacle… A ‘reserve’ was being prepared in France by the ‘Grand Orient’. Already in the 60s some Russians had entered French Masonry in Paris. Among them was the writer I.S. Turgenev, later – Great Prince Nicholas Mikhailovich (the ‘Bixiot’ lodge), and then the philosopher V. Vyrubov, the psychiatrist N. Bazhenov, the electrophysicist P. Yablochkov, the historian M. Kovalevsky. In 1887 the ‘Cosmos’ (no. 288) lodge was founded for Russians – the writer A. Amphiteatrov, the zemstvo activist V. Maklakov and the activist of culture V.N. Nemirovich-Danchenko. From 1900 the Masonic Russian

345 Solonevich, “Rossiia, Revoliutsiia i Yevrejstvo” (Russia, the Revolution and Jewry), Rossiia i Revoliutsiia (Russia and the Revolution), Moscow, 2007, pp. 26-27 ©.
School of social sciences began its work in Paris, and there arose yet another Russian lodge, ‘Mount Sinai’. At the beginning of 1906, with the agreement of the ‘Grand Orient of France’, M. Kovalevsky opened a lodge of French obedience in Russia. The first such lodge was joined by the already mentioned Kovalevsky, Bazhenov, Maklakov, Nemirovich-Danchenko, and also new people such as S. Kotlyarovsky, E. Kedrin (the jurist), the historian V.O. Klyuchevsky, Prince S. Urusov, the Jewish doctor and lawyer M. Margulies, the diplomat I. Loris-Melikov and others. This lodge had two main affiliates: in Moscow – ‘Regeneration’, and in St. Petersburg – ‘Polar Star’. They were ‘opened’ by two high-ranking Masons, Senchole and Boulet, who came specially from France. Later, in 1908, they gave ‘Polar Star’ the right to open new lodges in Russia without the prior agreement of the French. Many lodges with various names appeared [such as ‘the Iron Ring’ in Nizhni], but the leading role continued to be played by ‘Polar Star’, which was led by Count A. Orlov-Davydov, and only Masons of no lower rank than the 18th degree were admitted into it. The Masons were also joined by the Cadet A. Kolyubakin, Prince Bebutov, Baron G. Maidel, the public library worker A. Braudo, the historians N. Pavlov-Silvansky and P. Schegolev, the lawyers S. Balavinsky and O. Goldovsky, the Octobrist A.I. Guchkov, his comrade in the party M.V. Rodzyanko, the Cadet N.V. Nekrasov, the workers’ party A.F. Kerensky (in 1912, through the ‘Ursa Minor’ lodge\(^\text{347}\)\), the Mensheviks A. Galpern, Chkhheidze, the Bolsheviks Trotsky, Lunacharsky, Skvortsov-Stepanov, Krasin, Bok, Sereda, Chicherin, the millionaires N.I. Tereschenko, A. Konovalov, P.P. Ryabushinsky (with his two brothers), Prince V. Obolensky, Countess S.V. Panina, Baron V. Meller-Zakomelsky (not to be confused with the general), M. Gorky, his wife E. Peshkova, his godson the Jew Zenobius Peshkov (the brother of Ya. Sverdlov), their friend E.D. Kuskova (a female Mason of the higher degrees), her husband S. Prokopovich, Prince G. Lvov (president of the Zemstvo and City Unions), Prince A. Khatistov (the city commandant of Tiflis), Prince P. Dolgorukov, Major-General P. Popovtsev (of the 33rd degree), Mark Aldanov, Fyodorov, Chelnokov, the Menshevik G. Aronson, the artist Mark Chagall, the cadet V. Velikhov and very many other prominent activists of that time. The lists of Russian Masons do not contain the name of the Cadet historian P. Milyukov (he even concealed his Masonry), but only because he had for a long time been in purely French Masonry... Masonic lodges appeared and functioned also, besides Moscow and Petersburg, in Kiev, Odessa, Nizhni-Novgorod, Minsk, Vitebsk, Tver, Samara, Saratov, Tiflis, Kutaisi and other cities. In the

\(^{346}\) Both ‘Cosmos’ and ‘Mount Sinai’ were under the Supreme Council of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, according to the Mason Boris Telepneff, Russian Assistant Consul in Paris in 1922 (An Outline of the History of Russian Freemasonry).\(^\circ\). (V.M.)

\(^{347}\) According to George Sprukts, Kerensky also belonged to the “Grand Orient of the Peoples of Russia” and the Scottish Rite (32nd degree) (“Re: [paradosis] Re: White army”, orthodox-tradition@yahoogroups.com, June 9, 2004). (V.M.)
words of Kuskova, before 1917 the whole of Russia was covered by a net of Masonic lodges of which many thousands of people were members.”  

The Mason Boris Telepneff wrote: “This was done accordingly until 1911, when some of their members decided to renew their activities with due prudence. One would not call these activities Masonic in any sense, as their chief aim was purely political – the abolition of the autocracy, and a democratic regime in Russia; they acknowledged allegiance to the Grand Orient of France. This political organization comprised about forty Lodges in 1913. In 1915-1916 disagreements arose between their members who belonged to two political parties (the constitutional democrats and the progressives) and could not agree on a common policy. Ten Lodges became dormant. The remaining thirty Lodges continued to work, and took part in the organization of the 1917 March revolution and in the establishment of the Provisional Government. Their political aim being attained, the organisation began to decay; twenty-eight Lodges existed on the eve of the Bolshevik revolution, and since then most of their members have left Russia.”

Lebedev continues: “Besides lodges of the ‘Polar Star’ structure there also existed lodges of a mystical tendency. Among them were the Martinists (old-style) headed by a ‘Great Master’, Count Musin-Pushkin, which was joined by many from the aristocracy and even from the Imperial Family – Great Princes Nicholas Nikolayevich [supreme commander of the Russian armed forces in 1914-15], Peter Nikolayevich and George Mikhailovich. Among them at one time was the noted Mason and occultist Papius, who was very active. Papius even hoped to draw his Majesty Nicholas II, but was not successful! Among the mystics were the Masons Philaletes, who were joined by Great Prince Alexander Mikhailovich (the brother of George) and a string of aristocrats, about one thousand people in all. Their main occupation was spiritist séances (supposed ‘communion’ with the spirits and souls of the dead), which quite a lot of the intelligentsia were interested in at that time. Finally, there was the

---


349 Telepneff, op. cit.

350 Telepneff also reported that “an independent lodge of the so-called Martiniste Rite was formed among the entourage of Czar Nicholas II under the name of ‘The Cross and the Star’,... which suspended its work in 1916.” Perhaps Great Prince Nicholas Mikhailovich Romanov, the Chairman of the Russian History Society, was a member of this lodge. Edvard Radzinsky (The Last Tsar, London: Arrow Books, 1993, p. 111) writes that he “was a mystic, a mason, and a freethinker... In the family he was called Monsieur Egalité, as the eighteenth-century liberal, the Duc d’Orléans, was called.” (V.M.)

351 “Other Martiniste lodges opened ... ‘Apollonius’ in St Petersburg (1910), ‘St John’ in Moscow (1911), ‘St Andrew’ in Kiev (1912). A very curious lodge existed among the Russian Navy League, calling themselves ‘Philaletes’; beside philanthropic and intellectual work, it pursued a political aim in opposition to that of the Grand Orient lodges, namely the support
directly Satanist lodge ‘Lucifer’, which included many from the ‘creative’ sort, basically decadents such as Vyacheslav Ivanov, V. Bryusov and A. Bely. A. Blok was interested in the lodges.

“On the direct orders of the ‘Grand Orient of France’, Masonry extended its tentacles into the State apparatus, into the diplomatic corps. Thus according to the data of N. Verberova in her book, People and Lodges352, the Masons in the diplomatic service were: K.D. Nabokov (England), A.D. Kandaurov (France), G.P. Zabello (Italy), A.V. Nekludov (Sweden), I.G. Loris-Melikov (Norway), K.M. Onu (Switzerland), B.A. Bakhmetev (USA), N.A. Kudashev (China), A.I. Scherbatsky (Brazil), etc.

“All the Masonic lodges in Russia were linked and communicated with each other and with foreign centres, first of all with the ‘Grand Orient of France’. And all of them together were ruled by the purely Jewish community (called sometimes a ‘lodge’ and sometimes an ‘order’) B’nai Brith, which was at the head of united world Zionism, with its centre in the USA.

“For the western centres, the most important thing from a political point of view was Russian political Masonry of the ‘Polar Star’ structure. In 1909 it declared that it was liquidating itself.353 This was a manoeuvre, well-known from the times of [the Decembrist] P. Pestel, whose aim, on the one hand, was to get rid of ‘ballast’ and spies that had penetrated into its midst, and on the other hand, to create a new secret union for the political struggle that would not be subject to the suspicion and danger its legal ‘brothers’ were in. Thus in the same year of 1909 a deeply conspiratorial ‘Military lodge’ was formed headed by A.I. Guchkov, and in 1910 – the ‘Ursa Minor’ lodge for work with ‘state’ society, in which the main roles gradually came to be played by Prince G. Lvov, M.V. Rodzyanko, A.F. Kerensky, N.V. Nekrasov, P.P. Ryabushinsky, M.I. Tereschenko and A. Konovalov… Over them, that is, over the whole of Russian Masonry of this tendency, there weighed the Masonic oath of fidelity to the ‘Grand Orient of France’, which was given already in 1908 in the form of a special document called ‘Obligation’. This oath-obligation was kept faithfully both before and after the ‘self-liquidation’ and the emergence of a new leadership and a new structure. In 1910 this leadership declared its formal independence from Russian Masonry – but with the agreement of the French of the ‘Grand Orient’. The new leadership significantly simplified the


353 “The existence of Masonic Lodges was discovered by the Russian Government in 1909; it also became known to the authorities that they were of French origin. It was then decided by the Russian Lodges to suspend work.” (Telepneff). (V.M.)
reception of new members, it rejected (for conspiratorial reasons) many elements of Masonic symbolism and ritual, and thereby became, in the language of the Masons, ‘unlawful’. But all this was part of the conspiracy (so that in the event of something World Masonry could declare its complete ‘non-involvement’ in the conspirators and the conspiracy). In actual fact the whole course of the conspiracy was led and controlled precisely through foreign Masons (through the embassies of Germany, England and France in Russia). In 1910 Guchkov, a long-time member of the State Council and the Third State Duma, became the president of the Duma. However, in 1911 he voluntarily resigned from this post, which was immediately taken by his ‘brother’ Rodzyanko. In 1913 Guchkov and other ‘brothers’ created a secret ‘Supreme Council of Peoples of Russia’, which was joined by up to 400 members. But the presidents of the lodges knew only its secretaries – Nekrasov, Kerensky, Tereschenko. Each new lodge consisted of no more than 12 members. The Council and its ‘Convent’ coordinated the actions of the ‘Military Lodge’ and the structures of ‘Ursa Minor’. At this time Guchkov headed the military committee of the State Duma, and was in charge of defence questions. ‘In accordance with service obligations’, he was linked with the General Staff, and the most prominent military men, diplomats and industrialists. Gradually, one by one, Guchkov attracted into his ‘Military Lodge’ Generals N.N. Yanushkevich, A.S. Lukomsky, A.A. Polivanov, A.Z. Myshlayevsky, V.I. Gurko, Colonel Baron Korf, and then Generals A.V. Alexeyev, N.V. Ruzsky, A.M. Krymov, L.G. Kornilov, A.A. Brusilov, A.A. Manikovsky, V.F. Dzhunkovsky and many other eminent officers.

“In essence, in the years 1909-1913 Guchkov had already prepared a general plan of action, which he borrowed from the ‘Young Turk’ Masons in 1908 in Turkey, where he went specially to study the experience of the Turkish revolution. The essence of the plan consisted in the higher military officers, including those in the Tsar’s closest entourage, being able, at the necessary moment, to isolate their Monarch from all the levers of administration and force him to whatever deed or word the conspirators needed at that moment.

“As we can see, Masonry contained prominent activists and members of the leadership of almost all the parties and major organizations. Kerensky later recalled that in Masonry they almost never allowed themselves to violate the unity of the ‘brotherhood’ by party disagreements. But ‘in public’ a sharp polemic between the parties went on, a struggle that sometimes seemed irreconcilable to the public (the ‘profanes’)! So that whatever party came to power in the event of the revolution, there would in any case be ‘brother-masons’ at the helm of this power!”354

Yana Sedova writes: “This group of Masons – about 300 people – had absolutely no interest in the [official] aims of Masonry and rituals. They had

---

their own clearly defined aim – to gain political power in the Russian Empire. However, in spite of the fact that amongst them there were very many prominent public figures, they did not have the real strength for a coup. For that reason, in order to organize the coup, the Masons attracted outsiders who did not guess who was using them and for what.”

The Actors in the Revolution: (3) The Christians

Long before the Jews began to join terrorist organizations, or the intelligentsia to weave their plots against the tsar, the Russian Orthodox people began to fall away from the faith. This was mentioned by Saints Seraphim of Sarov and Tikhon of Zadonsk; and St. Ignatius Brianchaninov spoke about “hypocrisy”, “scribes and Pharisees” and “the salt losing its savour”. By the eve of the revolution this decline was still more noticeable.

Worst of all was the corruption of the Church hierarchy, which included renovationists such as Archbishop Sergius (Stragorodsky) and Bishop Antoninus (Granovsky). Even among the faithful hierarchs, there were few who spoke out openly against the revolutionary madness. When the tsar needed the support of the Church hierarchy in 1917, he did not find it...

In the monasteries it was the same story. Thus the future Elder Gabriel of Seven Lakes was warned by St. Ambrose of Optina “to go wherever he please, so as only not to live in Moscow”, where monasticism was at such a low level. A generation later, in 1909, St. Barsanuphius of Optina said: “Contemporary monasticism strives in all things to fulfil its own will. Abba Dorotheus says: ‘I know of no other fall for a monk than as a consequence of his own will.’” The ignorance and superstition of the name-worshipping monks did not grow on an empty place; and pseudo-elders such as Rasputin and Iliodor could not have flourished in a more truly pious society.

A particular characteristic of the pre-revolutionary period – and a propaganda gift for the revolutionaries - was the excessive expenditure of the rich and their flagrant immorality. The Romanovs – with the shining exception of the tsar and his immediate family, and some others – were among the worst sinners. The increasing hard-heartedness of wealthy Russian Christians to the poor was bewailed by many leading churchmen, such as St. John of Kronstadt. Both rich and poor tended to forget the Christian teaching on social inequality, namely, that it is an opportunity for the rich to show compassion and for the poor to display patience.

---

356 Fr. Simeon Kholmogorov, One of the Ancients, Platina, Ca.: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 1988, p. 67.
357 St. Barsanuphius, in Fomin & Fomina, op. cit., p. 409.
358 For, as Bishop Nikolai Velimirovich wrote, “it is God’s desire that men be unequal in externals: riches, power, status, learning, position and so forth. But he does not recommend
But the rich in every age have been corrupt. What of the poor? In the villages and factories, as we have seen, revolutionary propaganda made deep inroads. Although only a minority of peasants took part in the burning of landowners’ estates in the 1905 revolution, by 1917 the experience of the war and the lying propaganda directed against the Tsar and his family had increased the numbers of deserters, thieves and arsonists. In the elections to the Constituent Assembly in 1918 80% of the population voted for socialist deputies. Moreover, support for the Bolsheviks in the elections, as Richard Pipes writes, “came not from the region of Jewish concentration, the old Pale of Settlement, but from the armed forces and the cities of Great Russia, which had hardly any Jews”. So blame for the Russian revolution must fall on Russians as well as Jews, and not only the aristocratic or Masonic Russians, but on large swaths of the Christian working population.

And so for the Christian population as a whole Ivan Solonevich’s words applied: “With the substitution of faith in absolute Good with faith in relative sausages, everything else also begins to take on a relative character, including man. With the loss of faith in God, loss of faith in man is also lost. The Christian principle, ‘love your neighbour as yourself’, for your neighbour is also a part of absolute Good, is exchanged for another principle: ‘man is a means for the production of sausages’. The feeling of absolute morality is lost... Consequently faith ceases to exist not only in man generally, but also in one’s ‘neighbour’ and even in the neighbour himself. And then begins mutual extermination...”

The roots of the revolution lay in “the mystery of iniquity” foretold to reach fruition in the last times, the mystery of satanic rebellion against the order established in Church and State by God, which arises from within the People of God. In the early nineteenth century Joseph de Maistre wrote: “There have always been some forms of religion in the world and wicked men who opposed them. Impiety was always a crime, too... But only in the bosom of the true religion can there be real impiety... Impiety has never produced in times past the evils which it has brought forth in our day, for its guilt is always directly proportional to the enlightenment which surrounds it... Although impious men have always existed, there never was before the eighteenth century, and in the heart of Christendom, an insurrection against God.”

any sort of competitiveness in this. God desires that men compete in the multiplying of the inner virtues.” (Homilies, volume 2).
360 Pipes, op.cit., p. 113.
De Maistre was speaking, of course, about the French revolution, and his “true religion” was in fact the heresy of Papism. Nevertheless, in essence his words are profoundly true, and apply with still greater accuracy and force to the Russian revolution and the true religion of Orthodox Christianity. It is therefore to the insurrection against God within the heart of Orthodox Christianity that we must look for the deepest cause of the revolution. The crime of the people was the worse in that Tsar Nicholas was probably the most genuine Christian that has ever sat upon a Christian throne. Not only did he not exploit his people in any way: he brought them immeasurable benefits, both spiritual and material, building churches, canonizing saints, spreading the true faith, strengthening the economy, helping the poor, introducing just labour legislation and finally laying down his crown and life in order to save his people from civil war.

When the revolution finally came, and people saw the demonic horror they had voted for, many repented. They realized that they were reaping the fruits of what they themselves had sown. This relationship of pre-revolutionary decadence to post-revolutionary horror was pointed out by Hieromartyr Damascene, Bishop of Glukhov: “The absence of zeal in Christians and of a firm confession of their faith makes many of our enemies (who do not, of course, consciously arise up against the Holy Spirit) to see in Christianity – hypocrisy, and in the Church – an organization of exploiters. In the same way, the absence in us of Christian zeal can be seen as an indirect reason why those who are perishing in the darkness of atheism and the spite of anti-theism leave the Church. It goes without saying that real, especially spiteful ‘rising up against the Lord and against His Christ’ has other, deeper, age-old reasons. Still, if such a significant quenching of the spirit of faith and love amidst believers in the preceding age had not taken place, the faithful servants of the prince of darkness would not have found among us so many voluntary and involuntary helpers. It was said at one Masonic congress: ‘Russia has preserved the most ardent love for our eternal Enemy, and He Whose name I do not want to name will send a horde of His invisible powers to the defence of the Russian people’… And it was decided in counter-action to this to implant lack of faith in Russia…”

The Lord would indeed have sent “a horde of His invisible powers to the defence of the Russian people” – if they had been worthy of it. But they were not. And so instead of “the mystery of piety”, there triumphed “the mystery of iniquity”. For, as St. John Maximovich explained: “The sin against him [the Tsar] 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…”

---

Archbishop Averky (Taushev) 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 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.”

*The Case for the Monarchy (1)*

The factor which undermined morale most of all in the ranks of the Russians was the loss of faith in the institution of the monarchy and (especially because of the rumours surrounding the name of Rasputin) the person of the monarch. He was, as it were, the favourite enemy of educated society – and, increasingly, of the uneducated also. In Solzhenitsyn’s novel, *October 1916*, there is a dialogue on the subject of the monarchy between the socialist Obodovsky, the monarchist Andozerskaya and the disillusioned army officer Vorotyntsev, which, though fictional, well captures the arguments on both sides at that critical time:-

> And. How quickly and decisively you have marched towards the republic, gentlemen! How lightly you have cast aside the monarchy! But are you not simply following a fashion? Someone shouted first, and everyone repeats his words almost parrot-fashion: that the monarchy is the main obstacle on the path to progress. And this has become the distinguishing mark of our people – blaspheming the monarchy in the past, in the future, and in general at all times on the earth...

For everything in Rus’ the autocracy is to blame. The favourite enemy. But by the way, the word ‘autocrat’ historically means only: ‘non-subject’. Sovereign. And it by no means signifies that he does everything he wants. Yes, all the prerogatives of his power are inseparable, and no other earthly power can place limits on it, and he cannot be placed before an earthly court. But over him is the court of his own conscience and the Divine court. And he must consider the boundaries of his power to be sacred, holding on to them still more fiercely than if they were limited by a constitution.

> Obod. But unlimited power is formed by the greed of courtiers and flatterers, and by no means by a Divine conscience!... Having snatched away the will of the people, the autocracy is growing dull, it is dying away and

---

cannot of itself manifest a well-directed will, but only an evil one! In the best
case it is languishing under its own might. The history of all dynasties
without exception, and not only ours, is—criminal!

And. Yes, many peoples have hastened to raise their hands against their
monarchs. And some have irrevocably lost them. But for Russia, where public
consciousness is only a thin film, nobody will ever think up anything better
than the monarchy for a long, long time.

Obod. But allow me—the monarchy is first of all stagnation. How is it
possible to wish stagnation for one’s country?

And. Caution with regard to what is new and conservative feelings do not
mean stagnation. A far-seeing monarch carries out reforms—but those which
have really matured. He will not rush at them without thinking, like a
republic, so as to manoeuvre and not give up power. And it is precisely a
monarch who has the power to carry out long-term reforms stretching far into
the future.

Obod. But generally speaking what rational reasons can be produced in
our age in favour of the monarchy? Monarchy is the negation of equality. And
the negation of the freedom of citizens!

And. Why? Under a monarchy it is perfectly possible for both the freedom
and the equality of citizens to flourish.
First, a firm hereditary system delivers the country from destructive
disturbances. Secondly, under a hereditary monarchy there is no periodic
upheaval of elections, and political disputes in the country are weakened.
Thirdly, republican elections lower the authority of the power, we are not
obliged to respect it, but the power is forced to please us before the elections
and serve us after them. But the monarch promised nothing in order to be
elected. Fourthly, the monarch has the opportunity to weigh up things in an
unbiased way. The monarchy is the spirit of national unity, but under a
republic divisive competition is inevitable. Fifthly, the good and the strength
of the monarch coincide with the good and the strength of the whole country,
he is simply forced to defend the interests of the whole country if only in
order to survive. Sixthly, for multi-national, variegated countries the monarch
is the only tie and the personification of unity…

Obod. But how can you count on his self-criticism? The monarch is
surrounded by whirlwinds of flattery. He is placed in the pitiful role of an
idol. He fears all kinds of stratagems and plots. What counsellor can count on
logically dissuading the tsar?

And. In order to push forward one’s views, one has to convince someone,
come what may. And if it is not the monarch, then it is one’s party, and then
the various views current in society. And it is by no means more difficult to
convince a monarch, and takes no longer, than convincing society. But is not
public opinion in the power of ignorance, passions, advantages and interests?
And are there so few that flatter public opinion – and, moreover, with some
success? In free regimes man-pleasing has still more dangerous consequences
even than in absolute monarchies.

Obod. And does not submitting to a monarch jar on you?

And. But you will always have to submit to someone. Why is it more
pleasant to submit to the elective majority, so grey and mediocre? But the tsar
himself submits to the monarchy, even more than you, he is its first servant.

Obod. But under a monarchy we are slaves! Do you like being a slave?

And. Monarchy in no way makes people slaves, but a republic deprives
them of personality in a much worse way. On the contrary, the elevated
image of a man living only for the state also raises his subjects.

Obod. But what is the value of all these reasonings if they are all cut off by
the chance of birth? A man is born a fool – and automatically reigns for a
quarter of a century. And nobody can do anything about it!

And. The chance of birth is a vulnerable spot, I grant you that. But chance
operating in the opposite direction gives us a successful birth! A talented
person at the head of a monarchy – what republic can compare with that? A
monarch can be lofty, or not, but the chosen one of the majority is almost
unfailingly a mediocrity. A monarch may be an average person, but if
deprived of the temptations of wealth, power and orders, he does not need to
do disgusting things in order to elevate himself and has complete freedom of
judgement. And then: the chance of birth is corrected from childhood by his
preparation for power, his being directed towards it and the selection of the
best teachers… And finally there is the metaphysical…

Obod. But look – Nicholas I and Alexander III ascended the throne without
ever preparing for it. These are not small examples. While as regards the
present Sovereign, with his unrivalled ability to surround himself with
nincompoops, and betray honourable men – all these reasons apply badly to
him. And when the chance of becoming autocrat is turned into the chance of
becoming Supreme Commander…

And. … the metaphysical concept of his power as the fulfilment of a higher
will. As the Anointed of God.

Obod. What kind of a rotten formula is ‘the Anointed of God’? What kind
of maniacal hypnosis is ‘anointedness’ in the most ordinary person? What
educated person today can believe that here some God actually elected and appointed Nicholas the Second for Russia?

And. It is by no means a dead formula! It expresses that sufficient reality that it was not people who elected and appointed him, and that he himself did not seek to attain this post. If hereditary succession to the throne is not violated by violence, and we, of course, are examining precisely this variant, then the will of the people interfered only in the election of the first member of the dynasty. However, with the enthronement of the first member of this dynasty a certain finger of God, you must agree, has been on Rus’.

Obod. Perhaps there was a finger, but then they committed follies. They both fought for the throne, and snatched it away, and killed people...

And. But then the tradition of the dynasty flows on independently of people and the political struggle. As in Japan: one dynasty for a third of a millennium. That’s already like nature herself...

This is the essence of the anointing, that the monarch is not even at liberty to refuse it. He did not fight for this power, but he cannot avoid it. He accepted it – like a slave. It is more a duty than a right.

Vorot. Then what is the aim of this unfortunate anointing? That Russia should perish hopelessly?

And. Now that is not given to us to know... It will be understood in time. When we are gone already...

And under a republic? All rational decisions are incomparably more complicated, because you have to force your way through to them through a thicket of human vices. Vanity burns much more strongly under a republic: after all, you have to be able to satisfy it in a limited time period. And what a fireworks of election lies! Everything depends on popularity: will they like you? In the pre-election campaign the future head of the republic is a petitioner, a flatterer, a demagogue. And no person of a lofty soul can win in such a struggle. And he is hardly elected when he is bound again with the chains of distrust. Every republic is built on distrust for the head of the government, and in this whirlpool of distrust even the most talented personality cannot decide on demonstrating his talent. A republic cannot guarantee consistent development in any direction...

Obod. Under a republic the people is given back its reason and will. And freedom. And the fullness of the people’s life.

And. People think that you only have to call a country a republic, and it will immediately become happy. But why the political upheaval – is this the fullness of the people’s life? Politics must not eat up all the spiritual forces of the people, all its attention, all its time. From Rousseau to Robespierre they
tried to convince us that a republic is equivalent to freedom. But it isn’t! And why must freedom be preferable to honour and dignity?

Obod. Because the law guarantees the honour and dignity of each person. The law, which stands above all! But under a monarchy what law can there be if the monarch can step over it?

And. But is the law sinless? Is it always composed by prescient minds? Is there no element of chance in the birth of laws? And even an imbalance in favour of avariciousness? And personal calculation? Dura lex sed lex – this is a pre-Christian, very stupid principle. Yes, the anointed one, and only he, can step over even the law. With his heart. At a moment of danger he can step over it in firmness. And at another time – in mercifulness. And this is more Christian than the law.

Obod. What a justification! With such a formulation any tyrant can enthusiastically break the law. And by the way whose anointed one is a tyrant? The devil’s?...

And. A tyrant is a tyrant in that he breaks the law for himself, and not through a power given from above. A tyrant has no responsibility before Heaven, that is the difference between him and a monarch...

The Case for the Monarchy (2)

However, there are stronger arguments in justification of the Orthodox Autocracy than those cited by Solzhenitsyn. Just as the Roman Empire was born at almost the same time as the Nativity of Christ, so the Russian Autocracy was born and grew up together with the conversion of Russia to Orthodoxy, being called into being in order to protect this last, most precious child in the family of Christian nations. And so from the time of St. Vladimir the Great, who both baptized Russia (in 988) and became her first Autocrat, the Russian Autocracy and Russian Orthodoxy have been inseparable.

After about 1100, the autocratic principle went into decay because of the internecine struggles of the Kievan princes and the corrupting influence of the Novgorodian yeche. However, in the north-east, in the land of Vladimir-Suzdal, autocracy was reborn under St. Andrew Bogoliubovo, strengthened by St. Alexander Nevsky, and then, with the active support of the holy Metropolitans Peter and Alexis, and of St. Sergius of Radonezh, was transplanted to Moscow. From there disunity was dispelled through the acceptance of the principle of primogeniture, through victorious wars against the Tatars, and above all through the exaltation of Orthodoxy.

---

Muscovite Russia had few holy tsars (Tsar Theodore Ioannovich was the exception) and some definitely unholy ones (Tsar Ivan the Terrible). But what characterized this period especially was the fierce determination of the people to defend Orthodoxy at any cost, and their love for, and obedience to, the tsar – even if he was cruel and unjust - as the leader of the people in the defence of Orthodoxy, without whom the state would disintegrate and become a prey to heterodox invaders. This solidarity of tsar and people, which westerners find so difficult to believe in or approve of, was demonstrated by the fact that even during the reigns of the worst tsars there was no "democratic" movement, no mass movement of rebellion (as opposed to the intrigues of individual or groups of boyars, or noblemen). Order broke down only when, at the end of the sixteenth century, the Riurik dynasty came to an end, and there was no clearly legitimate successor to the throne. For a few years groups of nobles tussled for power while the Catholic Poles and Swedes invaded the country. But the people did not see in this deliverance from tsarist rule any kind of good: rather, when they came together to restore order in the land in 1613, they elected Michael Romanov to rule over them, and called a curse upon themselves if they should ever disobey him or his descendants.

This unity of “Faith, Tsar and Fatherland” began to weaken only when Tsar Alexis unlawfully defrocked the Patriarch in the false council of 1666, and then, in 1721, Peter the Great abolished the patriarchate. This destruction of the “symphony” between the spiritual and the secular powers did not destroy faith in the people, but it undermined the primary purpose of the autocracy, which is to support and strengthen the Orthodox Church as the spiritual heart of the nation. Moreover, it allowed elements of heresy – Lutheranism and Freemasonry - to enter the educated classes. The result was a weakening of the Autocracy, which, having alienated from itself its chief supports in the Church and the People, - who did not rebel against, but could not support, the tsars’ westernized way of life, - fell prey to the intrigues of ambitious nobles. Two tsars were murdered in palace coups, and a third attempted coup, in December, 1825, might have overthrown the autocracy altogether, if it had been successful; for its leaders were imbued with western constitutionalist ideas. However, the new tsar who emerged from that turmoil, Nicholas I, not only re-established order by firm government and the suppression of revolutionary ideas: he also began a slow but steady return to the traditional, Muscovite idea of the Autocracy. This process was accelerated especially, as we have seen, by Nicholas II, who dreamed of a Church Council that would restore a true Church-State symphony on the pre-1666 model. Unfortunately, however, this healthy process developed in tandem with the unhealthy process of westernization begun by Peter the Great. Moreover, the threat now came, as we have seen, not from the nobles only, as in the eighteenth century, but from every class of society which, in various degrees and ways, had been infected with the disease of westernism, its exaltation of democracy and denigration of the Orthodox Autocracy.
As we shall see in more detail later, Nicholas II could have chosen to suppress the rebellion against him by force. But the country had changed drastically between 1825 and 1917: the rebels and heretics were now not one small and unrepresentative segment of the population, but the majority. The Russian Autocracy, with the exception of the eighteenth-century tsars, had never acted against the people or in conflict with the people’s ideal – this is what distinguished it from western-style absolutism. So now that the majority of the people were no longer in solidarity with the tsar, having exchanged his and Holy Russia’s ideal of Orthodox Christianity for the western idols of democracy, ecumenism and material goods, there was nothing that the Tsar could honourably do but abdicate. The people had renounced Orthodoxy and the Autocrat who stood on guard for Orthodoxy; so now God, honouring its free will, granted it to taste the bitter fruits of “freedom”…

But was there not a “third way”, the English alternative – a constitutional monarchy which preserved religion and the monarchy while allowing the people participation in government? This was certainly the ideal of what Lebedev calls “the first echelon” of the revolution – the Cadets and Octobrists who did not want the Tsar to abdicate (at first) but demanded from him a “responsible” government (i.e. one controlled by them). Let us briefly compare the Russian and English ways in the same period from 988 to 1917.

It is striking to note that from 988 to the fall of the English Orthodox monarchy in 1066, the paths of Russia and England were the same. Both nations confessed the Orthodox faith, and both were ruled by Orthodox Autocrats working in solidarity with the people and in defence of Orthodoxy. In spite of constant wars with external enemies (the Vikings in England, the Polovtsians and others in Russia), both nations were prosperous, well-organized and just societies.

However, after the Norman Conquest, England lost her Orthodox faith and her inner unity – and never recovered them. Her rulers were tyrants (William I collectivized all the land) who spoke a different language (French) and imposed a different faith (Catholicism). The sufferings of the people did not cease when Catholicism was exchanged for Protestantism, and Norman tyrants for Tudor ones: indeed, the Tudor tyranny was more complete than the Norman one because from the 1530s it included complete control of the Church, whose head became the monarch. In the seventeenth century a bitter civil war destroyed the monarchy and all zeal for Christianity in the upper classes… But in the same period Muscovite Russia prospered mightily under the Romanov tsars.

But what of the famed English democracy? In Magna Carta (1215) the greedier barons succeeded in limiting - to some degree, and temporarily, - the power of the king. But this had no effect on the people, who rebelled in 1381, were crushed by the king, and continued in subjection and without
representation until the early nineteenth century. In the same period until Peter the Great, the Russian tsars frequently convened Zemskie Sobory, or “Councils of the Land”, which did not attempt to limit the tsars’ power (only a few of the greedier nobles wanted that!) but did enable the tsars to consult with leading representatives of every section of the people. The English “Glorious Revolution” of 1688 did move democracy a little forward. But since only very rich people could enter politics, this “democracy” was essentially a staged contest between two aristocratic parties (the Whigs and the Tories) who pursued essentially the same policies with essentially the same aim – the increase in their personal wealth – while making the monarch into a merely symbolic figure. By the mid-nineteenth century, in spite of some widening in the franchise, the differences in wealth between the rich and the poor in England had become so shocking and so blatant that the condition of the English working classes (not to mention the extremely poor agricultural workers) became the main evidence on which Marx and Engels composed their Communist Manifesto; while the Russian Autocracy freed the serfs, increased the prosperity of all classes and spread the Gospel to other races.

By almost every measure, the Russian Autocracy compares well with the English absolutism-followed-by-constitutional monarchy. Moreover, it shows an inner spiritual consistency and purpose that is completely lacking in its English rival. For all the Russian tsars consciously – albeit with differing levels of success – pursued the aim of the defence of Orthodoxy and the eternal salvation of all the people through Orthodoxy; whereas the English monarchy after 1066 had no such spiritual purpose, and from the eighteenth century would not have been able to pursue any such purpose in any case because of its subjection to parliament – which as a result of its “multimutinous” essence (Tsar Ivan IV’s word) could have no single purpose either. For in the last resort, in spite of many human failings, the Russian Autocracy tried to serve God, and precisely for that reason submitted to no other authority than God’s, seeing its authority as derived from God; whereas the English monarchy, after its fall from grace in 1066, served many masters, all of them human, seeing its authority as derived from man...

For these reasons Nicholas II was completely justified in his firm attachment to the autocratic principle. And his choice was vindicated by his own conduct: no autocrat conducted himself with a more profound feeling of responsibility before God – and more patient condescension before the failings of men. He was truly an autocrat, and not a tyrant. The tragedy of Russia was that she was about to exchange the most truly Christian of monarchs for the most horrific of all tyrannies – all in the name of freedom!

---

367 As he said to Count Witte in 1904: “I will never, in any circumstances, agree to a representative form of government, for I consider it harmful for the people entrusted to me by God.” (Fomin & Fomina, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 376).
The Plot

Many people think that the Russian revolution was the result of an elemental movement of the masses. This is not true—although the masses later joined it. The February revolution was a carefully hatched plot whose leader was the industrialist and conservative parliamentarian, A.I. Guchkov.

The plot was successful. But it succeeded in eventually bringing to power, not the Masonic liberals, but the Bolsheviks, who destroyed all the plotters and all their Masonic lodges, forcing the Masons themselves to flee back to their mother lodges abroad…

Yana Sedova writes: “Already in 1906, after a meeting with the Emperor, A.I. Guchkov came to the unexpected conclusion: ‘We are in for still more violent upheavals’. Then he wanted ‘simply to step aside’. But already in those years he began to talk about a ‘coup d’état’.

“In the next few years Guchkov’s attention was temporarily occupied by work in the State Duma. But in 1911 after the murder of Stolypin, as he later recalled, there arose in him ‘an unfriendly feeling’ towards the Emperor Nicholas II.

“At the beginning of 1913, at a meeting in his Petersburg flat, Guchkov talked about a military coup in Serbia. The discussion moved to a coup in Russia. At this point one of the participants in the meeting said that ‘the party of the coup is coming into being’.

“Several months later, at a congress of his [Octobrist] party in Petersburg, Guchkov proclaimed the principle by which he was governed in the next four years: ‘the defence of the monarchy against the monarch’.

“The next year, during the ‘great retreat’, Guchkov created the Military-Industrial Committees, an organization whose official task was to help provide the army with ammunition. In fact, however, the committees turned out to be an instrument for the preparation of a coup.

“However, Guchkov would probably have continued to the end of his life only to ‘platonically sympathize’ with the coup, and do nothing himself, if once there had not appeared in his flat the leader of Russian masonry, N.V. Nekrasov.

---

368 Thus in October Kerensky and his Masonic colleagues fled to France, where they set up lodges under the aegis of the Grand Orient (Katkov, G. Fevral’skaia Revoliutsia (The February Revolution), Paris, 1984, pp. 175-82).
“The two of them became the ‘initiators’ of a plan: ‘a palace coup, as a result of which his Majesty would be forced to sign his abdication passing the throne to his lawful Heir’.

“Soon another Mason, M.I. Tereschenko, joined the plot, and, as Guchkov recalled, ‘the three of us set about a detailed working out of this plan’.”\(^{369}\)

On September 8, 1915 a “Committee of National Salvation” issued “Disposition Number 1”. “It affirmed,” writes N. Yakovlev, “that there were two wars going on in Russia – against a stubborn and skilful enemy from outside and a no less stubborn and skilful enemy from inside. The attainment of victory over the external enemy was unthinkable without a prior victory over the internal enemy. By the latter they had in mind the ruling dynasty. For victory on the internal front it was necessary… immediately to appoint a supreme command staff, whose basic core consisted of Prince G.E. Lvov, A.I. Guchkov and A.F. Kerensky.”\(^{370}\)

Shtormakh considers that the main plotters were A.I. Guchkov, Prince G.E. Lvov, N.V. Nekrasov and M.I. Tereschenko, all of whom became ministers in the Provisional Government.\(^{371}\) Lvov was leader of the Union of Zemstvos and Cities.

Some of the plotters may have considered regicide. Thus Shtormakh writes: “In 1915,’ recounts the Mason A.F. Kerensky in his memoirs, ‘speaking at a secret meeting of representatives of the liberal and moderate conservative majority in the Duma and the State Council, which was discussing the Tsar’s politics, V.A. Maklakov, who was to the highest degree a conservative liberal, said that it was possible to avert catastrophe and save Russia only by repeating the events of March 11, 1801 (the assassination of Paul I).’ Kerensky reasons that the difference in views between him and Maklakov came down only to time, for Kerensky himself had come to conclude that killing the Tsar was ‘a necessity’ ten years earlier. ‘And besides,’ continues Kerensky, ‘Maklakov and those who thought like him would have wanted that others do it. But I suggested that, in accepting the idea, one should assume the whole responsibility for it, and go on to execute it personally’. Kerensky continued to call for the murder of the Tsar. In his speech at the session of the State Duma in February, 1917 he called for the ‘physical removal of the Tsar, explaining that they should do to the Tsar ‘what Brutus did in the time of Ancient Rome’.”\(^{372}\)

\(^{369}\) Sedova, “Ne Tsar’, a Ego Poddanie Otvetsvenny za Febral’skij Perevorot 1917 Goda” (Not the Tsar, but his Subjects were Responsible for the Coup of 1917”), *Nasha Strana*, N 2864, March 14, 2009, p. 3 ©.
\(^{371}\) [http://rushistory.3dn.ru/forum/4-86-1](http://rushistory.3dn.ru/forum/4-86-1)
\(^{372}\) [http://rushistory.3dn.ru/forum/4-86-1](http://rushistory.3dn.ru/forum/4-86-1) (R).
According to Guchkov, they worked out several variants of the seizure of power. One involved seizing the Tsar in Tsarskoye Selo or Peterhof. Another involved doing the same at Headquarters. This would have had to involve some generals who were members of the military lodge, especially Alexeyev (a friend of Guchkov’s) and Ruzsky. However, this might lead to a schism in the army, which would undermine its capability for war. So it was decided not to initiate the generals into the plot – although, as we shall see, they played a very important role quite independently of Guchkov’s band, prevented loyal military units from coming to the aid of the Tsar, and themselves demanded his abdication. A third variant, worked out by another Mason, Prince D.L. Vyazemsky, envisaged a military unit taking control of the Tsar’s train between Military Headquarters and Tsarskoye Selo and forcing him to abdicate in favour of the Tsarevich. Yet another plan was to seize the Tsar (on March 1) and exile him abroad. Guchkov claims that the agreement of some foreign governments to this was obtained.

The Germans got wind of these plans, and not long before February, 1917 the Bulgarian Ambassador tried to warn the Tsar about them. The Germans were looking to save the Tsar in order to establish a separate peace with him. But the Tsar, in accordance with his promise to the Allies, rejected this out of hand.

Yet another plan was worked out by Prince G.E. Lvov. He suggested forcing the Tsar to abdicate and putting Great Prince Nicholas Nikolayevich on the throne in his place, with Guchkov and Lvov as the powers behind the throne. The Mason A.I. Khatisov, a friend of the Great Prince, spoke with him and his wife about this, and they were sympathetic to the idea. Sedova claims that Lvov actually offered the throne to Nikolasha…

At a meeting between members of the Duma and some generals in the study of Rodzyanko in February, 1917 another plot to force the Tsar to abdicate was formed. The leading roles in this were to be played by Generals Krymov and Ruzsky and Colonel Rodzyanko, the Duma leader’s son.

Finally, the so-called naval plot was formed, as Shulgin recounts, according to which the Tsaritsa (and perhaps also the Tsar) was to be invited onto a warship and taken to England.

---

373 Sedova, after arguing that the generals were never initiated into Guchkov’s plot, goes on: “Finally, nevertheless, Guchkov revealed his plan to Ruzsky. But this took place already after the coup. On learning of the plot, Ruzsky cried out: ‘Ach, Alexander Ivanovich, if you had told me about this earlier, I would have joined you.’ But Guchkov said: ‘My dear, if I had revealed the plan, you would have pressed a button, and adjutant would have come and you would have said: “Arrest him”.’” (“Ne Tsar…”, p. 4)

374 Sedova, “‘Byl li masons’kij zagovor…?’”

375 http://rushistory.3dn.ru/forum/4-86-1.
Besides the formal conspirators, there were many others who helped them by trying to undermine the resolve of the Tsar. Thus “before the February coup,” writes Yana Sedova, “in the Russian empire there were more and more attempts on the part of individual people to ‘open the eyes of his Majesty’ to the internal political situation.

“This ‘search for truth’ assumed a particularly massive character in November, 1916, beginning on November 1, when Great Prince Nicholas Mikhailovich arrived at Stavka to have a heart-to-heart conversation with his Majesty…

“Very many considered it their duty to ‘open the eyes of his Majesty’: Great Princes Nicholas and Alexander Mikhailovich, Nicholas Nikolayevich and Paul Alexandrovich, the ministers Ignatiev and Pokrovsky, Generals Alexeyev and N.I. Ivanov, the ambassadors of allied governments Buchanan and Paléologue, the president of the Duma M. Rodzyanko, Protopresbyter of the army and navy G. Shavelsky, the court commandant V.N. Voejkov, the chief representative of the Red Cross P.M. Kaufmann-Turkestansky, the official A.A. Klopop, the dentist S.S. Kostritsky…

“This is far from a complete list. It includes only conversations, but many addressed his Majesty in letters or try to influence the Empress (Great Prince Alexander Mikhailovich both spoke with his Majesty and sent him a very long letter and spoke with the Empress). ‘It seemed,’ wrote Rodzyanko later, ‘that the whole of Russia was beseeching his Majesty about one and the same thing, and it was impossible not to understand and pay heed to the pleas of a land worn out by suffering’.

“But what did ‘the whole of Russia’ ask about? As a rule, about two things: the removal of ‘dark powers’ and the bestowing of ‘a ministry of confidence’. The degree to which the boundaries between these two groups was blurred is evident from the fact that the Duma deputy Protopopov at first considered himself a candidate for the ‘ministry of confidence’, but when his Majesty truly appointed him a minister, the name of Protopopov immediately appeared in the ranks of the ‘dark powers’. By the ‘dark powers’ was usually understood Rasputin and his supposed protégés. Few began to think at that time that ‘the Rasputin legend’ was invented, and not invented in vain.

“It was less evident what the ‘ministry of confidence’ was. For many this term had a purely practical meaning and signified the removal from the government of certain ministers who were not pleasing to the Duma and the appointment in their place of Milyukov, Rodzyanko and other members of the Duma.

“But the closer it came to the February coup, the more demands there were in favour of a really responsible ministry, that is, a government which would
be formed by the Duma and would only formally be confirmed by his Majesty. That a responsible ministry was no longer a real monarchy, but the end of the Autocracy was not understood by everyone. Nobody at that time listened to the words of Scheglovitov: ‘A monarchist who goes with a demand for a ministry of public confidence is not a monarchist’.

“As for the idea of appointed people with no administrative experience, but of the Duma, to the government in conditions of war, this was evidently thought precisely by those people. All these arguments about ‘dark forces’ and ‘a ministry of confidence’ first arose in the Duma and were proclaimed from its tribune. Evidently the beginning of the mass movements towards his Majesty in November, 1916 were linked with the opening of a Duma session at precisely that time. These conversations were hardly time to coincide with the opening of the Duma: rather, they were elicited by the Duma speeches, which were distributed at the time not only on the pages of newspapers, but also in the form of leaflets. ‘We,’ wrote Shulgin later, ‘ourselves went mad and made the whole country mad with the myth about certain geniuses, ‘endowed with public confidence’, when in fact there were none such...’

“In general, all these conversations were quite similar and usually irrelevant. Nevertheless, his Majesty always listened attentively to what was expressed in them, although by no means all his interlocutors were easy to listen to.

“Some of them, like many of the Great Princes and Rodzyanko, strove to impose their point of view and change his political course, demanding a ministry endowed with confidence or even a responsible ministry. His Majesty listened to them in silence and thanked them for their ‘advice’.

“Others, like General Alexeyev or S.S. Kostritsky, were under the powerful impression (not to say influence) of the Duma speeches and political agitation, which the truly dark forces who had already thought up the February coup were conducting at the time. Those who gave regular reports to his Majesty and whom he trusted were subjected to particularly strong pressure. If they began a heart-to-heart conversation, his Majesty patiently explained to them in what he did not agree with them and why.

“There existed a third category which, like P.M. Kaufmann, got through to his Majesty, even though they did not have a report to give, so as to tell him ‘the whole bitter truth’. They did not clearly know what they wanted, and simply said ‘everything that had built up in their souls’. Usually they began their speeches with the question: could they speak to him openly (as if his Majesty would say no to such a question!), and then spoke on the same two subjects, about the ‘dark powers’ and the government, insofar as, by the end of 1916, the same things, generally speaking, had built up in all their souls. The speech of such a ‘truth-seeker’ usually ended in such a sad way
(Kaufmann just said: ‘Allow me: I’ll go and kill Grishka!’) that his Majesty had to calm them down and assure them that ‘everything will work out’.

“One cannot say that his Majesty did not listen to his interlocutors. Some ministers had to leave their posts precisely because of the conversations. For example, on November 9, 1916 his Majesty wrote to the Empress that he was sacking Shturmer since nobody trusted that minister: ‘Every day I hear more and more about him. We have to take account of that.’ And on the same day he wrote in his diary: ‘My head is tired from all these conversations’.

“By the beginning everyone noticed his tiredness, and his interlocutors began more often to foretell revolution to him. Earlier he could say to the visitor: ‘But you’ve gone out of your mind, this is all in your dreams. And when did you dream it? Almost on the very eve of our victory?! And what are you frightened of? The rumours of corrupt Petersburg and the babblers in the Duma, who value, not Russia, but their own interests?’ (from the memoirs of Mamantov). And then the conversation came to an end. But now he had to reply to the most senseless attacks. And he replied. To the rumours of betrayal in the entourage of the Empress: ‘What, in your opinion I’m a traitor?’ To the diagnosis made by the Duma about Protopopov: ‘When did he begin to go mad? When I appointed him a minister?’ To the demand ‘to deserve the confidence of the people’: ‘But is it not that my people has to deserve my confidence?’ However, they did not listen to him…”

Given that the tsar had the God-given right to rule, and had been anointed in special church rite, how was he to exercise his rule in relation to rebels? This was truly a most difficult problem, which required both the meekness of David and the wisdom of Solomon – and the firmness of Tsar Nicholas I. Tsar Nicholas II, as we have seen, was the most merciful of men, and the least inclined to manifest his power in violent action. Once the head of the police promised him that there would be no revolution in Russia for a hundred years if the Tsar would permit 50,000 executions. The Tsar quickly refused this proposal… And yet he could manifest firmness, and was by no means as weak-willed as has been claimed. Thus once, in 1906, Admiral F.V. Dubasov asked him to have mercy on a terrorist who had tried to kill him. The Tsar replied: “Field tribunals act independently and independently of me: let them act with all the strictness of the law. With men who have become bestial there is not, and cannot be, any other means of struggle. You know me, I am not malicious: I write to you completely convinced of the rightness of my opinion. It is painful and hard, but right to say this, that ‘to our shame and gall’ [Stolypin’s words] only the execution of a few can prevent a sea of blood and has already prevented it.”

377 Lebedev, op. cit., p. 430.
The eve of the revolution of February, 1917 was, of course, no less serious a crisis than 1905. In the Duma in November Milyukov had uttered his famously seditious evaluation of the regime’s performance: “Is it stupidity – or treason?” Treason was certainly afoot among the Masons. And so, it could be argued, the Tsar should have acted against the conspirators at least as firmly as he had against the revolutionaries of 1905. Moreover, this was precisely what the Tsaritsa argued in private letters to her husband: “Show to all, that you are the Master & your will shall be obeyed – the time of great indulgence & gentleness is over – now comes your reign of will & power, & obedience…” (December 4, 1916). And again: “Be Peter the Great, John [Ivan] the Terrible, Emperor Paul – crush them all under you.” (December 14, 1916). She urged him to prorogue the Duma, remove Trepov and send Lvov, Milyukov, Guchkov and Polivanov to Siberia.

But he did not crush them. And in attempting to understand why we come close to understanding the enigma of the reign of this greatest of the tsars.

One false explanation is that he was deterred by the death of Rasputin on December 16 at the hands of Grand Prince Dmitri Pavlovich Romanov, Prince Felix Yusupov and a right-wing member of the Duma, Purishkevich. Rasputin had “prophesied”: “Know that if your relatives commit murder, then not one of your family, i.e. your relatives and children, will live more than two years…” Now Rasputin had been murdered by relatives of the tsar. Did this mean that resistance to the revolution was useless? However, the tsar was not as superstitious as his enemies have made out. One pseudo-prophecy could not have deterred him from acting firmly against the conspirators if that is what his conscience told him to do. Rasputin was certainly the evil genius of the Royal Family, and they – or the Tsaritsa, at any rate – were deceived in believing him to be a holy man. But his real influence on the course of events was only indirect – in giving the enemies of the Tsar an excuse for viciously slandering him.

Archpriest Lev Lebedev has another hypothesis: “We shall not err by one iota if we suppose that such question arose at that time in the consciousness of the Tsar himself, that he too experienced movements of the soul in the direction of deciding everything by simply and speedily dealing with the

---

378 It is now thought that the third and fatal shot that killed Rasputin was actually fired by a British secret service agent.
379 The Tsar did not condone the murder. But Grand Duchess Elizabeth considered it an act of true patriotism. She wrote to the Tsar on December 29: “Crime remains crime, but this one being of a special kind, can be counted as a duel and it is considered a patriotic act and for these deeds the law I think is altering. Maybe nobody has had the courage to tell you now, that in the street of the towns people kissed like at Easter week, sang the hymn in the theatres and all moved by one feeling – at last the black wall between us and our Emperor is removed” (Bokhanov et al., The Romanovs, p. 237). To Felix Yusupov’s parents she wrote: “May the Lord bless the patriotic exploit of your son” (Yusupov, Memoirs (Memoirs), Moscow, 1998, p. 235 ©).
conspirators. We remember his words, that ‘with men who have become bestial there is not, and cannot be, any other means of struggle’ (besides shooting them) and that ‘only the execution of a few can prevent a sea of blood’. But there appeared before the Tsar at that time in the persons of Ldov, Rodzyanko, Guchkov, etc. not ‘bestialized’ criminal murderers like the Bolsheviks, but respectable people with good intentions! Yes, they were in error in thinking that by removing the Tsar from power they rule Russia better [than he]. But this was a sincere error, they thought that they were truly patriots. It would have been wrong to kill such people! Such people should not even have been sent to Siberia (that is, into prison). It was necessary to show them that they were mistaken. And how better to show them than by victory over the external enemy, a victory which was already in their hands, and would be inevitable in four or five months! The tsar did not know that his closest generals had already prepared to arrest him and deprive him of power on February 22, 1917. And the generals did not know that they were doing this precisely in order that in four or five months’ time there should be no victory! That had been decided in Bnai-Brit, in other international Jewish organizations (Russia must not be ‘among the victor-countries’!). Therefore through the German General Staff (which also did not know all the plots, but thought only about its own salvation and the salvation of Germany), and also directly from the banks of Jacob Schiff and others (we shall name them later) huge sums of money had already gone to the real murderers of the Tsar and the Fatherland - the Bolsheviks. This was the second echelon [of plotters], it hid behind the first [the Russian Masons]. It was on them (and not on the ‘noble patriots’) that the world powers of evil placed their hopes, for they had no need at all of a transfigured Russia, even if on the western (‘their’) model. What they needed was that Russia and the Great Russian people should not exist as such! For they, the powers of evil, knew Great Russia better (incomparably better!) than the whole of Russian ‘society’ (especially the despised intelligentsia). Did Guchkov know about the planned murder of the whole of Great Russia? He knew! The Empress accurately called him ‘cattle’. Kerensky also knew, and also several specially initiated Masons, who hid this from the overwhelming majority of all the ‘brothers’ – the other Russian Masons. The specially initiated had already for a long time had secret links (through Trotsky, M. Gorky and several others) with Lenin and the Bolsheviks, which the overwhelming majority of the Bolsheviks, too, did not know!

“And what did his Majesty know? He knew that society was eaten up by Judaeo-Masonry, he knew that in it was error and cowardice and deception. But he did not know that at the base of the error, in its secret places, was treason. And he also did not know that treason and cowardice and deception were all around him, that is, everywhere throughout the higher command of the army. And what is the Tsar without an army, without troops?! Then there is the question: could the Tsar have learned in time about the treachery among the generals? Why not! Let’s take, for example, Yanushkevich, or Gurko, or Korfa (or all of them together), whom Sukhomlinov had pointed to
as plotters already in 1909 (!). In prison, under torture – such torture as they had with Tsars Ivan and Peter – they would have said everything, given up all the rest…! But in this case, he, Nicholas II, would have needed to be truly like Ivan IV or Peter I from the beginning – that is, a satanist and a born murderer (psychologically), not trusting anyone, suspecting everyone, sparing nobody. It is significant that her Majesty joined to the names of these Tsars the name of Paul I. That means that she had in mind, not Satanism and bestiality, but only firmness (that is, she did not know who in actual fact were Ivan the Terrible and his conscious disciple, Peter I). But she felt with striking perspicacity that her husband was ‘suffering for the mistakes of his royal predecessors’. Which ones?! Just as we said, first of all and mainly for the ‘mistakes’ precisely of Ivan IV and Peter I. Not to become like them, these predecessors, to overcome the temptation of replying to evil with evil means – that was the task of Nicholas II. For not everything is allowed, not all means are good for the attainment of what would seem to be the most important ends. The righteousness of God is not attained by diabolic methods. Evil is not conquered by evil! There was a time when they, including also his Majesty Nicholas II, suppressed evil by evil! But in accordance with the Providence of God another time had come, a time to show where the Russian Tsar could himself become a victim of evil – voluntarily! – and endure evil to the end. Did he believe in Christ and love Him truly in such a way as to suffer voluntarily like Christ? The same Divine providential question as was posed for the whole of Great Russia! This was the final test of faith – through life and through death. If one can live only by killing and making oneself one with evil and the devil (as those whom one has to kill), then it would be better not to live! That is the reply of the Tsar and of Great Russia that he headed! The more so in that it was then a matter of earthly, historical life. Here, in this life and in this history to die in order to live again in the eternal and new ‘history’ of the Kingdom of Heaven! For there is no other way into this Kingdom of Heaven – the Lord left no other. He decreed that it should be experienced only by this entry… That is what turned out to be His, God’s will!

“We recall that his Majesty Nicholas II took all his most important decisions after ardent prayer, having felt the goodwill of God. Therefore now, on considering earnestly why he then, at the end of 1916 and the very beginning of 1917 did not take those measures which his wife so warmly wrote to him about, we must inescapably admit one thing: he did not have God’s goodwill in relation to them! Her Majesty’s thought is remarkable in itself, that the Tsar, if he had to be ruled by anyone, should be ruled only by one who was himself ruled by God! But there was no such person near the Tsar. Rasputin was not that person. His Majesty already understood this, but the Tsaritsa did not yet understand it. In this question he was condescending to her and delicate. But, as we see, he did not carry out the advice of their ‘Friend’, and did not even mention him in his replies to his wife. The Tsar
entrusted all his heart and his thoughts to God and was forced to be ruled by Him alone.” 380

There is much of value in this hypothesis, but it is too kind to the Masonic plotters. Yes, they were “sincere” – but so were the Bolsheviks! It seems unlikely that the Tsar should have considered the Bolsheviks worthy of punishment, but the Masons not. More likely, in our opinion, is that he thought that acting against the Masons would bring forward the revolution at precisely the moment when he wanted peace in the rear of the army. Moreover, the Masons controlled the public organizations, like the Military-Industrial Committees and the zemstva, which, in spite of their disloyalty, were nevertheless making their contribution to the providing ammunition for the army and helping the wounded. “The Emperor held the opinion that ‘in wartime one must not touch the public organizations’.” 381

**The February Revolution**

In December, 1916 the Empress visited the prophetess Maria Mikhailovna at the Desyatina convent in Novgorod. She was 107 years old and a severe ascetic. “You, beautiful lady, shall know suffering,” she told the empress. “Don’t fear the heavy cross”... A few days later Rasputin was killed. Logically, this should have removed one of the main reasons for the people’s anger against the Royal Family. But the Russian revolution had little to do with logic...

The decision to cease plotting and begin acting was taken in January, 1917. In that month, there arrived in Petrograd an Allied Commission composed of representatives of England, France and Italy. After meeting with Guchkov, who was at that time president of the military-industrial committee, Prince G.E. Lvov, president of the State Duma Rodzyanko, General Polivanov, Sazonov, the English ambassador Buchanan, Milyukov and others, the mission presented the following demands to the Tsar:

1. The introduction into the Staff of the Supreme Commander of allied representatives with the right of a deciding vote.
2. The renewal of the command staff of all the armies on the indications of the heads of the Entente.
3. The introduction of a constitution with a responsible ministry.

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

---

381 Sedova, “ne Tsar...”, p. 3.
1. “The introduction of allied representatives is unnecessary, for I am not suggesting the introduction of my representatives into the allied armies with the right of a deciding vote.”

2. “Also unnecessary. My armies are fighting with greater success than the armies of my allies.”

3. “The act of internal administration belongs to the discretion of the Monarch and does not require the indications of the allies.”

When the reply of the Tsar was made known there was a meeting in the English Embassy attended by the same people, at which it was decided: “To abandon the lawful path and step out on the path of revolution”. General A.M. Krymov suggested forming a band of plotters who would stop the Imperial train and demand that the Tsar abdicate by force. It was now or never, for, as P.N. Milyukov noted: “We knew that in the spring we would see the victories of the Russian Army. In such a case the prestige and attraction of the Tsar among the people would become so great that all our efforts to shake and overthrow the Throne of the Autocrat would be in vain. That is why we had to resort to a revolutionary explosion as soon as possible, so as to avert this danger.”

On February 14, 1917 Kerensky declared at a session of the State Duma: “The historical task of the Russian people at the present time is the task of annihilating the medieval regime immediately, at whatever cost… How is it possible to fight by lawful means against those whom the law itself has turned into a weapon of mockery against the people?... There is only one way with the violators of the law – their physical removal.”

And yet there were still those who saw clearly that the future of the Church and of Russia depended on the survival of the Autocracy. Thus on February 21 Bishop Agapetus of Yekaterinoslav together with members of the Yekaterinoslav section of the Union of the Russian People, headed by their president, Obraztsov, wrote to the chancellery of the Over-Procurator: “The gates of hell will not prevail over the Church of Christ, but the destiny of Orthodoxy in our fatherland is indissolubly bound up with the destiny of the Tsarist Autocracy. Remembering on the Sunday of Orthodoxy the merits of the Russian Hierarchs before the Church and the State, we in a filial spirit dare to turn to your Eminence and other first-hierarchs of the Russian Church: by your unanimous blessings and counsels in the spirit of peace and love, strengthen his Most Autocratic Majesty to defend the Sacred rights of the Autocracy, entrusted to him by God through the voice of the people and the blessing of the Church, against which those same rebels who are encroaching against our Holy Orthodox Church are now encroaching.”

382 Tatyana Groyan, Tsariu Nebesnomu i Zemnomu Vernij (Faithful to the Heavenly and Earthly King), Moscow, 1996, P. XCIV.
384 Groyan, op. cit., pp. CXX-CXXI.
“In the middle of 1916,” writes Lebedev, “the Masons had designated February 22, 1917 for the revolution in Russia. But on this day his Majesty was still at Tsarskoye Selo, having arrived there more than a month before from Headquarters, and only at 2 o’clock on the 22nd did he leave again for Mogilev. Therefore everything had to be put back for one day and begin on February 23.385 By that time special trains loaded with provisions had been deliberately stopped on the approaches to Petrograd on the excuse of heavy snow drifts, which immediately elicited a severe shortage of bread, an increase in prices and the famous ‘tails’ – long queues for bread. The population began to worry, provocateurs strengthened the anxiety by rumours about the approach of inevitable famine, catastrophe, etc. But it turned out that the military authorities had reserves of food (from ‘N.Z.’) that would allow Petrograd to hold out until the end of the snow falls. Therefore into the affair at this moment there stepped a second very important factor in the plot – the soldiers of the reserve formations, who were in the capital waiting to be sent off to the front. There were about 200,000 of them, and they since the end of 1916 had been receiving 25 roubles a day (a substantial boost to the revolutionary agitation that had been constantly carried out among them) from a secret ‘revolutionary fund’. Most important of all, they did not want to be sent to the front. They were reservists, family men, who had earlier received a postponement of their call-up, as well as new recruits from the workers, who had been under the influence of propaganda for a long time. His Majesty had long ago been informed of the unreliability of the soldiers of the Petrograd garrison and had ordered General Alexeyev to introduce guards units, including cavalry, into the capital. However, Alexeyev had not carried out the order, referring to the fact that, according to the information supplied by the commandant of the Petrograd garrison General Khabalov, all the barracks in the capital were filled to overflowing, and there was nowhere to put the guardsmen!... In sum, against 200,000 unreliable reservists who were ready to rebel the capital of the Empire could hardly number 10,000 soldiers – mainly junkers and cadets from other military schools – who were faithful to his Majesty. The only Cossack regiment from the reserves was by that time also on the side of the revolution. The plotters were also successful in gaining the appointment of General Khabalov to the post of commandant of the capital and district. He was an inexperienced and extremely indecisive man. Had Generals Khan-Hussein of Nakhichevan or Count Keller been in his place, everything might have turned out differently.

385 There is conflicting evidence on this point. Sedova writes: “Later Guchkov said that the coup was planned for March-April, 1917. However his comrades in the plot were more sincere. In Yekaterinoslav, where Rodzyanko’s estate was situated, there came rumours from his, Rodzyanko’s house that the abdication of the Tsar was appointed for December 6, 1917. At the beginning of 1917 Tereschenko declared in Kiev that the coup, during which the abdication was supposed to take place, was appointed for February 8” (“Ne Tsar…”, p. 3). (V.M.)
“On February 23, at a command, 30,000 (according to other data, 90,000) workers went on strike with the slogans ‘Bread!’ and ‘Down with the War!’ The police had difficulty in dispersing their demonstrations. On February 24 up to 170,000 workers poured out onto the streets of Petrograd. Their slogans were: ‘Down with the Tsarist Government’, ‘Long Live the Provisional Government’ (although it did not exist yet!) and ‘Down with the War’. About 40,000 gathered in Nevsky Prospekt. The police and the soldiers pushed them away, but they went into the side streets, smashed shop windows, robbed the shops, stopped trams, and already sang the ‘Marseillaise’ and ‘Rise, Stand up, Working People!’ However, Protopopov reported to her Majesty in Tsarskoye that the disorders were elicited only by a lack of bread. In the opinion of many ministers, everything had begun with a chance ‘women’s rebellion’ in the queues. They did not know, or simply were frightened to know, that a previously organized revolution had begun. The Cossacks did nothing, protecting the demonstrators. On February 25 already 250,000 people were on strike! In their hands they held a Bolshevik leaflet (‘… All under the red flag of the revolution. Down with the Tsarist monarchy. Long live the Democratic Republic… Long live the Socialist International’.) At a meeting at the Moscow station the police constable Krylov hurled himself at a demonstrator in order to snatch a red flag from him, and was killed... by a Cossack! The crowd lifted the murderer on their shoulders. In various places they were beating, disarming and killing policemen. At the Trubochny factory Lieutenant Hesse shot an agitator, and those who had assembled, throwing away their red flags and banners, ran away. The same happened in the evening on Nevsky, where the demonstrators opened fire on the soldiers and police, and in reply the soldiers shot into the crowd (several people were immediately killed), who then ran away. The speeches of the workers, as we see, were the work of the hands of the second echelon of the revolution (the social democrats). But it is also evident that without the soldiers it would not have worked for either the first or the second echelon...

“On the evening of the same February 25, a Saturday, his Majesty sent Khabalov a personal telegram: ‘I order you to stop the disturbances in the capital tomorrow, disturbances that are inadmissible in the serious time of war against Germany and Austria. Nicholas.’ Khabalov panicked. Although everything said that there was no need to panic, decisive action even by those insignificant forces that were faithful and reliable, that is, firing against the rebels, could have stopped everything in its tracks. The Duma decreed that their session should stop immediately. But the deputies remained and continued to gather in the building of the Tauris palace.

“On February 26, a Sunday, it was peaceful in the morning and Khabalov hastened to tell his Majesty about this. What lengths does fear for themselves and for their position or career take people to!... On that day the newspapers did not come out, and at midday demonstrations began again and the Fourth company of the reserve battalion of the Pavlovsky regiment mutinied. It was
suppressed, and the mutineers arrested. It was difficult to incite soldiers to rebel, even those like the Petrograd reservists. They replied to the worker-agitators: ‘You’ll go to your homes, but we’ll get shot!’... The plotters understood that the troops could be aroused only by some kind of exceptional act, after which it would no longer be possible for them to go back. Such an act could only be a serious military crime – a murder... The heart of the Tsar sensed the disaster. On the evening of the 26th he noted in his diary: ‘This morning during the service I felt a sharp pain in my chest... I could hardly stand and my forehead was covered with drops of sweat.’ On that day Rodzyanko sent the Tsar a telegram in which, after describing the disorders in the capital, the clashes of military units and the firing, he affirmed: ‘It is necessary immediately to entrust a person enjoying the confidence of the country (!) to form a new government. There must be no delay. Delay is like death. I beseech God that at this hour responsibility may not fall on the Crown-bearer.’ A liar and a hypocrite, Rodzyanko had more than once very bombastically expressed his ‘devotion’ to his Majesty, while at the same time preparing a plot against him. He immediately sent copies of this telegram to the commanders of the fronts – Brusilov and Ruzsky, asking them to support his demand for a ‘new government’ and a ‘person’ with the confidence of the country before his Majesty. They replied: ‘task accomplished’.

“On the night from the 26th to the 27th in the Reserve battalion of the Light-Guards of the Volhynia regiment (the regiment itself was at the front), the under-officer of the Second Company Kirpichnikov (a student, the son of a professor) convinced the soldiers ‘to rise up against the autocracy’, and gained their promise to follow his orders. The whole night the same agitation was going on in other companies. By the morning, when Captain Lashkevich came into the barracks, they told him that the soldiers had decided not to fire at the people any more. Lashkevich hurled himself at under-officer Markov, who had made this declaration, and was immediately killed. After this the Volhynians under the command of Kirpichnikov went to the reserves of the Preobrazhensky regiment. There they killed the colonel. The rebels understood that now they could escape punishment (and at the same time, being sent to the front) only if they would all act as a group, together (there was no going back). The ‘professional’ revolutionaries strengthened them in their feelings. The Volhynians and Preobrazhenskys were joined on the same morning of the 27th by a company of the Lithuanian regiment, the sappers, a part of the Moscow regiment (reservists, of course). The officers saved themselves from being killed, they started firing and ran. The workers united with the soldiers. Music was playing. They stormed the police units and the ‘Kresty’ prison, from which they freed all those under arrest, including recently imprisoned members of the ‘Working Group’ of the Military-Industrial Committee386, who had fulfilled the task of being the link between

386 “The reports of the Petrograd department of the Okhrana concerning the preparations for the coup by forces of the Central Military-Industrial Committee became so eloquent that on January 27 the working group of the Committee was arrested. But this did not stop the
the Masonic ‘headquarters’ and the revolutionary parties, and first of all – the Bolsheviks. They burned the building of the District Court. The appeal sounded: ‘Everyone to the State Duma’. And a huge crowd rolled into the Tauris palace, sacked it, ran amok in the halls, but did not touch the Duma deputies. But the Duma delegates, having received on the same day an order from his Majesty to prorogue the Duma until April, did not disperse, but decided to form a *Provisional Committee of the State Duma* ‘to instil order in the capital and to liaise with public organizations and institutions’. The Committee was joined by the whole membership of the bureau of the ‘Progressive Bloc’ and Kerensky and Chkeidze (the first joining up of the first and second echelons). *Immediately*, in the Tauris palace, at the same time, only in different rooms, revolutionaries of the second echelon, crawling out of the underground and from the prisons, formed the Executive Committee of the Soviet of Workers’ Deputies (which later added ‘and of Soldiers’’ to its name). The Soviet was headed by Alexandrovich, Sukhanov (Gimmer) and Steklov (Nakhamkes), and all the rest (97%) were Jews who had never been *either workers or soldiers*. Immediately the Executive Committee sent invitations round the factories for deputies to the Congress of Soviets, which was appointed to meet at 7 o’clock in the evening, and organized ‘requisitions’ of supplies from the warehouses and shops for ‘the revolutionary army’, so that the Tauris Palace immediately became *the provisioning point* for the rebels (the Provisional Committee of the Duma had not managed to think about that!).

“The authorities panicked. Khabalov hastily gathered a unit of 1000 men under the command of Colonel A.P. Kutepov, but with these forces he was not able to get through to the centre of the uprising. Then soldiers faithful to his Majesty, not more than 1500-2000 men (!) gathered in the evening on Palace Square in front of the Winter Palace. With them was the Minister of War Belyaev, and Generals Khabalov, Balk and Zankevich. Khabalov telegraphed the Tsar that he could not carry out his instructions. He was joined by Great Prince Cyril Vladimirovich, who declared that the situation was hopeless. Then, during the night, there arrived Great Prince Michael Alexandrovich, the (younger) brother of the Tsar, who said that the soldiers would have to be taken out of the Palace since he ‘did not want the soldiers to fire at the people from the House of the Romanovs’. And he suggested telegraphing the Tsar to ask him to appoint Prince Lvov as the new President of the Council of Ministers... The completely bewildered generals were moved to the Admiralty, and the soldiers began to disperse. On the afternoon of the 28th their remnants left the Admiralty at the demand of the Minister of the Navy and, laying down their weapons, dispersed. One should point out that many members of the Imperial House behaved very unworthily in those days. They even discussed a plan for a ‘palace coup’ (to overthrow his Majesty and ‘seat’ one of the Great Princes on the throne). And some of the Great Princes directly joined the revolution. There were still some members of

---

plotters - the sessions of the workers in the Committee continued. However, the Okhrana department lost its informers from the workers’ group” (Sedova, “Ne Tsar...”, p. 3). (V.M.)
the Council of Ministers and the State Council in the Mariinsky Palace. They advised Protopopov (who was especially hated by ‘society’) to say that he was ill, which he did. Prince Golitsyn telegraphed the Tsar with a request that he be retired and that he grant a ‘responsible ministry’. His Majesty replied that he was appointing a new leader of the Petrograd garrison, and gave an order for the movement of troops against Petrograd. He gave Golitsyn all rights in civil administration since he considered ‘changes in the personal composition (of the government) to be inadmissible in the given circumstances’. His Majesty was very far from a Tolstoyan ‘non-resistance to evil’! On the same day, the 27th, he gave an order to send a whole group of military units that were brave and faithful to the Fatherland from all three fronts to Petrograd, and told everyone that on the 28th he would personally go to the capital. At the same time his Majesty ordered General N.I. Ivanov to move on Petrograd immediately with a group of 700 Georgievsky cavalrymen, which he did the next day. At that time, on February 27, the ministers and courtiers, gathering together for the last time, suddenly received the news that an armed crowd was heading for the Mariinsky Palace. They decided to disperse! They dispersed forever! The crowd came and began to sack and loot the Mariinsky.

“It was all over with the government of Russia. On the evening of the 27th, as has been noted, there took place the first session of the Soviet of Workers’ Deputies, who elected Chkheidze as their president. They also elected a ‘literary commission’ and ordered the publication of the Soviet’s Izvestia. At that point, on the night from the 27th to the 28th, the Provisional Committee of the State Duma began to try and persuade Rodzyanko ‘to take power into his hands’, since, in the words of Milyukov, ‘the leaders of the army were in cahoots with him’. 15 minutes of tormented waiting passed. Finally, Rodzyanko agreed. The Provisional Committee proclaimed itself to be the ‘power’ of Russia. But... as became clear, with the prior agreement of the Soviet’s Executive Committee! From that moment all the members of the Provisional Government, that is, the first ‘echelon’, would be led by the leaders of the Soviet, that is, the second ‘echelon’ of the revolution, although there were few who knew about that.

“On February 28th the uprising spread to the suburbs of Petrograd. In Kronstadt drunken soldiers killed Admiral Viren and tens of officers. In Tsarkoye Selo the troops who were guarding the Family of his Majesty declared that they were ‘neutral’.

“At 6 o’clock in the morning of February 28, 1917 Rodzyanko twice telegraphed General Alexeyev in Headquarters. The first telegram informed him that ‘power has passed to the Provisional Committee’, while the second said that this new power, ‘with the support of the troops and with the
sympathy of the population’ would soon instil complete order and ‘re-establish the activity of the government institutions’. It was all a lie!”

**Tsar Nicholas’ Abdication**

“On the 28th the Tsar set off by train from Headquarters to Tsarskoye Selo.

“The time had come to carry out Guchkov’s old plan. The Tsar’s train was stopped first at Malaya Vishera station, then at Dno station, supposedly because the stations further down the line were in the hands of the rebels, which, as it turned out, was a deception. Movement along the railway lines was already controlled by the appointee of the Masons and revolutionary Bublikov (a former assistant of the Minister of Communications). Incidentally, he later admitted: ‘One disciplined division from the front would have been sufficient to put down the rebellion’. But Alexeyev, Brusilov and Ruzsky did not allow even one division as far as Petrograd, as we shall now see! It was decided to direct the Tsar’s train to Pskov, so as then to attempt to get through to Tsarskoye Selo via Pskov. The Tsar hoped that the whole situation could be put right by General Ivanov, who at that moment was moving towards Tsarskoye Selo by another route. So everything was arranged so that his Majesty should be in Pskov, where the Headquarters of the Commander of the Northern Front, General Ruzsky, was. The Tsar was very much counting on him. Not knowing that he was one of the main traitors… It has to be said again that this lack of knowledge was not the result of bad work on the part of the police. The Masons had done their conspiring well. Moreover, it did not enter the heads either of the police or of his Majesty that fighting generals, commanders of fronts, the highest ranks in the army, ‘the most noble gentlemen’ from the Duma, the ministries and institutions could be plotters!...

“On March 1 there arrived at the Duma new military units, or their deputations, with declarations of fidelity to ‘the new power’. At 4 o’clock in the afternoon there arrived Great Prince Cyril Vladimirovich at the head of the Guards Naval Squadron. He told Rodzyanko that he was at his disposal. Before that the Great Prince had sent to the leaders of the military units at Tsarskoye Selo, who had sent deputies to the Soviet, notes suggesting that they ‘unite with the new government’, following his example. In his memoirs Rodzyanko writes that Cyril Vladimirovich arrived ‘with a red bow on his chest’ and that this ‘signified a clear violation of his oath’ and ‘the complete dissolution of the idea of the existing order… even among the Members of the

---

388 “Dno” in Russian means “abyss, bottom” – an extraordinary coincidence! (V.M.)
389 “The plotters had earlier prepared a group to seize the train from among the reserve Guards units in the so-called Arakcheev barracks in Novgorod province. That is why the train had to be stopped nearer these barracks, and not in Pskov” (Sedova, “Ne Tsar…”, p. 4). (V.M.)
Royal House’. One cannot believe Rodzyanko. Other witnesses to the event do not recall the ‘red bow’. The Great Prince himself wrote during those days that he was forced to go to Rodzyanko ‘to save the situation’. Cyril Vladimirovich offered the Guards Squadron to Rodzyanko for the restoration of order in the capital, but they replied to him that there was no need for that. In 1924 Cyril Vladimirovich took upon himself the title of Emperor. While the memoirs of Rodzyanko appeared in 1925. Thus the invention of the ‘red bow’ and Great Prince Cyril’s welcoming of the revolution began to form. But the fact that they for some reason refused the services of the Guards does not tally with the invention. They gave the Great Prince neither encouragement nor any task to carry out, and he was the first to leave Russia during the Provisional Government, before the October revolution… Great Prince Cyril thought that he would be able to help the Duma to suppress the armed bands of the Soviet, he thought that Rodzyanko wanted this… But he was mistaken, and soon he understood his mistake. For this he was slandered.

“On the same March 1 the Soviet of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies issued the famous ‘Order No. 1’ to the army, signed by the Mason N.D. Sokolov. Its essence was that soldiers’ committees should be elected by the troops and that only those orders of the Military Commission of the State Duma should be carried out which did not contradict the orders of the Soviet (!), and that all the weapons of the army should be at the disposal and under the control of the company and battalion elected committees and in no circumstances were ‘to be given to the officers, even at their demand’. Saluting and addressing [officers] by their titles were also rescinded. This was the beginning of the collapse of the Russian army. After the departure of his Majesty from Stavka General Alexeyev at 1.15 a.m. on March 1, without the knowledge of the Tsar, sent General Ivanov telegram No. 1833, which for some reason he dated February 28, in which he held Ivanov back from decisive actions by referring to ‘private information’ to the effect that ‘complete calm had arrived’ in Petrograd, that the appeal of the Provisional Government spoke about ‘the inviolability of the monarchical principle in Russia’, and that everyone was awaiting the arrival of His Majesty in order to end the matter through peace, negotiations and the averting of ‘civil war’. Similar telegrams with completely false information were sent at the same time to all the chief commanders (including Ruzsky). The source of this lie was the Masonic ‘headquarters’ of Guchkov. ‘Brother’ Alexeyev could not fail to believe the ‘brothers’ from the capital, moreover he passionately wanted to believe, since only in this could there be a ‘justification’ of his treacherous actions. General Ivanov slowly, but surely moved towards the capital. The railwaymen were forced, under threat of court martial, to carry out his demands. At the stations, where he was met by revolutionary troops, he acted simply – by commanding them: ‘On your knees!’ They immediately carried out the command, casting their weapons on the ground…”

390 Lebedev, op. cit., pp. 477-482.
“Meanwhile, the Tsar arrived in Pskov. On the evening of March 1, 1917 there took place between him and General Ruzsky a very long and difficult conversation. N.V. Ruzsky, who thought the same about the situation in the capital as Alexeyev, on the instructions of Rodzyanko kept saying unashamedly to the members of the royal suite: ‘It remains only to cast ourselves on the mercy of the conquerors’, supposing that ‘the conquerors’ were the Masonic ‘Progressive Bloc’ of the State Duma... Unexpectedly for Nicholas II, Ruzsky ‘heatedly’ began to demonstrate to him the necessity of a ‘responsible ministry’. His Majesty calmly objected: ‘I am responsible before God and Russia for everything that has happened and will happen; it does not matter whether the ministers will be responsible before the Duma and the State Council. If I see that what the ministers are doing is not for the good of Russia, I will never be able to agree with them, comforting myself with the thought that the matter is out of my hands.’ The Tsar went on to go through the qualities of all the main actors of the Duma and the ‘Bloc’, showing that none of them had the necessary qualities to rule the country. However, all this was not simply an argument on political questions between two uninvolved people. From time to time in the course of this strange conversation his Majesty received witnesses to the fact that this was the position not only of Ruzsky, but also of Alexeyev. The latter sent a panicky telegram from Headquarters about the necessity immediately of bestowing ‘a responsible ministry’ and even sent him the text of a royal manifesto composed by him to this effect! Besides, it turned out that his Majesty could not even communicate with anyone by direct line! The Tsar sent [V.N.] Voeikov (the palace commandant) to telegraph his reply to Alexeyev. Voeikov demanded access to the telegraph apparatus from General Davydov (also a traitor from Ruzsky’s headquarters). Ruzsky heard the conversation and declared that it was impossible to hand over the apparatus. Voeikov said that he was only carrying out ‘the command of his Majesty’. Ruzsky said that ‘he would not take such an insult (!!), since he, Ruzsky, was the commander-in-chief here, and his Majesty’s communications could not take place through his headquarters without his, Ruzsky’s, knowledge, and that at the present worrying time he, Ruzsky would not allow Voeikov to use the apparatus at all! The Tsar understood that practically speaking he was already separated from the levers and threads of power. The members of his suite also understood this. One of them recalled that the behaviour and words of Ruzsky (on casting themselves ‘on the mercy of the conquerors’) ‘undoubtedly indicated that not only the Duma and Petrograd, but also the higher commanders at the front were acting in complete agreement and had decided to carry out a coup. We were only perplexed when this took place.’

It began ‘to take place’ already in 1915, but the final decision was taken by Alexeyev and Ruzsky during a telephone conversation they had with each other on the night from February 28 to March 1. I. Solonevich later wrote that ‘of all the weak points in the Russian State construction the heights

---

391 As we have seen, however, Guchkov claims that the generals were not initiated into the plot, but acted independently. Sedova agrees with this assessment. (V.M.)
of the army represented the weakest point. And all the plans of his Majesty Emperor Nicholas Alexandrovich were shattered precisely at this point’.

“In view of the exceptional and extraordinary importance of the matter, we must once again ask ourselves: why was it precisely this point in the ‘construction’ that turned out to be the weakest? And once again we reply: because it was eaten up from within by the rust of Masonry, its propaganda. Then there is one more question: how did this become possible in the Russian Imperial army? And again the reply: only because, since the time of Peter I, through the implanting of Masonry into Russia, the ideological idol of ‘service to Russia and the Fatherland’ was raised in the consciousness of the nobility, and in particular the serving, military nobility, above the concept of service to God and the Tsar, as was demanded by the direct, spiritual-mystical meaning of the Oath given by the soldiers personally, not to some abstraction, but to a given, concrete Sovereign before God! The emperors of the 19th century did not pay due attention to this danger, or were not able to destroy this idol-worship. In truth, the last of them, his Majesty Nicholas II, was now paying in full for this, ‘suffering for the mistakes of his predecessors’.

“Seeing the extreme danger of the situation, at 0.20 a.m. on the night from March 1 to March 2 the Tsar sent this telegram to General Ivanov, who had already reached Tsarskoye Selo: ‘I ask you to undertake no measures before my arrival and your report to me.’ It is possible that, delighted at this text, Ruzsky, behind the back of his Majesty, on his own authority and against the will of the Tsar, immediately rescinded the sending of soldiers of the Northern Front to support Ivanov and ordered them to return the military echelons which had already been sent to Petrograd. At the same time Alexeyev from Headquarters, in the name of his Majesty, but without his knowledge and agreement, ordered all the units of the South-Western and Western fronts that had earlier been sent to Petrograd to return and stop the loading of those who had only just begun to load. The faithful officers of the Preobrazhensky regiment (and other units!) recalled with pain how they had had to submit to this command. They did not know that this was not the command of the Tsar, but that Alexeyev had deceived them!

“After this everything took place catastrophically quickly. His Majesty agreed to a ‘responsible government’. But when Rodzyanko was told about this in Petrograd, he replied that this was already not enough: for the salvation of Russia and the Dynasty, and the carrying through of the war to victory, everyone (who was everyone?) were demanding the abdication of his Majesty Nicholas II in favour of his son, the Tsarevich Alexis, with Great Prince Michael as regent over him. Moreover, Rodzyanko again, without any gnawing of conscience, lied to Alexeyev and Ruzsky that the Provisional Government had complete control of the situation, that ‘everybody obeyed him (i.e. Rodzyanko) alone’… He was hiding the fact that ‘everybody’ (that is, the Soviet first of all) were frightened, as of fire, of the return of the Tsar to the
capital! For they were not sure even of the mutinous reservists, and if even only one warlike unit (even if only a division) were to arrive from the front – that would be the end for them all and for the revolution! We can see what the real position of the Provisional Government was from the fact that already on March 1 the Soviet had expelled it from its spacious accommodation in the Tauris palace, which it occupied itself, into less spacious rooms, and refused Rodzyanko a train to go to negotiate with the Tsar. So Rodzyanko was compelled to beg. The Soviet gave him two soldiers to go to the post, since on the road the ‘ruler of Russia’, whom everyone supposedly obeyed, might be attacked or completely beaten up... One of the main leaders of the Soviet in those days was Sukhanov (Himmer). In his notes he conveyed an accurate general picture of the state of things. It turns out that the ‘progressivists’ of the Duma on that very night of March 1 in a humiliating way begged Himmer, Nakhamkes and Alexandrovich to allow them to create a ‘government’. Himmer wrote: ‘The next word was mine. I noted either we could restrain the masses or nobody could. The real power, therefore, was with us or with nobody. There was only one way out: agree to our conditions and accept them as the government programme.’ And the Provisional Committee (the future ‘government’) agreed! Even Guchkov (!) refused to take part in such a government. He joined it later, when the Bolsheviks allowed them to play a little at a certain self-sufficiency and supposed ‘independence’ before the public.

“... But Rodzyanko lied and deceived the generals, since it was his direct responsibility before the ‘senior brothers’ by all means not to allow the arrival of military units and the Tsar into Petrograd at that moment!

“At 10.15 a.m. on March 2 Alexeyev on his own initiative sent to all the front-commanders and other major military leaders a telegram in which, conveying what Rodzyanko was saying about the necessity of the abdication of his Majesty for the sake of the salvation of the Monarchy, Russia and the army, and for victory over the external foe, he added personally on his own part (as it were hinting at the reply): ‘It appears that the situation does not allow any other resolution.’ By 2.30 on March 2 the replies of the commanders had been received. Great Prince Nicholas Nikolayevich replied, referring to the ‘fateful situation’: ‘I, as a faithful subject (?!), consider it necessary, in accordance with the duty of the oath and in accordance with the spirit of the oath, to beseech Your Imperial Majesty on my knees’ (... to abdicate). General Brusilov (the future Bolshevik ‘inspector of cavalry’) also replied that without the abdication ‘Russia will collapse’. General Evert expressed the opinion that ‘it is impossible to count on the army in its present composition for the suppression of disorders’. This was not true! The army as a whole, and some units in particular, was devoted to his Majesty. Masonic and revolutionary propaganda was indeed being carried out in it, but it did not have the necessary success as long as the Tsar remained at the head of his Army. General Sakharov, while reviling the Duma for all he was worth (‘a thieving band of
men... which has taken advantage of a propitious moment’), nevertheless, ‘sobbing, was forced to say that abdication was the most painless way out’… To these replies Alexeyev appended his own opinion, which was also in favour of the abdication of the Tsar. Only the commander of the Guards Cavalry, General Khan-Hussein of Nakhichevan (a Muslim) remained faithful to the Russian Orthodox Autocrat392. ‘I beseech you not to refuse to lay at the feet of His Majesty the boundless devotion of the Guards Cavalry and our readiness to die for our adored Monarch’, was his reply to Alexeyev. But the latter did not pass on this reply to the Tsar in Pskov. They also did not tell him that Admiral Rusin in Headquarters had more or less accused Alexeyev and his assistant General Lukomsky of ‘treason’ when they had suggested that the admiral sign the text of a general telegram to his Majesty in the name of all the commanders expressing the opinion that abdication was necessary. Then Rusin voluntarily refused to serve the enemies of Russia and resigned his post. So at that time there were still leaders who were completely faithful to the Tsar, and not only traitors like Alexeyev, Lukomsky, Ruszky and Danilov, or like Generals Brusilov, Polivanov, Manikovsky, Bonch-Bruevich, Klembovsky, Gatoovsky, Boldyrev and others, who tried to please the Bolsheviks. At 10 a.m. on March 2 his Majesty was speaking to Ruzsky about the abdication: ‘If it is necessary that I should step aside for the good of Russia, I am ready, but I am afraid that the people will not understand this’… At this point they brought the text of Alexeyev’s telegram to the commanders. It was decided to wait for the replies. By 3 p.m. the replies had arrived from Headquarters. Ruzsky, accompanied by Danilov and Savich, came with the text of the telegram to his Majesty’s carriage. The Tsar, as Danilov recalled, ‘seemed calm, but was paler than usual: it was evident that he had passed most of the night without sleep. He was dressed in a dark blue Circassian coat, with a dagger in a silver sheath in his belt.’ Having sat down at the table, his Majesty began to listen to Ruzsky. He informed him of the events of the past hours and handed the Tsar the replies of the commanders. The Tsar read them. Ruzsky, ‘emphasizing each word’, began to expound his own opinion, which consisted in the fact that his Majesty had to act as the generals advised him. The Tsar asked the opinion of those present. Danilov and Savich said the same as Ruzsky. ‘A deathly silence ensued,’ wrote Danilov. ‘His Majesty was visibly perturbed. Several times he unconsciously looked at the firmly drawn window of the carriage.’ His Majesty’s widowed mother, Empress Maria Fyodorovna, later, from the words of her son, affirmed that Ruzsky had even dared to say: ‘Well, decide.’

“What was his Majesty thinking about at that moment? According to the words of another contemporary of the events, the Tsar ‘clearly understood that General Ruzsky would not submit to his command if he ordered him to suppress the mutiny raging in the capital. He felt that a secret betrayal was encompassing him like a sticky spider’s web.’ Immediately the Empress learned that his Majesty was in Pskov, she expressed herself with maximum accuracy:

392 Also General Theodore Keller, who was later martyred. (V.M.)
‘It’s a trap!’ Danilov continues: ‘Then, standing up and turning quickly towards us, [the Tsar] crossed himself and said: “I have decided... I have decided to renounce the Throne in favour of my son Alexis!... I thank all of you for your brilliant and faithful service. I hope that it will continue under my son...” It was as if a stone that had been pressing on us fell from our shoulders. It was a profoundly triumphant moment. The behaviour of the abdicated Emperor was worthy of every kind of praise.’

“The moment was fateful. But for the traitor-generals themselves. Each of them would later receive his recompense from the Bolsheviks and God. But it was also a fateful moment for the whole of Russia!”

Why did the Tsar finally agree to abdicate? Yana Sedova finds the explanation in a letter he wrote to his mother at the very similar turning-point of October, 1905. “His Majesty himself explained the reason for his agreement [to concede a constitution]. He wrote about two paths, between which he had to choose: a dictatorship and a constitution. A dictatorship, in his words, would give a short ‘breathing space’, after which he would ‘again have to act by force within a few months; but this would cost rivers of blood and in the end would lead inexorably to the present situation, that is, the power’s authority would have been demonstrated, but the result would remain the same and reforms could not be achieved in the future’. So as to escape this closed circle, his Majesty preferred to give a constitution with which he was not in sympathy.

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

“By contrast with Peter I, Tsar Nicholas II of course was not inclined to walk over other people’s bodies. But he, too, was able, in case of necessity, to act firmly and send troops to put down the rebellious city. He could have acted in this way to defend the throne, order and the monarchical principle as a whole. But now he saw how much hatred there was against himself, and that the February revolution was as it were directed only personally against him. He did not want to shed the blood of his subjects to defend, not so much his throne, as himself on the throne... [He said:] ‘I have always protected, not the autocratic power, but Russia.’”

393 Lebedev, op. cit., pp. 481-486.
394 Sedova, “Pochemu Gosudar’ ne mog ne otrech’sa?” (Why his Majesty could not avoid abdication), Nasha Strana, March 6, 2010, no. 2887, p. 2 ®.
Archpriest Lev Lebedev argues that the Tsar agreed to abdicate, because he believed that the general dissatisfaction with his personal rule could be assuaged by his personal departure from the scene. But he never saw in this the renunciation of the Monarchy and its replacement by a republic; he never thought this would mean the destruction of the Monarchy, but only its transfer to another member of the Dynasty – his son, under the regency of his brother. This transfer, he thought, would placate the army and therefore ensure victory against the external enemy, Germany.

Let us look at this hypothesis in detail... The first evidence of the Tsar’s real intentions is contained in his diary-entry for March 2: “My abdication is necessary. Ruzsky transmitted this conversation [with Rodzianko] to the Staff HQ, and Alexeyev to all the commanders-in-chief of the fronts. The replies from all arrived at 2:05. The essence is that that for the sake of the salvation of Russia and keeping the army at the front quiet, I must resolve on this step. I agreed. From the Staff HQ they sent the draft of a manifesto. In the evening there arrived from Petrograd Guchkov and Shulgin, with whom I discussed and transmitted to them the signed and edited manifesto. At one in the morning I left Pskov greatly affected by all that had come to pass. All around me I see treason, cowardice, and deceit.”

Commenting on these last words, Fr. Lev writes: “The Tsar was convinced that this treason was personally to him, and not to the Monarchy, not to Russia! The generals were sincerely convinced of the same: they supposed that in betraying the Tsar they were not betraying the Monarchy and the Fatherland, but were even serving them, acting for their true good!... But betrayal and treason to God’s Anointed is treason to everything that is headed by him. The Masonic consciousness of the generals, drunk on their supposed ‘real power’ over the army, could not rise even to the level of this simple spiritual truth! And meanwhile the traitors had already been betrayed, the deceivers deceived! Already on the following day, March 3, General Alexeyev, having received more detailed information on what was happening in Petrograd, exclaimed: ‘I shall never forgive myself that I believed in the sincerity of certain people, obeyed them and sent the telegram to the commanders-in-chief on the question of the abdication of his Majesty from the Throne’... In a similar way General Ruzsky quickly ‘lost faith in the new government’ and, as was written about him, ‘suffered great moral torments’ concerning his conversation with the Tsar, and the days March 1 and 2 ‘until the end of his life’ (his end came in October, 1918, when the Bolsheviks finished off Ruzsky in the Northern Caucasus). But we should not be moved by these belated ‘sufferings’ and ‘recovery of sight’ of the generals (and also of some of the Great Princes). They did not have to possess information, nor be particularly clairvoyant or wise, they simply had to be faithful to their oath – and nothing more! One of the investigators of the generals’ treason, V. Kobylin, is right is saying that no later ‘regrets’ or even exploits on the fields of the Civil war could wash away the stain of eternal shame from the traitor-
military commanders. ‘The world has never heard of such an offence,’ he writes. ‘After that, nothing other than Bolshevism could or should have happened... The Russian Tsar had been betrayed... The whole of Russia had been betrayed... The Army had been betrayed, and after this it would also betray. As a consequence of the acts of Alexeyev and the commanders-in-chief there would be ‘Order N 1’ (of the Soviet), which was carried out to the letter by the same Alexeyev…’ The whole of this ‘chain reaction’ of betrayals and deceits was determined, according to the just word of N. Pavlov, ‘by the connection of the Tsars with Orthodoxy and the people and the act of anointing by God. Before... the past and the future (of Russia) his Majesty stood alone,’ says Pavlov. ‘On no other Monarch had the burden of such a decision ever been laid, since there is no greater or more important country than Russia...’ Archimandrite Constantine (Zaitsev) adds: {Russia} ‘in general ceased to exist as a certain conciliar [sobornaia] personality’ – an exceptionally important observation! Although, in spite of the thought of Fr. Constantine, this did not happen immediately, at the moment of abdication.

“The whole point is that to the mysticism of Tsarist power as the ‘Head’ of Russia there corresponded the mysticism of its people’s ‘Body’. If you cut off the head of an ordinary person, then the body, like the head, is doomed to a rapid dying. But it was not like that with the mystical ‘Body’ of the people, Great Russia as a Conciliar Personality! This ‘Body’, this Personality was able in similar cases to generate a new Head in the form of a new Tsar, as had already happened more than once, for example in 1613! His Majesty Nicholas II knew this well. Therefore, in abdicating from his power personally, he firmly believed and knew that this power would be inherited by another Monarch, and in no other way, and he was completely right! A thousand times right! And wrong are those who rebuked (and to this day continue to rebuke) Nicholas II for ‘not thinking’ about the people, the Fatherland and Russia, and that by his abdication he ‘doomed’ them to something terrible. Nothing of the sort! After the inevitable period of a new Time of Troubles, the Great Russian people, that is, more than 80% of the population, which was deeply monarchist in the whole of its nature and psychology, could not fail to engender a new Orthodox Autocrat and nothing other than a restored Orthodox Kingdom!...

“... At that time, March 1-2, 1917, the question was placed before the Tsar, his consciousness and his conscience in the following way: the revolution in Petrograd is being carried out under monarchical banners: society, the people (Russia!) are standing for the preservation of tsarist power, for the planned carrying on of the war to victory, but this is being hindered only by one thing – general dissatisfaction personally with Nicholas II, general distrust of his personal leadership, so that if he, for the sake of the good and victory of Russia, were to depart, then he would save both the Homeland and the Dynasty!
“Convinced, as were his generals, that everything was like that, his Majesty, who never suffered from love of power (he could be powerful, but not power-loving!), after 3 o’clock in the afternoon of March 2, 1917, immediately sent two telegrams – to Rodzyanko in Petrograd and to Alexeyev in Mogilev. In the first he said: ‘There is no sacrifice that I would not undertake in the name of the real good of our native Mother Russia. For that reason I am ready to renounce the Throne in favour of My Son, in order that he should remain with Me until his coming of age, under the regency of My brother, Michael Alexandrovich’. The telegram to Headquarters proclaimed: ‘In the name of the good of our ardently beloved Russia, her calm and salvation, I am ready to renounce the Throne in favour of My Son. I ask everyone to serve Him faithfully and unhypocritically.’ His Majesty said, as it were between the lines: ‘Not as you have served Me…’ Ruzsky, Danilov and Savich went away with the texts of the telegrams.

“On learning about this, Voeikov ran into the Tsar’s carriage: ‘Can it be true… that You have signed the abdication?’ The Tsar gave him the telegrams lying on the table with the replies of the commanders-in-chief, and said: ‘What was left for me to do, when they have all betrayed Me? And first of all – Nikolasha (Great Prince Nicholas Nikolayevich)... Read!’"³⁹⁶

As in 1905, so in 1917, probably the single most important factor influencing the Tsar’s decision was the attitude of his uncle and the former Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, Grand Duke Nicholas Nikolayevich Romanov, “Nikolasha” as he was known in the family. It was indeed the case that there was very little he could do in view of the treason of the generals and Nikolasha. He could probably continue to defy the will of the social and political elite, as he had done more than once in the past. But could he defy the will of his generals?

E.E. Alferev writes: “Factually speaking, in view of the position taken by [Generals] Ruzsky and Alexeev, the possibility of resistance was excluded. Being cut off from the external world, the Sovereign was as it were in captivity. His orders were not carried out, the telegrams of those who remained faithful to their oath of allegiance were not communicated to him. The Empress, who had never trusted Ruzsky, on learning that the Tsar’s train had been help up at Pskov, immediately understood the danger. On March 2

she wrote to his Majesty: ‘But you are alone, you don’t have the army with you, you are caught like a mouse in a trap. What can you do?’”

Perhaps he could count on the support of some military units. But the result would undoubtedly be a civil war, whose outcome was doubtful, but whose effect on the war with Germany could not be doubted: it would give the Germans a decisive advantage at a critical moment when Russia was just preparing for a spring offensive. It was this last factor that was decisive for the Tsar: he would not contemplate undermining the war effort for any reason. For the first duty of an Orthodox Tsar after the defence of the Orthodox faith is the defence of the country against external enemies – and in the case of the war with Germany the two duties coincided. And so he laid aside the crown for his country’s sake.

“The Lord allowed the satanic plan of Guchkov – borrowed by him, as we recall, from the Young Turks – to be carried out exactly. The Tsar, having left Headquarters, was, while on his way (isolated from the concrete, immediate levers and threads of the administration of the army and state), seized by plotters from the highest officers of the army and by deceit forced to abdicate.

“The ‘monarchists’ Guchkov and Shulgin, who did not yet know of his decision, and were only thinking to incline him towards it, that is, to carry out the work which Ruzsky, Alexeyev and the others had already done, left Petrograd for Pskov without the Soviet of Deputies knowing (!). They arrived at about 10 p.m. on March 2. By this time, that is, in the evening, the Tsar had somewhat changed his original decision. The point was the extremely dangerous illness of his Son, the Tsarevich Alexis, who was still destined to rule, albeit under the regency of his uncle, Michael. The Tsar-Father, worrying about his, asked the doctors for the last time: was there the slightest hop of Alexis Nikolayevich being cured of haemophilia? And he received a negative reply: there was no hope. Then the Tsar took the decision to keep his sick son completely with himself and abdicate in favour of his brother Michael. However, the text of the abdication manifesto was still marked as March 2, 15.00 hours, that is, the moment when he decided to renounce his power. So when Guchkov and Shulgin brought the text of the manifesto that they had composed they found that it was not necessary. The Tsar gave them his. And they had to admit with shame how much more powerful, spiritual and majestic in its simplicity was the manifesto written by the Tsar that their talentless composition.

They begged the Tsar to appoint Prince Lvov as

---

398 Shulgin wrote: “How pitiful seemed to me the sketch that we had brought him... It is too late to guess whether his Majesty could have not abdicated. Taking into account the position that General Ruzsky and General Alexeyev held, the possibility of resistance was excluded: his Majesty’s orders were no longer passed on, the telegrams of those faithful to him were not communicated to him... In abdicated, his Majesty at least retained the possibility of appealing
President of the Council of Ministers and General L.G. Kornilov as Commander of the Petrograd military district. The Tsar signed the necessary orders. These were the last appointments made by the Tsar.

“Seeing themselves as the controllers of the destinies and rulers of Russia, Guchkov and Shulgin both arrived in a concealed manner, bewildered, unshaven, in noticeably dirty collars, and departed with all the papers they had been given in a conspiratorial manner, looking around them and concealing themselves from ‘the people’ whom they thought to rule... Thieves and robbers! Guchkov’s plan had been carried out, while as for Guchkov himself – what a boundlessly pitiful situation did this very clever Mason find himself in, he who had worked for so many years to dig a hole under Tsar Nicholas II!

“Nicholas II’s manifesto declared: ‘During the days of the great struggle against the external foe which, in the space of almost three years, has been striving to enslave our Native Land, it has pleased the Lord God to send down upon Russia a new and difficult trial. The national disturbances that have begun within the country threaten to reflect disastrously upon the further conduct of the stubborn war. The fate of Russia, the honour of our heroic army, the well-being of the people, the entire future of our precious Fatherland demand that the war be carried out to a victorious conclusion, come what may. The cruel foe is exerting what remains of his strength, and nor far distant is the hour when our valiant army with our glorious allies will be able to break the foe completely. In these decisive days in the life of Russia, We have considered it a duty of conscience to make it easy for Our people to bring about a tight-knit union and cohesion of all our national strength, in order that victory might be the more quickly attained, and, in agreement with the State Duma We have concluded that it would be a good thing to abdicate the Throne of the Russian State and to remove Supreme Power from Ourselves. Not desiring to be separated from Our beloved Son, We transfer Our legacy to Our Brother Grand Duke Michael Alexandrovich, and bless Him to ascend the Throne of the Russian State. We command Our Brother to conduct State affairs fully and in inviolable unity with the representatives of those men who hold legislative office, upon those principles which they shall establish, swearing an inviolable oath to that effect. In the name of our ardently beloved Native Land We call upon all faithful sons of the Fatherland to fulfil their sacred duty before it, by submitting to the Tsar during the difficult moment of universal trials, and, aiding Him, together with the representatives of he people, to lead the Russian State out upon the path of victory, well-being and glory. May the Lord God help Russia. Pskov. 2 March, 15.00 hours. 1917. Nicholas.’ Countersigned by the Minister of the Court Count Fredericks.399

399 Lebedev’s text has been slightly altered to include the whole text of the manifesto (V.M.)
“Then - it was already night on March 2 - the Tsar telegraphed the essence of the matter to his brother Michael and asked forgiveness that he ‘had not been able to warn’ him. But this telegram did not reach its addressee.

“Then the train set off. Left on his own, in his personal compartment, the Tsar prayed for a long time by the light only of a lampada that burned in front of an icon. Then he sat down and wrote in his diary: ‘At one in the morning I left Pskov greatly affected by all that had come to pass. All around me I see treason, cowardice, and deceit.’

“This is the condition that reigned at that time in ‘society’, and especially in democratic, Duma society, in the highest army circles, in a definite part of the workers and reservists of Petrograd. But what of the rest of Russia?

“In Moscow on February 28th there were massive demonstrations under red flags. The garrison (also composed of reservists) passed over to the side of the rebellion on March 1. In those days a Soviet of workers’ deputies and a Committee of public organizations was formed in the Moscow Duma, as in Petrograd. Something similar took place also in Kharkov and Nizhni-Novgorod. In Tver a crowd killed Governor N.G. Byunting, who, as the crowd approached, had managed to make his confession to the bishop. And that’s all…”

It has been argued that this telegram-manifesto was not an abdication, but a final coded appeal to the army to support him. But such a supposition cannot be reconciled with the plain meaning of the text. And since all agree on the crystal-clear sincerity of Nicholas’ character, there is no reason not to believe the plain meaning of the text. What is true, however, is that the Tsar considered himself to be still Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces of Russia. That is why his train now moved towards Mogilev, and why neither Ruzsky nor Alexeyev nor even Guchkov prevented him from returning there.

And for almost a whole week he continued to lead all the Armed Forces of Russia!... But, although there were many senior officers there who were ready to die for him, the Tsar made no move to make use of his powerful position to march against the revolution. For, according to Lebedev, he was sincerely convinced that “his departure from power could help everyone to come together for the decisive and already very imminent victory over the external enemy (the general offensive was due to take place in April). Let us recall his words to the effect that there was no sacrifice which he was not prepared to offer for the good of Russia. In those days the Tsar expressed himself still more definitely: “… If Russia needs an atoning sacrifice, let me be that sacrifice’. The Tsar was convinced (and they convinced him) that... the Provisional...

400 Lebedev, op. cit., pp. 488-489.
Government, society and the revolution were all (!) for the preservation of the Monarchy and for carrying through the war to a glorious victory…”  

Lebedev is less than convincing here. Certainly, the Tsar’s first priority was a successful conclusion to the war. After all, on the night of March 2, after the abdication, he wrote in his diary: “For the sake of Russia, and to keep the armies in the field, I decided to take this step…” But that he still, after all the treason he has seen around him, believed that “the Provisional Government, society and the revolution [!] were all for the preservation of the Monarchy” seems hard to believe…

Tsar Michael’s Abdication

In any case, if he had any such illusions, they were soon to be shattered.

“On March 3, 1917 it became clear that the Provisional Government and society were by no means for the Monarchy. On that day the members of the new government in almost their complete composition appeared before Great Prince Michael Alexandrovich with the text of Nicholas II’s manifesto on his abdication in favour of his brother. Only Guchkov and Milyukov expressed themselves for the preservation of the Monarchy (a constitutional one, it goes without saying), that is, for the Great Prince’s accepting power. The rest, especially Kerensky, Rodzyanko and Lvov, ardently tried to prove the impossibility and danger of such an act at the present time. They said openly that in that case Michael Alexandrovich could be killed, while the Imperial Family and all the officers could ‘have their throats cut’. A second historically important moment arrived. What would the Great Prince decide, who in those minutes was from a juridical point of view already the All-Russian Emperor?”

Edvard Radzinsky describes the scene:-

“Michael came in, tall, pale, his face very young.

“They spoke in turn.

“Socialist Revolutionary Alexander Kerensky: ‘By taking the throne you will not save Russia. I know the mood of the masses. At present everyone feels intense displeasure with the monarchy. I have no right to conceal that the dangers taking power would subject you to personally. I could not vouch for your life.’

“Then silence, a long silence. And Michael’s voice, his barely audible voice: ‘In these circumstances, I cannot.’

---

401 Lebedev, op. cit., p. 491.
402 Lebedev, op. cit., p. 491.
“Michael was crying. It was his fate to end the monarchy. Three hundred years – and it all ended with him.”

However, continues Lebedev, “Michael Alexandrovich... did not decide [completely] as Kerensky and the others wanted. He did not abdicate from the Throne directly in favour of the Provisional Government. In the manifesto that he immediately wrote he suggested that the question of his power and in general of the form of power in Russia should be decided by the people itself, and in that case he would become ruling Monarch if ‘that will be the will of our Great People, to whom it belongs, by universal suffrage, through their representatives in a Constituent Assembly, to establish the form of government and the new basic laws of the Russian State’. For that reason, the manifesto goes on to say, ‘invoking the blessing of God, I beseech all the citizens of the Russian State to submit to the Provisional Government, which has arisen and been endowed with all the fullness of power at the initiative of the State Duma (that is, in a self-willed manner, not according to the will of the Tsar – Prot. Lebedev), until the Constituent Assembly, convened in the shortest possible time on the basis of a universal, direct, equal and secret ballot, should by its decision on the form of government express the will of the people. Michael.’ The manifesto has been justly criticised in many respects. But still it is not a direct transfer of power to the ‘democrats!’

Nevertheless, Tsar Michael had effectively given the people the final say in how they were to be ruled, and thereby finally destroyed the monarchy. ‘We can see,’ writes M.A. Babkin, ‘that the talk was not about the Great Prince’s abdication from the throne, but about the impossibility of his occupying the royal throne without the clearly expressed acceptance of this by the whole people of Russia.’ Tsar Nicholas clearly saw what had happened, writing in his diary: “God knows who gave him the idea of signing such rot”.

Some have compared March, 1917 to the people’s election of the first Romanov tsar in 1613. At that time there was no tsar, it was a time of anarchy; so it was incumbent upon the people to take the initiative in choosing their ruler. But here, as we have seen, Michael was already from a juridical point of view tsar by a lawful transfer of power from the former tsar. So, unlike Tsar Nicholas, who simply transferred power from himself to his lawful successor, with no hint of people-power, Tsar Michael undermined the very basis of the Monarchy by acting as if he were not the lawful tsar already. Like King Saul

---

403 Radzinsky, The Last Tsar, p. 173.
404 Lebedev, op. cit., p. 491.
406 Radzinsky, The Last Tsar, p. 172.
in the Old Testament he listened to the voice of the people rather than the voice of God – with fateful consequences for himself and the people.

It has been argued that Tsar Nicholas’ abdication had no legal force because there was no provision for abdication in the Basic Laws. As Michael Nazarov points out, the Basic Laws of the Russian Empire, which had been drawn up by Tsar Paul I and which all members of the Royal Family swore to uphold, “do not foresee the abdication of a reigning Emperor (‘from a religious… point of view the abdication of the Monarch, the Anointed of God, is contrary to the act of His Sacred Coronation and Anointing; it would be possible only by means of monastic tonsure’ [N. Korevo]). Still less did his Majesty have the right to abdicate for his son in favour of his brother; while his brother Michael Alexandrovich had the right neither to ascend the Throne during the lifetime of the adolescent Tsarevich Alexis, nor to be crowned, since he was married to a divorced woman, nor to transfer power to the Provisional government, nor refer the resolution of the question of the fate of the monarchy to the future Constituent Assembly.

“Even if the monarch had been installed by the will of such an Assembly, ‘this would have been the abolition of the Orthodox legitimating principle of the Basic Laws’, so that these acts would have been ‘juridically non-existent’, says Zyzykin (in this Korevo agrees with him). ‘Great Prince Michael Alexandrovich… performed only an act in which he expressed his personal opinions and abdication, which had an obligatory force for nobody. Thereby he estranged himself from the succession in accordance with the Basic Laws, which juridically in his eyes did not exist, in spite of the fact that he had earlier, in his capacity as Great Prince on the day of his coming of age, sworn allegiance to the decrees of the Basic Laws on the inheritance of the Throne and the order of the Family Institution’.

“It goes without saying that his Majesty did not expect such a step from his brother, a step which placed the very monarchical order under question…”

In defence of Michael, it should be pointed out that he, too, acted under duress, “under the pressure,” as Nazarov writes, “of the plotters who came to his house. Kerensky admitted that this had been their aim: ‘We decided to surround the act of abdication of Mikhail Alexandrovich with every guarantee, but in such a way as to give the abdication a voluntary character’.”

The further question arises: was Tsar Nicholas right to abdicate? The saints’ utterances on this subject are not crystal-clear. Thus Eldress Paraskeva (Pasha) of Sarov (+1915), who had foretold his destiny at the glorification of

---

408 Nazarov, op. cit., p. 69.
St. Seraphim of Sarov in 1903, said: “Your Majesty, descend from the throne yourself.” But Blessed Duniushka of Ussuruisk, who was martyréd in 1918, said: “The Tsar will leave the nation, which shouldn’t be, but this has been foretold to him from Above. This is his destiny. There is no way that he can evade it.”

And yet confusion and searching of consciences continued, as can be seen in a letter of some Orthodox Christians to the Holy Synod dated July 24, 1917: “We Orthodox Christians most ardently beseech you to explain to us in the newspaper Russkoe Slovo [Russian Word] what... the oath given to us to be faithful to the Tsar, Nicholas Alexandrovich, means. People are saying in our area that if this oath is worth nothing, then the new oath to the new Tsar [the Provisional Government?] will be worth nothing. Which oath must be more pleasing to God. The first or the second? Because the Tsar is not dead, but is alive and in prison...”

Since Great Prince Michael had presented the choice of the form of State government to the Constituent Assembly, many opponents of the revolution were prepared to accept the Provisional Government on the grounds that it was just that – provisional. They were not to know that the Constituent Assembly would hardly be convened before it would be forcibly dissolved by the Bolsheviks in January, 1918. So the results of the Tsar’s abdication for Russia were different from what he had hoped and believed. Instead of an orderly transfer of power from one member of the royal family to another, the whole dynasty and autocratic order collapsed. And instead of preventing civil war for the sake of victory in the world war, the abdication was followed by defeat in the world war and the bloodiest civil war in history, followed by unprecedented sufferings and persecutions of the faith for generations.

Indeed, in retrospect we can see that the two royal abdications of March, 1917 brought to an end the 1600-year period of the Orthodox Christian Empire that began with the coming to power of St. Constantine the Great. “He who restrains” the coming of the Antichrist, the Orthodox Christian Emperor, “was removed from the midst” (II Thessalonians 2.7) – and very soon “the collective Antichrist”, Soviet power, began its savage torture of the Body of Holy Russia. St. John of Kronstadt had said that Russia without the Tsar would no longer even bear the name of Russia, and would be “a stinking corpse” - and so it proved to be...

And yet in a real sense the Tsar saved the monarchy for the future by his abdication. For in abdicating he resisted the temptation to apply force and start a civil war in a cause that was just from a purely juridical point of view, but which could not be justified from a deeper, eschatological point of view.

---

409 Gubanov, op. cit., p. 70.
411 In Groyan, op. cit., pp. 122, 123.
In this he followed the example of Saints Boris and Gleb, and the advice of the Prophet Shemaiah to King Rehoboam and the house of Judah as they prepared to face the house of Israel: “Thus saith the Lord, Ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren, the children of Israel. Return every man to his house...” (I Kings 12.24).

The Tsar-Martyr resisted the temptation to act like a Western absolutist ruler, thereby refuting those in both East and West who looked on his rule as just that – a form of absolutism. He showed that the Orthodox Autocracy was not a form of absolutism, but something completely sui generis – the external aspect of the self-government of the Orthodox Church and people on earth. He refused to treat his power as if it were independent of the Church and people, but showed that it was a form of service to the Church and the people from within the Church and the people, in accordance with the word: “I have raised up one chosen out of My people... with My holy oil have I anointed him” (Psalm 88.18, 19). So not “government by the people and for the people” in a democratic sense, but “government by one chosen out of the people of God for the people of God and responsible to God alone”...

Paradoxically, one of the best tributes to the Tsar came from Winston Churchill, first Lord of the Admiralty in the British government and a Freemason since 1902 (master of the “Rosemary” lodge no. 2851): ‘Surely to no nation has Fate been more malignant than to Russia. Her ship went down in sight of port... Every sacrifice had been made; the toil was achieved... In March the Tsar was on the throne: the Russian Empire and the Russian army held up, the front was secured and victory was undoubted. The long retreats were ended, the munitions famine was broken; arms were pouring in; stronger, larger, better equipped armies guarded the immense front... Moreover, no difficult action was no required: to remain in presence: to lean with heavy weight upon the far stretched Teutonic line: to hold without exceptional activity the weakened hostile forces on her front: in a word to endure – that was all that stood between Russia and the fruits of general victory... According to the superficial fashion of our time, the tsarist order is customarily seen as blind, rotten, a tyranny capable of nothing. But an examination of the thirty months of war with Germany and Austria should correct these light-minded ideas. We can measure the strength of the Russian Empire by the blows which it suffered, by the woes it experienced, by the inexhaustible forces that it developed, and by the restoration of forces of which it showed itself capable... In the government of states, when great events take place, the leader of the nation, whoever he may be, is condemned for failures and glorified for successes. The point is not who did the work or sketched the plan of battle: reproach or praise for the outcome is accorded to him who bears the authority of supreme responsibility. Why refuse this strict examination to Nicholas II? The brunt of supreme decisions centred upon him. At the summit where all problems are reduced to Yea and Nay, where events transcend the faculties of men and where all is inscrutable, he had to
give the answers. His was the function of the compass needle. War or no war? Advance or retreat? Right or left? Democratise or hold firm? Quit or persevere? These were the battlefields of Nicholas II. Why should he reap no honour for them?...

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

The Church, the People and the Revolution

Why did the Church not intervene at this great crisis, as she had intervened on many similar occasions in Russian history? After all, on the eve of the revolution, the Church had canonized St. Hermogen, Patriarch of Moscow in the Time of Troubles, as if to emphasize that, just as St. Hermogen had refused to recognize the false Demetrius as a legitimate political authority, so the time was coming when it would again be necessary make a similar distinction between true and false political authorities. So surely the Church would stand up in defence of the monarchy as St. Hermogen did then?

However, the Synod showed itself to be at a loss at this critical moment. At its session of February 26, it refused the request of the Assistant Procurator, Prince N.D. Zhevakhov, to threaten the creators of disturbances with ecclesiastical punishments. Then, on February 27, it refused the request of the Procurator himself, N.P. Rayev, that it publicly support the monarchy. Ironically, therefore, that much-criticised creation of Peter the Great, the office of Over-Procurator of the Holy Synod, proved more faithful to the Anointed of God at this critical moment than the Holy Synod itself...

“On March 2,” writes M.A. Babkin, “the Synodal hierarchs gathered in the residence of the Metropolitan of Moscow. They listened to a report given by Metropolitan Pitirim of St. Petersburg asking that he be retired (this request was agreed to on March 6 – M.B.). The administration of the capital’s diocese was temporarily laid upon Bishop Benjamin of Gdov. But then the members of the Synod recognized that it was necessary immediately to enter into relations with the Executive committee of the State Duma. On the basis of which we can assert that the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church recognized the Provisional Government even before the abdication of Nicholas II from the throne. (The next meeting of the members of the Synod

took place on March 3 in the residence of the Metropolitan of Kiev. On that same day the new government was told of the resolutions of the Synod.)

“The first triumphantly official session of the Holy Synod after the coup d’état took place on March 4. Metropolitan Vladimir of Kiev presided and the new Synodal over-procurator, V.N. Lvov, who had been appointed by the Provisional government the previous day, was present. Metropolitan Vladimir and the members of the Synod (with the exception of Metropolitan Pitirim, who was absent – M.B.) expressed their sincere joy at the coming of a new era in the life of the Orthodox Church. And then at the initiative of the over-procurator the royal chair... was removed into the archives... One of the Church hierarchs helped him. It was decided to put the chair into a museum.

“The next day, March 5, the Synod ordered that in all the churches of the Petrograd diocese the Many Years to the Royal House ‘should no longer be proclaimed’. In our opinion, these actions of the Synod had a symbolical character and witnessed to the desire of its members ‘to put into a museum’ not only the chair of the Tsar, but also ‘to despatch to the archives’ of history royal power itself.

“The Synod reacted neutrally to the ‘Act on the abdication of Nicholas II from the Throne of the State of Russia for himself and his son in favour of Great Prince Michael Alexandrovich’ of March 2, 1917 and to the ‘Act on the refusal of Great Prince Michael Alexandrovich to accept supreme power’ of March 3. On March 6 it decreed that the words ‘by order of His Imperial Majesty’ should be removed from all synodal documents, and that in all the churches of the empire molebens should be served with a Many Years ‘to the God-preserved Russian Realm and the Right-believing Provisional Government’.”

But was the new government, whose leading members, as we have seen, were Masons, really “right-believing”? Even leaving aside the fact of their membership of Masonic lodges, which is forbidden by the Church, the answer to this question has to be: no. When the Tsar opened the First State Duma in 1906 with a moleben, the Masonic deputies sniggered and turned away, openly showing their disrespect for the Church. And now the new government, while still pretending to be Christian, openly declared that it derived its legitimacy, not from God, but from the revolution. Thus when the foreign minister, Paul Milyukov, was asked who had elected his government,

---

414 Babkin, op. cit., pp. 2, 3.
415 This is also now generally accepted even by western historians. Thus Tsuyoshi Hasegawa writes: “Five members, Kerensky, N.V. Nekrasov, A.I. Konovalov, M.I. Tereshchenko and I.N. Efremov are known to have belonged to the secret political Masonic organization” (“The February Revolution”, in Edward Acton, Vladimir Cherniaev, William Rosenberg (eds.), Critical Companion to the Russian Revolution 1914-1921, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997, p. 59).
he replied: “The Russian revolution elected us”.416 But the revolution cannot
be lawful, being the incarnation of lawlessness. How, then, could the Church
allow her members to vote for Masonic or social-democratic delegates to the
 Constituent Assembly? After all, that Assembly would determine the future
form of government of the Russian land.

On March 7 the Synod passed a resolution “On the Correction of Service
Ranks in view of the Change in State Administration”. In accordance with this
resolution, a commission headed by Archbishop Sergius (Stragorodsky) was
formed that removed all references to the Tsar in the services of the Church.
This involved changes to, for example, the troparion for the Church New
Year, where the word “Emperor” was replaced by “people”, and the
troparion for the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross.

Again, on March 7-8 the Synod passed a resolution, “On Changes in Divine
Services in Connection with the Cessation of the Commemoration of the
Former Ruling House”. The phrase “former ruling” (tsarstvovavshego)
implied that there was no hope of a restoration of any Romanov to the throne.

Then, on March 9, the Synod addressed all the children of the Orthodox
Russian Church: “The will of God has been accomplished. Russia has entered
on the path of a new State life. May God bless our great Homeland with
happiness and glory on its new path... For the sake of the many sacrifices
offered to win civil freedom, for the sake of the salvation of your own
families, for the sake of the happiness of the Homeland, abandon at this great
historical moment all quarrels and disagreements. United in brotherly love for
the good of Russia. Trust the Provisional Government. All together and
everyone individually, apply all your efforts to the end that by your labours,
exploits, prayer and obedience you may help it in its great work of
introducing new principles of State life...”

Now it is understandable that the Synod would not want to risk a civil war
by displaying opposition to the new government. But was it true that “the
will of God has been accomplished”? Was it not rather that God had allowed
the will of Satan to be accomplished, as a punishment for the sins of the
Russian people? And if so, how could the path be called a “great work”? As
for the “new principles of State life”, everyone knew that these were
revolutionary in essence...

Babkin writes: “This epistle was characterised by B.V. Titlinov, professor of
the Petrograd Theological Academy, as ‘an epistle blessing a new and free
Russia’, and by General A.I. Denikin as ‘sanctioning the coup d’état that has
taken place’. To the epistle were affixed the signatures of the bishops of the
‘tsarist’ composition of the Synod, even those who had the reputation of being

416 Quoted in G.M. Katkov, *Fevral’skaia Revoliutsia (The February Revolution)*, Paris: YMCA
monarchists and ‘black hundredists’, for example, Metropolitan Vladimir of Kiev and Metropolitan Macarius of Moscow. This witnessed to the ‘loyal’ feelings of the Synodal hierarchs…”

Why did the hierarchs sanction the coup so quickly? Probably in the hope of receiving internal freedom for the Church. This is hinted at in a declaration of six archbishops to the Holy Synod and Lvov on March 8: “The Provisional Government in the person of its over-procurator V.N. Lvov, on March 4 in the triumphant opening session of the Holy Synod, told us that it was offering to the Holy Orthodox Russian Church full freedom in Her administration, while preserving for itself only the right to halt any decisions of the Holy Synod that did not agree with the law and were undesirable from a political point of view. The Holy Synod did everything to meet these promises, issued a pacific epistle to the Orthodox people and carried out other acts that were necessary, in the opinion of the Government, to calm people’s minds…”

Lvov broke his promises and proceeded to act like a tyrant, including expelling Metropolitan Macarius from his see. It was then that Metropolitan repented of having signed the March 9 epistle. And later, after the fall of the Provisional Government, he said: “They [the Provisional Government] corrupted the army with their speeches. They opened the prisons. They released onto the peaceful population convicts, thieves and robbers. They abolished the police and administration, placing the life and property of citizens at the disposal of every armed rogue... They destroyed trade and industry, imposing taxes that swallowed up the profits of enterprises... They squandered the resources of the exchequer in a crazy manner. They radically undermined all the sources of life in the country. They established elections to the Constituent Assembly on bases that were incomprehensible to Russia. They defiled the Russian language, distorting it for the amusement of half-illiterates and sluggards. They did not even guard their own honour, violating...

417 Babkin, op. cit., pp. 3-4. Other hierarchs echoed the words of the Address in still more revolutionary tones. Thus Bishop Andrew of Ufa wrote: “The abdication from the throne of Nicholas II frees his former subjects from their oath to him. But besides this, every Orthodox Christian must remember the words of one Church song, that ‘if thou hast sworn, but not for the good, it is better for thee to break thine oath’ than to do evil (from the service on the day of the Beheading of John the Forerunner). I wrote about this in Thoughts on February 9, 1916, when I pointed to the great church-civil exploit of Metropolitan Philip of Moscow, who found in his conscience support for his rebuking the iniquities of the Terrible one. And so the question of the oath for those who have been disturbed and are weak in conscience completely falls away…. The Autocracy of the Russian tsars degenerated first into absolutism [samovlastie] and then into despotism [svoevlastie] exceeding all probability... And lo! their power has collapsed – the power that turned away from the Church. The will of God has been accomplished… The Catholic Church of Christ has been delivered from the oppression of the State.” (Ufinskie Vedomosti (Ufa Gazette), 1917, № 5-6, pp. 138-139; Monk Benjamin, op. cit., pp. 6-7 ®.)

418 Quoted by M.A. Babkin, Dukhovenstvo Russkoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi i Soerzhenie Monarkhii (The Clergy of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Overthrow of the Monarchy), Moscow, 2007, pp. 195-198 ®.
the promise they had given to the abdicated Tsar to allow him and his family free departure, by which they prepared for him inevitable death...

“Who started the persecution on the Orthodox Church and handed her head over to crucifixion? Who demanded the execution of the Patriarch? Was it those whom the Duma decried as ‘servants of the dark forces’, labelled as enemies of the freedom of the Church?... No, it was not those, but he whom the Duma opposed to them as a true defender of the Church, whom it intended for, and promoted to the rank of, over-procurator of the Most Holy Synod – the member of the Provisional Government, now servant of the Sovnarkom – Vladimir Lvov.”

Lvov was indeed thoroughly unsuited for the post of over-procurator – he ended up as a renovationist and enemy of Orthodoxy. In appointing him the Provisional Government showed its true, hostile attitude towards the Church. It also showed its inconsistency: having overthrown the Autocracy and proclaimed freedom for all people and all religions, it should have abolished the very office of over-procurator as being an outdated relic of the State’s dominion over the Church. But it wanted to make the Church tow the new State’s line, and Lvov was to be its instrument in doing this. Hence his removal of all the older, more traditional hierarchs, his introduction of three protopriests of a Lutheran orientation into the Synod and his proclamation of the convening of an All-Russian Church Council – a measure which he hoped would seal the Church’s descent into Protestant-style renovationism, but which in fact, through God’s Providence, turned out to be the beginning of the Church’s true regeneration and fight back against the revolution...

419 Quoted in Groyan, op. cit., pp. 183-184. Basil Lurye writes: “Metropolitan Macarius together with the hierarchs who were members with him of the last Tsarist composition of the Synod shared the sin of justifying the February coup. His signature is under the appeal to the flock released by the Synod on March 9, 1917 which began with the blasphemous words: ‘The will of God has been accomplished’. Instead of anathematizing the ‘Provisional Government’ - in accordance with what the Order of Orthodoxy said about all those who plot against Tsarist power, and with what the former over-procurator, N.P. Rayev, suggested, - the bishops displayed their own lack of belief in what they themselves declared every year on the Sunday of Orthodoxy. They began to ‘work’ with the ‘Provisional Government’ as if it were a lawful power, and not a group of plotters who were under the anathema of the Church and who drew under this same all those who followed them. The Synod did not give in to the pressure of the new authorities, who tried to force it to issue a special act concerning the loss by the Tsar of his anointing, but, in sanctioning the sin against the Anointed one, it blessed the people to go on the path of the king-killers. To the great honour of Metropolitan Macarius it is necessary to say that it was precisely he among the older hierarchs who was the first to come to his senses. It was for that reason that he took up the strictly canonical position, not agreeing with his retirement from the Moscow Metropolia. Having uncanonically replaced Vladyka Macarius on the Moscow kathedra, the future Patriarch Tikhon understood this, but only much later (at the end of his life he asked forgiveness from Metropolitan Macarius). In 1957 the relics of the hierarch Macarius were found to be incorrupt.” (review of Molis’, boris’, spasajseyd, a collection of the letters of Metropolitan Macarius, in Vertograd-Inform, N 7 (40), July, 1998, p. 37 ®).
Similarly uncompromising was the position of the future hieromartyr, Archbishop Andronicus of Perm. On March 4, in an address “To All Russian Orthodox Christians”, he called the present situation an “interregnum”. And although he called on all to obey the Provisional Government, he went on: “We shall beseech the All-Generous One that He Himself establish authority and peace on our land, that He not abandon us for long without a Tsar, as children without a mother. May He help us, as three hundred years ago He helped our ancestors, that we may unanimously and with inspiration receive a native Tsar from His All-Good Providence.”

Prince Lvov wrote to Andronicus demanding an explanation for his actions in support of the old regime, which “aimed at the setting up of the clergy against the new order”. The archbishop replied: “The act on the refusal of Michael Alexandrovich which legitimises the Provisional Government declared that after the Constituent Assembly we could have a monarchical government, or any other, depending on how the Constituent Assembly will pronounce on this. I have submitted to the Provisional Government, I will also submit to a republic if it will be established by the Constituent Assembly. But until then not one citizen is deprived of the freedom of expressing himself on the form of government for Russia; otherwise a Constituent Assembly would be superfluous if someone could irrevocably predetermine the question on the form of government in Russia.”

A similar position was taken by Archbishop Anthony (Khrapovitsky), who on March 5, at the end of the liturgy, declared: “When we received news of the abdication from the throne of His Most Pious Emperor Nicholas Alexandrovich, we prepared, in accordance with his instructions, to commemorate His Most Pious Emperor Michael Alexandrovich. But now he too has abdicated, and commanded that we should obey the Provisional Government, and for that reason, and only for that reason, we are commemorating the Provisional Government. Otherwise no power could force us to cease the commemoration of the Tsar and the Royal Family… We must do this, first, in fulfilment of the oath given by us to His Majesty Nicholas II, who handed over power to Prince Michael Alexandrovich, who handed this power over to the Provisional Government until the Constituent Assembly. Secondly, we must do this so as to avoid complete anarchy, larceny, fighting and sacrilege against the holy things. Only in one thing must we listen to nobody, neither now nor in the past, neither tsars nor rulers nor the mob: if they demand that we renounce the faith, or defile the holy things, or in general carry out clearly lawless and sinful acts.”

---

421 Archbishop Anthony, Pastyr’ i Pastva (Pastor and Flock), 1917, № 10, pp. 280-281; Pis’ma Blazhennogo Metropolita Antonia (Khrapovitskago) (The Letters of his Beatitude Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky), Jordanville, 1988, p. 57; Monk Benjamin (Gomareteli), Letopis’ tserkovnykh sobytij Prawoslavnoj Tserkvi nachinaia s 1917 goda (Chronicle of Church Events, beginning from 1917), www.zlatoust.ws/letopis.htm, pp. 2-3 ®. Cf. Victor Antonov, “1917
Following the Holy Synod, Archpriest John Vostorgov, the future hieromartyr and a leading monarchist, considered the Provisional Government “completely lawful”: “Our former Emperor, who has abdicated from the throne, transferred power in a lawful manner to his brother. In his turn the brother of the Emperor, having abdicated from power until the final decision of the Constituent Assembly, in the same lawful manner transferred power to the Provisional Government, and to that permanent government that would be given to Russia by the Constituent Assembly. And so we now have a completely lawful Provisional Government which is the powers that be, as the Word of God calls it. To this power, which is now the One Supreme and All-Russian power, we are obliged to submit in accordance with the duty of religious conscience; we are obliged to pray for it; we are obliged also to obey the local authorities established by it. In this obedience, after the abdication of the former Emperor and his brother, and after their indications that the Provisional Government is lawful, there can be no betrayal of the former oath, but in it consists our direct duty.”

However, Fr. John remained devoted to the monarchy, and on March 25-26, in a small journal intended for soldiers and workers, he published an appeal to remain faithful to the anointed of God. On March 27 this appeal was noted and condemned during a meeting of Council of the United Clergy and Laity of Moscow, and the resolution was passed that “Fr. Vostorgov should be removed completely from the clergy of the Moscow Church as an element in it that is strange and undesirable”. And so on May 13 Fr. John was removed from the posts of supervisor of church schools of the Trans-Volga and Urals dioceses and synodal missionary-preacher.

But there were other “conservatives” who took a more revolutionary position. Thus on March 7 Archbishop Seraphim (Chichagov) of Tver and Kashin said: “By the mercy of God, the popular uprising against the old, wretched order in the State, which led Russia to the edge of destruction in the harsh years of world war, has taken place without many victims, and Russia has easily passed to the new State order, thanks to the firm decision of the State Duma, which formed the Provisional Government, and the Soviet of workers’ deputies. The Russian revolution has turned out to be almost the shortest and most bloodless of all revolutions that history has known…”

---

422 Hieromartyr John, quoted in Groyan, op. cit., p. 128.
424 Archbishop Seraphim, Tverskie Eparkhiul’nie Vedomosti (Tver Diocesan Gazette), 1917, № 9-10, pp. 75-76; in Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 4.
And then there were the liberals, like Bishop Nicon (Bessonov) of Krasnoyarsk, who on March 10 said to his flock: “I suppose there should be a REPUBLIC in Russia, but not a democratic one, but a common one – a REPUBLIC in general; in its administration ALL classes participate, and not only the ‘proletariat’.” And on March 12 he addressed a meeting of the Cadet Party: “I am for a Russian republic. Our many Russian monarchs, and especially the last of them, Nicholas II, with his wife, so humiliated, so degraded and shamed monarchism that monarchy should not even be mentioned among us, even a constitutional one.”

Meanwhile, the Council of the Petrograd Religio-Philosophical Society went still further, denying the very concept of Sacred Monarchy. Thus on March 11 and 12, it resolved that the Synod’s acceptance of the Tsar’s abdication “does not correspond to the enormous religious importance of the act, by which the Church recognized the Tsar in the rite of the coronation of the anointed of God. It is necessary, for the liberation of the people’s conscience and to avoid the possibility of a restoration, that a corresponding act be issued in the name of the Church hierarchy abolishing the power of the Sacrament of Royal Anointing, by analogy with the church acts abolishing the power of the Sacraments of Marriage and the Priesthood.”

Fortunately, the Church hierarchy rejected this demand. For not only can the Sacrament of Anointing not be abolished, since it is of God: even the last Tsar still remained the anointed Tsar after his abdication. As Shakespeare put it in Richard II (III, ii, 54-7):

\[\text{Not all the water in the rough rude sea} \]
\[\text{Can wash the balm off from an anointed king;} \]
\[\text{The breath of worldly men cannot depose} \]
\[\text{The deputy elected by the Lord.}\]

---

425 Bishop Nicon, in Babkin, Duhovenstvo, op. cit., p. 233.
426 Groyan, op. cit., p. 142. Italics mine (V.M).
427 Again, an Orthodox Jewish rabbi has written: “King Saul lost the power of his anointing when he deliberately disobeyed God’s command. King Jehu was anointed to obey God’s commands, but he also failed. Divine blessing was withdrawn. That, however, was God’s decision. Can the anointed person, of himself, resign?...

“The mystery of anointing and crowning creates a special person; a person not untouchable or infallible, nor all-powerful or absolute, but sacred, consecrated and set apart from others and above the waves of politics.

“Tsar Nicholas II, anointed, crowned and consecrated in May, 1896, bore within himself, and shared with his Tsarina and wife, an inner calm and tranquility of faith beyond all changes in politics and political forces. Spiritually speaking, his abdication on March 2, 1917, was of no effect. Those who are anointed cannot resign their spiritual elevation, though they may lay down the earthly trappings of power or have them torn away. Those who are true and devoted adherents of the Russian Orthodox Church have no right to speak of His Late Majesty as the ‘ex-Tsar’ or as the ‘Tsar-abdicate’. Clearly, those of the Russian Orthodox faith should recognize the direct link that has come down from the days of Moses, through the High Priests and Kings of Israel, to Tsar Nicholas II, in the God-commanded ceremony of..."
Not only can the sacred anointing not be washed off the forehead of the Tsar: if Russia were to be deprived of her tsar, as St. John of Kronstadt said, she would become a “stinking corpse”. And so it turned out: as a strictly logical and moral consequence, “from the day of his abdication,” as St. John Maximovich wrote, “everything began to collapse. It could not have been otherwise. The one who united everything, who stood guard for the truth, was overthrown…”

For, as St. John said in another place: “The Tsar was the embodiment of the Russian people’s… readiness to submit the life of the state to the righteousness of God: therefore do the people submit themselves to the Tsar, because he submits to God. Vladyka Anthony [Khrapovitsky] loved to recall the Tsar’s prostration before God and the Church which he makes during the coronation, while the entire Church, all its members, stand. And then, in response to his submission to Christ, all in the Church make a full prostration to him.”

In agreement with this, the philosopher Ivan Alexandrovich Ilyin wrote: “Faithfulness to the monarchy is a condition of soul and form of action in which a man unites his will with the will of his Sovereign, his dignity with his dignity, his destiny with his destiny... The fall of the monarchy was the fall of Russia herself. A thousand-year state form fell, but no ‘Russian republic’ was put in its place, as the revolutionary semi-intelligentsia of the leftist parties dreamed, but the pan-Russian disgrace foretold by Dostoyevsky was unfurled, and a failure of spirit. And on this failure of spirit, on this dishonour and disintegration there grew the state Anchar of Bolshevism, prophetically foreseen by Pushkin - a sick and unnatural tree of evil that spread its poison on the wind to the destruction of the whole world. In 1917 the Russian people fell into the condition of the mob, while the history of mankind shows that the mob is always muzzled by despots and tyrants... The Russian people unwound, dissolved and ceased to serve the great national work - and woke up under the dominion of internationalists. History has as it were proclaimed a certain law: Either one-man rule or chaos is possible in Russia; Russia is not anointing.”


428 St. John Maximovich, “Homily before a Memorial Service for the Tsar-Martyr”, in Man of God: Saint John of Shanghai and San Francisco, Redding, Ca., 1994, p. 133 ®. Cf. Archbishop Seraphim (Sobolev): “There is no need to say how terrible a ‘touching’ of the Anointed of God is the overthrow of the tsar by his subjects. Here the transgression of the given command of God reaches the highest degree of criminality, which is why it drags after it the destruction of the state itself” (Russkaia Ideologia (The Russian Ideology), St. Petersburg, 1992, pp. 50-51 ®). And so, insofar as it was the disobedience of the people that compelled the Tsar to abdicate, leading inexorably to his death, “we all,” in the words of Archbishop Averky, “Orthodox Russian people, in one way or another, to a greater or lesser degree, are guilty of allowing this terrible evil to be committed on our Russian land” (Istinnoe Pravoslavie i Sovremennij Mir (True Orthodoxy and the Contemporary World), Jordanville, N.Y.: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1971, p. 166 ®).

capable of a republican order. Or more exactly: the existence of Russia demands one-man rule – either a religiously and nationally strengthened one-man rule of honour, fidelity and service, that is, a monarchy, or one-man rule that is atheist, conscienceless and dishonourable, and moreover anti-national and international, that is, a tyranny."

In view of this fact, the Church hierarchy must be considered to have betrayed the monarchy, paradoxically, by obeying it too slavishly. Instead of obeying the Tsar’s call to obey a self-appointed republican government composed of Masons and traitors, they should have rallied round the sacred principle of the Orthodox Autocracy and used their still considerable influence among the people to restore monarchical rule. A clear precedent existed: in the recently canonized Patriarch Hermogen’s call to liberate Russia from foreign rule and restore a lawful monarchy in 1612. Like Hermogen, they could have called the Russian people to arms against those who had forced the abdication of both the Tsar and Great Prince Michael, and who were therefore, in effect, rebels against lawful authority and subject to anathema. But the opportunity was lost through a combination of a commendable desire to avoid bloodshed and a less commendable lack of courage. Some hierarchs supported the revolution, others rejected it; but none were prepared to lead the people in such a way as to oppose the rebels and protect the monarchical principle. Nor did the Church approach any member of the Romanov dynasty with an invitation that he ascend the throne and end the interregnum.

In this way, as some have argued, Russia came under the curse pronounced in 1613 against those who did not obey the Romanov dynasty: “It is hereby decreed and commanded that God’s Chosen One, Tsar Michael Feodorovich Romanov, be the progenitor of the Rulers of Rus’ from generation to generation, being answerable in his actions before the Tsar of Heaven alone; and should any dare to go against this decree of the Sobor - whether it be Tsar, or Patriarch, or any other man, may he be damned in this age and in the age to come, having been sundered from the Holy Trinity...”

Of course, such following the example of St. Hermogen would have been difficult, and required great courage. But it was not impossible. And we know the tragic, truly accursed consequences of the failure to follow it...

430 Ilyin, Sobranie Sochinenij (Collected Works), Moscow, 1994, volume 4, 7; in Valentina D. Sologub, Kto Gospoden’ – Ko Mne! (He who is the Lord’s – to me!), Moscow, 2007, p. 53 ©.
431 As Babkin writes, in March, 1917 “the monarchy in Russia, in accordance with the act of Great Prince Michael Alexandrovich, continued to exist as an institution”. Consequently the Synod should have acted as if there was an “interregnum” in the country (Dukhovenstvo, op. cit., p. 210). Again, Bishop Diomedes of Anadyr and Chukotka writes: “It was necessary in the name of the hierarchy of the Russian Orthodox Church to persuade the Ruling House not to leave the Russian State to be destroyed by rebels, and to call all the rebels to repentance by anathematizing them with the 11th anathema of the Sunday of Orthodoxy” (Address of November 21 / December 4, 2008, http://www.russia-talk.com/otkliki/ot-601.htm (R).
The weakness of the Church at this critical moment was the result of a long historical process. Having been deprived of its administrative independence by Peter the Great, the Church hierarchy was not ready to stand alone against the new regime and in defence of the monarchical principle in March, 1917. Instead, in the early days of March, it hoped that, in exchange for recognizing it and calling on the people to recognize it, it would receive full administrative freedom. But it was deceived: when Lvov came to power, he began to act like a tyrant worse than the old tsarist over-procurators. And then a wave of democratization began at the diocesan and parish levels which the hierarchs did not have the strength to resist…

Thus was the prophecy of Bishop Ignatius Brianchaninov (+1867) fulfilled: “Judging from the spirit of the times and the intellectual ferment, we must suppose that the building of the Church, which has already been wavering for a long time, will collapse quickly and terribly. There will be nobody to stop this and withstand it. The measures undertaken to support [the Church] are borrowed from the elements of the world hostile to the Church, and will rather hasten her fall than stop it…”

If the Church hierarchy, traditionally the main support of the Autocracy, faltered, it is not surprising that the people as a whole faltered, too.

Their confusion was well expressed in a telegram sent to the Holy Synod on July 24, 1917 concerning the oath of loyalty that the Provisional Government was trying to impose on them: “We Orthodox Christians ardently beseech you to explain to us in the newspaper Russkoye Slovo what constitutes before the Lord God the oath given by us to be faithful to the Tsar, Nicholas Alexandrovich. People are saying amongst us that if this oath is worth nothing, then the new oath to the new Tsar is also worth nothing.

“Is that so, and how are we to understand all this? We do not want to decide this question ourselves, as we have been advised by someone whom we know, but by the Governing Synod, so that everyone should understand this in the necessary way, without differences of opinion. The zhids [Jews] say that the oath is nonsense and a deception, and that one can do without an oath. The popes are silent. Each layman expresses his own opinion. But this is no good. Again they have begun to say that God does not exist at all, and that the churches will soon be closed because they are not necessary. But we on our part think: why close them – it’s better to live by the church. Now that the Tsar has been overthrown things have got bad, and if they close the churches it’ll get worse, but we need things to get better. You, our most holy Fathers, must try to explain to all of us simultaneously: what should we do about the old oath and with the one they are trying to force us to take now?”

“Which oath must be dearer to God. The first or the second? Because the Tsar is not dead, but is alive in prison. And is it right that all the churches should be closed? Where then can we pray to the Lord God? Surely we should not go in one band to the zhids and pray with them? Because now all power is with them, and they’re bragging about it.

“If that’s how things are going to be from now on, that is not good, and we are very dissatisfied…”

So the hierarchs were confused and unhappy, the believing people were confused and unhappy – and the Tsar was alone, abandoned by all and bitterly repenting of his decision to abdicate the throne in favour of the so-called representatives of the people. And yet, as the holy eldress said, this was his destiny and he could not evade it. For since the leadership of a Christian State must be dual – through a partnership or “symphony” of Church and State – he could not continue to rule as an Orthodox Christian tsar. Just as it takes two willing partners to make a marriage, so it takes a head and a body who are willing to work with each other to make a Christian state. In Deuteronomy 17:14 the Lord had laid it down as one of the conditions of the creation of a God-pleasing monarchy that the people should want a God-pleasing king. The bridegroom in this case was willing and worthy, but the bride was not...

As P.S. Lopukhin wrote: “At the moment of his abdication his Majesty felt himself to be profoundly alone, and around him was ‘cowardice, baseness and treason’. And to the question how he could have abdicated from his tsarist service, it is necessary to reply: he did this because we abdicated from his tsarist service, from his sacred and sanctified authority…”

Archimandrite Constantine (Zaitsev) wrote that the tragedy of the last days of the Russian Empire consisted in the fact the people were ever more strongly attracted to the European path with its liberation from all paths hindering the attainment of ever greater prosperity and ever greater freedom. “In this striving for civil freedom, the Russian man lost the capacity and the readiness freely to submit to the power given by God, and rational freedom was transformed in the consciousness of Russian people into freedom from

---

433 In Groyan, op. cit., pp. CXXII-CXXIII.
434 As Lev Alexandrovich Tikhomirov writes: "Without establishing a kingdom, Moses foresaw it and pointed it out in advance to Israel... It was precisely Moses who pointed out in advance the two conditions for the emergence of monarchal power: it was necessary, first, that the people itself should recognize its necessity, and secondly, that the people itself should not elect the king over itself, but should present this to the Lord. Moreover, Moses indicated a leadership for the king himself: 'when he shall sit upon the throne of his kingdom, he must... fulfil all the words of this law.' (Monarkhicheskaia Gosudarstvennost (Monarchical Statehood), Buenos Aires, 1968, pp. 127-129 ®).
435 Lopukhin, “Tsar’ i Patriarkh” (Tsar and Patriarch), Pravoslavnij Put’ (The Orthodox Way), Jordanville, 1951, pp. 103-104 ®.
spiritual discipline, into a cooling towards the Church, into lack of respect for the Tsar. The Tsar became, with the civil flourishing of Russia, spiritually and psychologically speaking unnecessary. He was not needed by free Russia. The closer to the throne, and the higher up the ladder of culture, prosperity and intellectual development, the more striking became the spiritual abyss opening up between the Tsar and his subjects. Only in this way, generally speaking, can we explain the fact of the terrifying emptiness that was formed around the Tsar from the moment of the revolution.”

The demand for his abdication was “a sharp manifestation of that psychological feeling of the unnecessariness of the Tsar which took hold of Russia. Every person acted according to his own logic and had his own understanding of what was necessary for the salvation and prosperity of Russia. Here there might have been much cleverness, and even much state wisdom. But that mystical trembling before the Tsar’s power and that religious certainty that the Tsar and Anointed of God bore in himself the grace of God which it was impossible to distance oneself from by substituting one’s own ideas for it, no longer existed, it had disappeared…”

The Russian people did not want their pious Tsar, and so the Scripture was fulfilled: “We have no king, because we feared not the Lord…” (Hosea 10.3)

---