THE THEOLOGY OF POLITICAL POWER –
An Historical Approach to the Relationship between Religion and Politics

PART 3: THE AGE OF REVOLUTION (to 1856)

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INTRODUCTION

This book is a continuation of my earlier books, *The Theology of Political Power – Part 1: Israel, Rome and Byzantium (to 1453)* and *The Theology of Political Power – Part 2: Russia and the West (to 1789)*. It takes the analysis of the relationship between religion and the main forms of political power – autocracy, absolutism and democracy – into the era of the French revolutions, from 1789 to the Treaty of Paris in 1856. The main struggle in this period is seen to be between the Russian Autocracy and the Western revolution in its new, liberal and nationalist forms.

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VII. THE WESTERN REVOLUTION: FRANCE

The nation, this collective organism, is just as inclined to deify itself as the individual man. The madness of pride grows in this case in the same progression, as every passion becomes inflamed in society, being refracted in thousands and millions of souls.

Metropolitan Anastasius (Gribanovsky) of New York.¹

After the Gregorian revolution of the eleventh century, the Humanist-Protestant revolution of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the English revolution of the seventeenth century and the Enlightenment Programme of the eighteenth century, the French revolution of 1789 marks the fifth major turning-point in Western life and thought. In some countries – England, for example, and still more America - some of the less radical ideas of the French revolution were already being put into effect, at least partially, well before 1789; while in others – Russia and China, for example – they did not achieve dominance until the twentieth century. Eventually, however, the French revolutionary ideals of “Liberty, Equality and Fraternity” and “the Rights of Man”, combined with an essentially secularist and utilitarian attitude to religion, became the dominant ideology, not only of Europe and North America, but of the whole world. For, as Eric Hobsbawn writes, “alone of all the contemporary revolutions, the French was ecumenical. Its armies set out to revolutionize the world; its ideas actually did so.”²

The Constitutional Monarchy

The French revolution, like its English forerunner, went through several phases, each of which on its own was profoundly influential outside the borders of France. The first was the constitutional monarchy (1789-92). The second was the Jacobin terror (1792-94). The third (after the interregnum of the Directory) was the Napoleonic dictatorship and empire (1799-1815). Just as the English revolution had its proto-communist elements, which, however, failed in the end, so did the French (Babeuf’s failed coup of 1796). Just as the upshot of the English revolution was to transfer power from the king to the landowning aristocracy, so the upshot of the French revolution was to transfer power from the king and the aristocrats to the bourgeoisie – a trend which came to dominate the whole of Western Europe in the course of the nineteenth century.

From a sociological point of view, France in 1789 had not changed in essence since the eleventh century; it was an agrarian, hierarchical society consisting of “the three Estates”: those who prayed (the clergy), those who fought (the nobility) and those who worked (the rest, mainly peasants, but

including lawyers and intellectuals). The ideas of the Enlightenment and Masonry had infected a narrow stratum of the more educated classes. But the mass of the population lived and thought as they had lived and thought for centuries.

It is customary to explain the French revolution as the product of corrupt political, social and economic conditions, and in particular of the vast gap in wealth and power between the ancien régime and the people. Discontent with social and economic injustices undoubtedly played a large part in fuelling this horrific atheist and anti-theist outburst. But it was not the king who was primarily to blame for these injustices. In the years 1745-89 he and his ministers made numerous attempts at economic reform and a more equitable redistribution of the tax burden. But they were always foiled by opposition at court and in the Parlements from the aristocrats, who paid no tax. Thus when five of his minister Turgot’s Six Edicts were rejected by the Paris Parlement in 1776, Louis XVI observed: “I see well that there is no-one here but M. Turgot and myself who love the people.” This prompted de Tocqueville’s words: “The social order destroyed by a revolution is almost always better than that which preceded it; and experience shows that the most dangerous moment for a bad government is generally that in which it sets about reform. Only great genius can save a ruler who takes on the task of improving the lot of his subjects after long oppression.”

The aristocrats claimed that their opposition was an expression of Montesquieu’s doctrine of the necessity of checks on executive power. In fact, however, they were trying to replace a royal “despotism” with their own aristocratic one. And here, as so often in history, the “despotism” of one man standing above the political fray turned out to be less harmful to the majority of the population than the despotism of an oligarchical clique pursuing only one class or factional interest. Indeed, the problem with the French monarchy was not its excessive strength, but its weakness, its inability to impose its will on the privileged class.

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3 The Russian writer D.I. Fonvisin toured France in 1777-78, and in a letter to P.I. Panin unfavourably compared the situation of the French, both morally and materially, with that of the contemporary Russians. See N.G. Fyodorovsky, *V Poiskakh Svoego Puti: Rossia mezhdu Evropej i Aziej* (In Search of Her Path: Russia between Europe and Asia), Moscow, 1997, pp. 21-22 (in Russian).


However, there was much more to the Revolution than a conflict between king and nobility, letting in the Third Estate that destroyed them both. The essential conflict was between two ideas of the origin of authority: between the idea that it comes from above – ultimately, from God, and the idea that it comes from below – ultimately from what the Masons called “Nature”. King Louis XVI stated the Christian principle: “I have taken the firm and sincere decision to remain loftily, publicly and generously faithful to Him Who holds in His hand kings and kingdoms. I can only be great through Him, because in Him alone is greatness, glory, majesty and power; and because I am destined one day to be his living image on earth.”

This firm, but humble statement of the doctrine, not so much of the Divine right of kings, as of their Divine dependence on the King of kings, was opposed by the satanic pride of the revolutionary faith. “The Revolution is neither an act nor a fact,” said De Mounier. “It is a political doctrine which claims to found society on the will of man instead of founding it on the will of God, which puts the sovereignty of human reason in the place of the Divine law.”

This anti-theistic character of the French Revolution was confirmed by the great Anglo-Irish parliamentarian, Edmund Burke: “We cannot, if we would, delude ourselves about the true state of this dreadful contest. It is a religious war. It includes in its object undoubtedly every other interest of society as well as this; but this is the principal and leading feature. It is through this destruction of religion that our enemies propose the accomplishment of all their other views. The French Revolution, impious at once and fanatical, had no other plan for domestic power and foreign empire. Look at all the proceedings of the National Assembly from the first day of declaring itself such in the year 1789, to this very hour, and you will find full half of their business to be directly on this subject. In fact it is the spirit of the whole. The religious system, called the Constitutional Church, was on the face of the whole proceeding set up only as a mere temporary amusement to the people, and so constantly stated in all their conversations, till the time should come, when they might with safety cast off the very appearance of all religion whatsoever, and persecute Christianity throughout Europe with fire and sword... This religious war is not a controversy between sect and sect as formerly, but a war against all sects and all religions...”

So the real question that the Revolution sought to answer was not political or economic, but theological or ideological, not: who pays the taxes?, but: who rules the universe?

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It is striking how similar was the sequence of events in the French and English revolutions. Just as the English revolution started with the king’s compelling need to seek money for his war against the Scots, so the French revolution started with a severe financial crisis caused by the king’s intervention in the American War of Independence. And just as the English parliament’s refusal to accede to the king’s request led successively to civil war, the overthrowing of the State Church, the execution of the king, a radicalisation of the country to a state of near-communist revolution, foreign wars (in Scotland and Ireland), and finally a military dictatorship under Cromwell that restored order while preserving many of the fruits of the revolution, so the refusal, first of the Nobles’ Assembly and then of the Estates General to accede to the French king’s request led to a constitutional monarchy, the overthrowing of the State Church, the execution of the king, increased radicalisation and the Great Terror, wars with both internal and external enemies, and finally a military dictatorship under Napoleon that restored order while consolidating many of the results of the revolution.

But the French Revolution went much further than the English in the number of its victims, in the profundity of its effects, not only on France but also on almost every country in Europe, and in its unprecedented radicalism, even anti-theism. It really began on June 17, 1789, when the Third Estate gathered a so-called National Assembly, of which they declared: “To it, and it alone, belongs the right to interpret and express the general will of the nation. Between the throne and this Assembly there can exist no veto, no power of negation.”

This, writes Davies, “was the decisive break. Three days later, locked out of their usual hall, the deputies met on the adjacent tennis court, le jeu de paume, and swore an oath never to disband until France was given a Constitution. ‘Tell your master,’ thundered Count Mirabeau to the troops sent to disperse them, ‘that we are here by the will of the people, and will not disperse before the threat of bayonets.’

“Pandemonium ensued. At court, the King’s conciliatory ministers fell out with their more aggressive colleagues. On 11 July [the chief minister] Jacques Necker, who had received a rousing welcome at the opening of the Estates General, was dismissed. Paris exploded. A revolutionary headquarters coalesced round the Duc d’Orléans at the Palais Royal. The gardens of the Palais Royal became a notorious playground of free speech and free love. Sex shows sprang up alongside every sort of political harangue. ‘The exile of Necker,’ screamed the fiery orator Camille Desmoulins fearing reprisals, ‘is the signal for another St. Bartholomew of patriots.’ The royal garrison was won over. On the 13th a Committee of Public Safety was created, and 48,000 men were enrolled in a National Guard under General Lafayette. Bands of insurgents tore down the hated barrières or internal customs posts in the city, and ransacked the monastery of Saint-Lazare in the search for arms. On the

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10 Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 516.
11 In Russian: Komitet Gosudarstvennoj Besopasnosti – KGB.
14th, after 30,000 muskets were removed from the Hôtel des Invalides, the royal fortress of the Bastille was besieged. There was a brief exchange of gunfire, after which the governor capitulated. The King had lost his capital.”

Power appeared to have passed from the king to the National Assembly and the Third Estate; but already at this early stage of the revolution (as in February, 1917 in Russia), real power was neither with the king nor with any of the Estates, but with the mob – or rather, with those who incited and controlled the mob.

The success of the Revolution was assured by the weakness of the King; for when “he who restrains” stops restraining, “then,” as Dostoyevsky said, “everything is permitted”. Doyle writes: “News of the king’s surrender to popular resistance broke all restraints. His acquiescence in the defeat of the privileged orders was taken as a signal for all his subjects to take their own measures against public enemies. The prolonged political crisis has spawned countless wild rumours of plots to thwart the patriotic cause by starving the people. Monastic and noble granaries, reputedly bulging with the proceeds of the previous season’s rents, dues, and tithes, seemed obvious evidence of their owners’ wicked intentions. Equally suspicious were urban merchants scouring country markets far beyond their usual circuits to provide bread for hungry townsmen. Besides, the roads were thronged with unprecedented numbers of men seeking work as a result of the slump. Farmers had good reason to dread the depredations of bands of travelling vagrants, and now took little persuading that the kingdom was alive with brigands in aristocratic pay. It was just a year since the notorious storms of July 1788, and as a promising harvest began to ripen country people were particularly nervous. All this produced the ‘Great Fear’, a massive panic that swept whole provinces in the last weeks of July and left only the most peripheral regions untouched. Peasants assembled, armed themselves, and prepared to fight off the ruthless hirelings of aristocracy. Seen from a distance, such armed bands were often taken for brigands themselves, and so the panic spread.

“In many areas villagers did not wait for the marauders to arrive. Then it would be too late. They were determined to make sure of aristocratic defeat by striking pre-emptively. After all, they would only anticipating what the Assembly was bound to decree. As one country priest explained, ‘When the inhabitants heard that everything was going to be different they began to refuse to pay both tithes and dues, considering themselves so permitted, they said, by the new law to come.’”

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On August 4, under pressure of the peasant revolt, the National or Constituent Assembly declared that it “abolishes the feudal system in its entirety”. It also proclaimed “King Louis XVI Restorer of French Liberty”…

In his pamphlet *What is the Third Estate?* published in that year, Abbé Sieyès asked: What is the Third Estate? Everything. What has it been in the political order up to the present? Nothing. What does it demand? To become something…” Now the Third Estate was something. Rarely, if ever, in political history has a single act had such a huge and immediate effect (the abdication of the Tsar in February, 1917 is perhaps the only parallel).

On August 26, the Assembly passed the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen, which listed the following “natural, inalienable and sacred rights”:

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"I. Men are born and remain free and equal in rights. Social distinctions can only be founded on public utility.
II. The purpose of every political association is the preservation of the natural and unprescriptible rights of men. These rights are liberty, property, and safety from, and resistance to, oppression.
III. The principle of all sovereignty lies in the nation. No body of men, and no individual, can exercise authority which does not emanate directly therefrom.
IV. Liberty consists in the ability to do anything which does not harm others.
V. The Law can only forbid actions which are injurious to society…
VI. The Law is the expression of the General Will… It should be the same for all, whether to protect or to punish.
VII. No man can be accused, arrested, or detained except in those instances which are determined by law.
VIII. The Law should only establish punishments which are strictly necessary. No person should be punished by retrospective legislation.
IX. No man [is] presumed innocent till found guilty…
X. No person should be troubled for his opinions, even religious ones, so long as their manifestation does not threaten public order.
XI. The free communication of thoughts and opinions is one of men’s most precious rights. Every citizen, therefore, can write, speak, and publish freely, saving only the need to account for abuses defined by law.
XII. A public force is required to guarantee the [above] rights. It is instituted for the benefit of all, not for the use of those to whom it is entrusted.
XIII. Public taxation is indispensable for the upkeep of the forces and the administration. It should be divided among all citizens without distinction, according to their abilities.
XIV. Citizens… have the right to approve the purposes, levels, and extent of taxation.
XV. Society has the right to hold every public servant to account.
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XVI. Any society in which rights are not guaranteed nor powers separated
does not have a constitution.

XVII. Property being a sacred and inviolable right, no person can be
deprived of it, except by public necessity, legal process, and just
compensation.’

“Social convention held that the ‘Rights of Man’ automatically subsumed
the rights of women. But several bold souls, including Condorcet, disagreed,
arguing that women had simply been neglected.\(^\text{14}\) In due course the original
Declaration was joined by new ideas, notably about human rights in the social
and economic sphere. Article XXI of the revised Declaration of June 1793
stated: ‘Public assistance is a sacred obligation [dette]. Society owes
subsistence to unfortunate citizens, whether in finding work for them, or in
assuring the means of survival of those incapable of working.’ Slavery was
outlawed in 1794. Religious toleration was guaranteed.”\(^\text{15}\)

In October a great crowd of hungry women brought the king from
Versailles to Paris. Thereafter the forging of a new Constitution that would
include limited powers for the king went ahead relatively peacefully.
However, the king could not make up his mind whether to accept or reject the
Revolution\(^\text{16}\); and this vacillation, combined with his arrest at Varennes on
June 21, 1791 while attempting to flee the country, gradually undermined
what remained of his authority.\(^\text{17}\) For, as Hobsbawn points out, “traditional
kings who abandon their peoples lose the right to royalty”.\(^\text{18}\)

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\(^\text{14}\) In 1791 Olympe de Gouges wrote *The Rights of Women and the Citizen*, in which she declared:
“1. Woman is born free, and remains equal to Man in rights... 4. The exercise of Woman’s
natural rights has no limit other than the tyranny of Man’s opposing them... 17. Property is
shared or divided equally by both sexes.” (Cohen and Major, *op. cit.*, p. 518). In 1792 Mary
Wollstonecraft wrote *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, in which she denies that there are
any specifically feminine qualities. Thus “I here throw down my gauntlet, and deny the
existence of sexual virtues, not excepting modesty.” (Cohen and Major, *op. cit.*, p. 483) Her
daughter was Mary Shelley, the author of *Frankenstein*... (V.M.)

\(^\text{15}\) Davies, *op. cit.*, pp. 713-714.

\(^\text{16}\) Rejection was probably his more constant and sincere opinion. In October, 1789 he wrote to
the Spanish King, his cousin, protesting “against all the decrees contrary to royal authority
to which I have been compelled by force to assent, since 15\textsuperscript{th} July of this year. I beg your Majesty
to keep my protest secret until its publication becomes necessary” (Mark Almond, *Revolution*,
London: De Agostini Editions, 1996, p. 74. See also Munro Price, “Countering the

\(^\text{17}\) The day before his attempted escape the king declared: “What remains to the King other
than a vain semblance of royalty?...The King does not think it possible to govern a kingdom
of such great extent and importance as France through the means established by the National
Assembly... The spirit of the clubs and dominates everything... In view of all these facts, and
the impossibility of the King’s being able to do the good and prevent the evil which is being
committed, is it surprising that the King has sought to recover his liberty and find security for
himself and his family?” (Hunt, *op. cit.*, p. 41).

\(^\text{18}\) Hobsbawn, *op. cit.*, p. 86.
Moreover, while the Assembly passed a large number of laws, it completely failed to solve the problems which had propelled it to power – the financial insolvency of the country. It simply printed money which rapidly deteriorated in value, fuelling inflation, and in 1791 collected only 249 livres in taxes against 822.7 livres expended.\(^{19}\)

**Burke versus Paine**

The ideas of the French revolution posed a great threat to the British, who prided themselves on being the home of liberty, but who saw that French revolutionary “liberty” would speedily destroy their own. Already the American revolution had shown that libertarianism and empire made an uncomfortable fit; and the fit would look still worse in India and Ireland as the French ideas filtered through. Moreover, the first effects of the industrial revolution on the industrial poor, and of the “dark, satanic mills” on England’s “green and pleasant land”, threatened to arouse revolutionary passions among the poor.

Already in the years 1778-83 a debate had begun on whether the ideas of the founding philosopher of English liberalism, John Locke, had been right after all. This debate became more urgent as the atrocities of the revolution became known. Could the ideas of the urbane and civilised Locke really have led to such barbarism? William Jones thought so. He said that “with Mr. Locke in his hand”, that “mischievous infidel Voltaire” had set about destroying Christianity. And Locke was “the oracle of those who began and conducted the American Revolution, which led to the French Revolution; which will lead (unless God in his mercy interfere) to the total overthrow of religion and government in this kingdom, perhaps in the whole Christian world.”\(^{20}\)

Another critic of the French revolution was the leader of the “Philosophical Radicals”, Jeremy Bentham, famous for his “greatest happiness” principle of ethics: the best action is the one which involves the greatest balance of pleasure over pain for the greatest number of people. According to Bertrand Russell, “he had a great contempt for the doctrine of the rights of man. The rights of man, he said, are plain nonsense; the imprescriptible rights of man, nonsense on stilts. When the French revolutionaries made their ‘Déclaration des droits de l’homme’, Bentham called it ‘a metaphysical work – the ne plus ultra of metaphysics.’ Its articles, he said, could be divided into three classes: (1) those that are unintelligible, (2) those that are false, (3) those that are both.”\(^{21}\)

\(^{19}\) Hunt, op. cit., p. 34.


However, the most famous ideological attack on the French revolution came from Edmund Burke, who had adopted a liberal position on America and Ireland, and who now tried to defend English liberalism while attacking French radicalism. His *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790) foresaw that the French revolution would bring in its train, not freedom, but tyranny - and precisely because of its populist character. For “the tyranny of a multitude,” he wrote, “is a multiplied tyranny.”

Burke agreed with the Catholic monarchist Joseph de Maistre in calling the revolution “satanic”. And, as we have seen, he called the war that broke out between revolutionary France and Britain in 1793 “a religious war”. For truly, the war between the revolution and its opponents was a religious war, a war between two opposed ideas of who rules human society: God or the people.

Burke laid great emphasis on the importance of tradition and the organic forms of social life, which was important at a time when the rage was all for the destruction of everything that was old and venerable. In this respect (although not in others) he went against one of the main presuppositions of the English social contract theorists, following rather in the line of thought of the German Counter-Enlightenment thinkers Hamann and Herder. As Sir Isaiah Berlin writes: “Burke’s famous onslaughts on the principles of the French revolutionaries was founded upon the selfsame appeal to the myriad strands that bind human beings into a historically hallowed whole, contrasted with the utilitarian model of society as a trading-company held together by contractual obligations, the world of ‘sophisters, oeconomists, and calculators’ who are blind and deaf to the unanalysable relationships that make a family, a tribe, a nation, a movement, any association of human beings held together by something more than a quest for mutual advantage, or by force, or by anything that is not mutual love, loyalty, common history, emotion and outlook.”

Society exists over several generations, so why, asked Burke, should only one generation’s interests be respected in drawing up the social contract? For, as Roger Scruton writes, “the social contract prejudices the interests of those who are not alive to take part in it: the dead and the unborn. Yet they too have a claim, maybe an indefinite claim, on the resources and institutions over which the living so selfishly contend. To imagine society as a contract among its living members, is to offer no rights to those who go before and after. But when we neglect those absent souls, we neglect everything that endows law with its authority, and which guarantees our own survival. We should therefore see the social order as a partnership, in which the dead and the unborn are included with the living.”

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22 Burke, *Letter to a Member of the National Assembly* (1791).
“Every people,” writes L.A. Tikhomirov, “is, first of all, a certain historical whole, a long row of consecutive generations, living over hundreds or thousands of years in a common life handed down by inheritance. In this form a people, a nation, is a certain socially organic phenomenon with more or less clearly expressed laws of inner development... But political intriguers and the democratic tendency does not look at a people in this form, as a historical, socially organic phenomenon, but simply in the form of a sum of the individual inhabitants of the country. This is the second point of view, which looks on a nation as a simple association of people united into a state because they wanted that, living according to laws which they like, and arbitrarily changing the laws of their life together when it occurs to them.”

Burke rejected the idea that the French Revolution was simply the English Revolution writ large. The Glorious Revolution of 1688 was not a revolution in the new, French sense, because it left English traditions, including English traditions of liberty, intact: it “was made to preserve our ancient indisputable laws and liberties, and that ancient constitution of government which is our only security for law and liberty... We wished at the period of the Revolution, and do now wish, to derive all we possess as an inheritance from our forefathers... All the reformations we have hitherto made, have proceeded upon the principle of reference to antiquity.” In fact, far from making the people the sovereign power, the English parliament in 1688 had sworn “in the name of the people” to “most humbly and faithfully submit themselves, their heirs and posterities” to the Monarchs William and Mary “for ever”.

The French Revolution, by contrast, rejected all tradition. “You had,” he told the French, “the elements of a constitution very nearly as good as could be wished...; but you chose to act as if you have never been moulded into civil society, and had everything to begin anew. You began ill, because you began by despising everything that belonged to you.” “Your constitution, it is true,... suffered waste and dilapidation; but you possessed in some parts the walls and, in all, the foundations of a noble and venerable castle. You might have repaired those walls; you might have built on those old foundations. Your constitution was suspended before it was perfected.” “Rage and phrenzy will pull down more in half an hour, that prudence, deliberation, and foresight can build up in an hundred years.” There was in fact nothing new about the French Revolution. It was just another disaster “brought upon the world by pride, ambition, avarice, revenge, lust, sedition, hypocrisy, ungoverned zeal”. The “rights of man” were just a “pretext” invented by the “wickedness” of human nature.

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28 Burke, Reflections on the Revolution in France, quoted in Fidler & Welsh, op. cit., p. 31.
“It was Burke’s Reflections,” writes G.P. Gooch, “which overthrew the supremacy of Locke [for the time being], and formed the starting-point of a number of schools of thought, agreeing in the rejection of the individualistic rationalism which had dominated the eighteenth century. The work is not only the greatest exposition of the philosophic basis of conservatism ever written, but a declaration of the principles of evolution, continuity, and solidarity, which must hold their place in all sound political thinking. Against the omnipotence of the individual, he sets the collective reason; against the claims of the present, he sets the accumulated experience of the past; for natural rights he offers social rights; for liberty he substitutes law. Society is a partnership between those who are living, those who are dead, and those who are yet to be born.”

Burke, writes Doyle, attributed the fall of the old order “to a conspiracy. On the one hand were the ‘moneyed interest’, resentful at their lack of esteem and greedy for new profits; on the other, and even more important, were the so-called philosophers of the Enlightenment, a ‘literary cabal’ committed to the destruction of Christianity by any and every available means. The idea of a philosophic conspiracy was not new. It went back to the only one ever conclusively proved to have existed, the plot of the self-styled Illuminati to undermine the Church-dominated government of Bavaria. The Bavarian government published a sensational collection of documents to illustrate its gravity, and Burke had read it. Although he was not the first to attribute events in France to conspiracy of the sort thwarted in Bavaria, the way he included the idea in the most comprehensive denunciation of the Revolution yet to appear lent it unprecedented authority. Nor was the destruction of Christianity and the triumph of atheism the only catastrophe he predicted. Disgusted by the way the ‘Republic of Paris’ and its ‘swinish multitude’ held the government captive, the provinces would eventually cut loose and France would fall apart. The assignats would drive out sound coinage and hasten, rather than avert, bankruptcy. The only possible end to France’s self-induced anarchy would come when ‘some popular general, who understand the art of conciliating the soldiery, and who possesses the true spirit of command, shall draw the eyes of all men upon himself. Armies will obey him on his personal account... the moment in which that event will happen, the person who really commands the army is your master.’”

Burke’s Reflections were answered by Tom Paine’s Rights of Man, which sold still more copies – an astonishing 250,000 in two years. This debate between two Englishmen, which was eagerly followed all over Europe, turned out to be the first of the major debates between “right” and “left” that have dominated European intellectual life since 1789, taking the place of the

old Catholic-Protestant polemics. Burke proved to be more accurate than Paine in its forecasts about the future of the revolution (he predicted both the killing of the king and the military dictatorship); but it was to be Paine’s ideas that proved to be the more popular and influential.31

Paine admitted that Louis XVI had “natural moderation”; but the revolution, he argued, was not against people, but against principles – in particular, the principle of despotism. In any case, he wrote, “[Burke] is not affected by the showy resemblance of it striking his imagination. He pities the plumage, but forgets the dying bird... His hero or his heroine must be a tragedy victim, expiring in show, and not the real prisoner of misery, sliding into death in the silence of a dungeon.”32

However, Paine himself was soon to become “a real prisoner of misery” in a Jacobin dungeon, just one of the hundreds of thousands of people, including the “naturally moderate” King and vast numbers of the poorer classes – far more than the ancien régime had caused in centuries.

As for the principle of despotism, Paine saw it everywhere: “When despotism has established itself for ages in a country, as in France, it is not in the person of the King only that it resides. It has the appearance of being so in show, and in nominal authority; but it is not so in practice, and in fact. It has its standard everywhere. Every office and department has its despotism, founded upon custom and usage. Every place has its Bastille, and every Bastille its despot. The original hereditary despotism resident in the person of the King, divides and subdivides itself into a thousand shapes and forms, till at last the whole of it is acted by deputation. This was the case in France; and against this species of despotism, proceeding on through an endless labyrinth of office till the source of it is scarcely perceptible, there is no mode of redress. It strengthens itself by assuming the appearance of duty, and tyrannizes under the pretence of obeying.

31 This greatly increased influence of the printed word, which has become such an important feature of the modern world, was another of Burke’s correct predictions: “What direction the French spirit of proselytism is likely to take, and in what order it is likely to prevail in the several parts of Europe, it is not easy to determine. The seeds are sown almost everywhere, chiefly by newspaper circulations, infinitely more efficacious and extensive than ever they were. And they are a more important instrument than is generally imagined. They are a part of the reading of all, they are the whole of the reading of the far greater number. There are thirty of them in Paris alone. The language diffuses them more widely than the English, though the English too are much read. The writers of these papers indeed, for the greater part, are either unknown or in contempt, but they are like a battery in which the stroke of any one ball produces no great effect, but the amount of continual repetition is decisive. Let us only suffer one person to tell us his story, morning and evening, but for one twelvemonth, and he will become our master” (Thoughts on French Affairs (1791), in Fidler and Welsh, op. cit., p. 240).
"When a man reflects on the condition which France was in from the nature of her government, he will see other causes for revolt than those which immediately connect themselves with the person or character of Louis XVI. There were, if I may so express it, a thousand despotisms to be reformed in France, which had grown up under the hereditary despotism of the monarchy, and became so rooted as to be in a great measure independent of it. Between the monarchy, the parliament, and the church, there was a *rivalship of despotism*, besides the feudal despotism operating locally, and the ministerial despotism operating everywhere."\(^{33}\)

So even parliament was despotic! Paine gives himself away here: his real target is not despotism, but *hierarchy*, every relationship in society which involves the submission of one person to another. He rejected the role of tradition in politics as radically as Luther and Calvin had rejected it in theology.

"Every age and generation," he wrote, "must be as free to act for itself, *in all cases*, as the ages and generations which preceded it. The vanity and presumption of governing beyond the grave, is the most ridiculous and insolent of all tyrannies. Man has no property in man; neither has any generation property in the generations which are to follow. The parliament or the people of 1688, or of any other period, has no more right to dispose of the people of the present day, or to bind or to control those who are to live a hundred or a thousand years hence. Every generation is, and must be, competent to all the purposes which its occasions require. It is the living, and not the dead, that are to be accommodated. When man ceases to be, his power and his wants cease with him; and having no longer any participation in the concerns of this world, he has no longer any authority in directing who shall be its governors, or how its government shall be organized, or how administered.... I am contending for the rights of the *living*, and against their being willed away by the manuscript assumed authority of the dead...

"The error of those who reason by precedents drawn from antiquity, respecting the rights of man, is, that they do not go far enough into antiquity. They do not go the whole way. They stop in some of the intermediate stages of an hundred or a thousand years, and produce what was then done, as a rule for the present day. This is no authority at all. If we travel still farther into antiquity, we shall find a direct contrary opinion and practice prevailing; and if antiquity is to be authority, a thousand such authorities may be produced, successively contradicting each other:

"...If the mere name of antiquity is to govern the affairs of life, the people who are to live an hundred or a thousand years hence, may as well take us for a precedent, as we make a precedent of those who lived an hundred or a thousand years ago. The fact is, that portions of antiquity, by proving

everything, establish nothing. It is authority against authority all the way, till we come to the divine origin of the rights of man at the creation. Here our inquiries find a resting-place, and our reason finds a home. If a dispute about the rights of man had arisen at the distance of an hundred years from the creation, it is to this same source of authority they must have referred, and it is to the same source of authority that we must now refer.

“Though I mean not to touch upon any sectarian principle of religion, yet it may be worth observing, that the genealogy of Christ is traced to Adam. Why then not trace the rights of man to the creation of man? I will answer the question. Because there have been upstart governments, thrusting themselves between, and presumptuously working to un-make man.

“If any generation of men ever possessed the right of dictating the mode by which the world should be governed for ever, it was the first generation that existed; and if that generation did it not, no succeeding generation can show any authority for doing it, nor can set any up. The illuminating and divine principle of the equal rights of man, (for it has its origin from the Maker of man) relates, not only to the living individuals, but to generations of men succeeding each other. Every generation is equal in rights to the generations which preceded it, by the same rule that every individual is born equal in rights with his contemporary.”

Paine had a point. Arguments based on merely human tradition are relative; one precedent from antiquity is cancelled out by another. Human tradition needs to be supported by Divine Tradition – that is, the Tradition handed down from God to His Chosen People and passed on by them from generation to generation in the Church.

Burke had this problem not only in relation to Paine, but also in relation to other contemporary English radicals. If he claimed that British liberties “were an entailed inheritance peculiar to the inhabitants of the island” going back to William the Conqueror, then “his radical opponents, who were rather less keen on entails, claimed that their rights were derived from the alleged practices of free-born Englishmen before the days of the ‘Norman yoke’.”

And the precedent his opponents pointed to was both older and more noble; for, as Paine pointed out, if any ruler was a despot and usurper, - that is, a destroyer of tradition - it was William the Conqueror. And he was right: it had been William who, in 1066, cut off England from the One, True Church in the East and destroyed her traditions, both human and Divine. He would have done better to point to the nation’s pre-Norman inheritance, the Orthodox Autocracy of Anglo-Saxon England.

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Again, since Burke accepted the legitimacy of both the English and American revolutions (while preferring to rest on their least revolutionary moments), he could not attack the French revolution from a position of basic principle (for its principles were not fundamentally different from those of its Anglo-Saxon predecessors), but only because it carried those principles “too far”. But if the principle itself is accepted, who is to say when the application of the principle has gone “too far”? In any case, both Burke and his English radical opponents (but not Paine) agreed that the rights they were talking about “did not rest on principle and had no relevance to foreigners”\(^\text{36}\) - and so had no relevance to the French revolution, either.

And yet Burke was not defending just the English way of doing things, which was relevant only to Englishmen (in other of his works he defended the rights of the Irish and the Indians to keep their own traditions within the British Empire). The French revolution attacked the very foundation of society - religion. So in defending the Christian religion Burke was defending a universal principle: “We know, and what is better, we feel inwardly, that religion is the basis of civil society, and the source of all good and of all comfort. In England we are so convinced of this, that there is no rust of superstition... that ninety-nine in a hundred of the people of England would not prefer to impiety... We know, and it is our pride to know, that man is by his constitution a religious animal; that atheism is against, not only our reason, but our instincts; and that it cannot prevail long. But if... we should uncover our nakedness, by throwing off that Christian religion which has hitherto been our boast and comfort, and the one great source of civilisation amongst us, and among many other nations, we are apprehensive (being well aware that the mind will not endure a void) that some uncouth, pernicious, and degrading superstition might take the place of it.”\(^\text{37}\)

The very radicalism of Paine’s rejection of tradition and hierarchy undermined the validity of his argument. First, no society can exist without tradition or hierarchy – least of all revolutionary ones, which immediately act to fill the void they have created. Secondly, if sovereignty resides in \textit{the Nation}, as Paine affirms, the question arises: what is the Nation if it has to be constantly re-inventing itself, holding nothing from the past as sacred and starting again from a \textit{tabula rasa} with every new generation? A Nation defines itself precisely by its continuity over time and over many generations; there must be some loyalty to, and preservation of, the past if the Nation is to recognise itself as the \textit{same} Nation throughout its transformations. But Paine, true revolutionary that he was, was as sweeping in his rejection of temporal tradition as he was of spatial hierarchy.

\(^{\text{36}}\) Hampson, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 233.
Not surprisingly, therefore, he had little time for religion, the main guarantor of both the spatial and the temporal dimensions of society. “My country is the world,” he wrote, “and my religion is to do good”.\textsuperscript{38} There was no one, true dogmatic religion for Paine, only conflicting human opinions which he made no attempt to evaluate: “With respect to what are called denominations of religion, if everyone is left to judge of his own religion, there is no such thing as a religion that is wrong; but if they are to judge of each other’s religion, there is no such thing as a religion that is right; and therefore, all the world is right, or all the world is wrong…”\textsuperscript{39} “Every religion is good that teaches man to be good”. “I do not believe in the creed professed by the Jewish Church, by the Roman Church, by the Greek Church, by the Turkish Church, by the Protestant Church, nor by any church that I know of. My own mind is my own church.”\textsuperscript{40}

Paine was not anti-religious as such; but in his attitude to religion there was more than a hint of contempt: “All religions are in their nature kind and benign [!], and united with principles of morality. They could not have made proselytes at first, by professing anything that was vicious, cruel, persecuting, or immoral. Like everything else, they had their beginning; and they proceeded by persuasion, exhortation, and example. How then is it that they lose their native mildness, and become morose and intolerant?

“It proceeds from the connexion which Mr. Burke recommends. By engendering the church with the state, a sort of mule-animal, capable only of destroying, and not of breeding up, is produced, called \textit{The Church established by Law}. It is a stranger, even from its birth, to any parent mother on which it is begotten, and whom in time it kicks out and destroys.”\textsuperscript{41}

On this principle, Paine should have been very happy in America, where he spent his last years, insofar as the American Constitution made a complete separation between Church and State. But where there is no persecution from the State, there can still be criticism from individuals – indeed, that is their right according to Paine’s own principles. And the Americans criticised him for his Deist views, so that Paine spent his last years in loneliness and misery.

For all his Rousseauist iconoclasm, Paine’s revolutionary zeal was profoundly non-Rousseauist, Anglo-Saxon and individualist. Society exists, according to him, for the sake of the individual and his needs, especially his need to be free \textit{from} various ills. There is no place in his system for a general will that is superior to the individual and which forces him to be free \textit{to} be himself. “Civil power, properly considered as such, is made up of the aggregate of that class of the natural rights of man, which becomes defective

\textsuperscript{38} Paine, \textit{The Age of Reason}, 1793, in Davies, op. cit., p. 679.
\textsuperscript{39} Paine, \textit{Rights of Man}, op. cit., p. 86.
\textsuperscript{40} Paine, quoted in Porter, op. cit., p. 454.
\textsuperscript{41} Paine, op. cit., p. 87.
in the individual in point of power, and answers not to his purpose; but when collected to a focus, becomes competent to the purpose of every one.”

In other words, the State has no special rights over an individual unless he interferes with the rights of other individuals; it simply exists to service the individual(s), to help him to do things he would not be able to do on his own.

Paine was more influential than Burke, and even the stolid and traditionalist British found themselves moving along the path that he indicated. Thus, as Hampson points out, “it was the British who moved towards the attitudes proclaimed by the French Revolution... After 1832 it was conceded that, irrespective of precedent and tradition, whole categories of Englishmen had a right to vote.”

Moreover, Paine’s vision of a welfare state outlined in part two of *The Rights of Man* was to inspire generations of British and American radicals... And yet, it was Burke, not Paine, who was right about the Revolution...

**The Jacobin Terror**

In June, 1791 Louis XVI tried, unsuccessfully, to flee abroad, and in August the monarchs of Austria and Prussia met at Pillnitz to co-ordinate action against the Revolution. Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden and Catherine of Russia also prepared to crush the “orang-outangs of Europe”. From the summer of 1791 to the summer of 1792 power steadily slipped away from the elected Constituent Assembly, which was still broadly in favour of a constitutional monarchy, and into the hands of the mob, or the Paris Commune. Their passionate hatred of refractory priests and monarchists inside the country was inflamed by the first attempts of the foreign powers to invade France and restore legitimate authority from outside.

The rhetoric became increasingly bloody. Thus on April 25, 1792 the “Marseillaise” was composed; “impure blood, it exulted, would drench the tracks of the conquering French armies.” And on the same day the new invention of the Guillotine claimed its first victim... On June 20 the mob or sansculottes (without breeches), invaded the Tuileries. “By sheer weight of numbers,” writes Adam Zamoyski, “the crowd pushed through the gates of the royal palace and came face to face with Louis XVI in one of the upstairs salons, where the defenceless monarch had to endure the abuse of the mob. Pistols and drawn sabres were waved in his face, and he was threatened with death. More significantly, he was made to don a red cap [symbol of the revolution] and drink the health of the nation – and thereby to acknowledge its sovereignty. By acquiescing, he toasted himself off the throne.”

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42 Paine, op. cit., p. 69.
43 Paine, op. cit., p. 69.
44 Doyle, op. cit., p. 183.
For a brief moment, on July 14, the third anniversary of the storming of the Bastille, it looked as if constitutional monarchy could be saved. Louis was called “king of the French” and “father of his country”. But on the same day Marie Antoinette’s nephew, Francis II, was crowned Holy Roman Emperor in Frankfurt in a ceremony that reaffirmed with great splendour the principle of autocratic monarchy. Between the revolution celebrated in France and the autocracy celebrated in Germany there could be no permanent compromise. The centre, constitutional monarchy, could not hold…

Pressure mounted on the Assembly to declare the dethronement of the king. Finally, on August 10, the Tuileries was again invaded, 600 Swiss guards were brutally massacred, and the king was imprisoned. The Assembly “had little alternative but to ‘invite’ the French people to form a convention ‘to assure the sovereignty of the people and the reign of liberty and equality. The next day it decreed that the new assembly was to be elected by manhood suffrage, without distinction between citizens. Only servants and the unemployed had no vote.”

Paris was ruled by the mob now. In September the prisons were opened and suspected royalists were slaughtered. On September 20 the Prussian army was defeated at Valmy, and the next day the monarchy was officially abolished.

The newly elected Convention’s task was to legislate for a new republican Constitution. It was divided between “Montagnards” (Jacobins) on the left, led by Marat, Danton, Robespierre and the Parisian delegates, and the “Girondins” on the right, led by Brissot, Vergniaud and the “faction of the Gironde”. The Montagnards were identified with the interests of the Paris mob and the most radical ideas of the Revolution; the Girondins – with the interests of the provinces and the original liberal ideals of 1789. The Montagnards stood for disposing of the king as soon as possible; the Girondins wanted a referendum of the whole people to decide.

The Montagnard Saint-Just said that a trial was unnecessary; the people had already judged the king on August 10; it remained only to punish him. For “there is no innocent reign... every King is a rebel and a usurper.” Robespierre had voted against the death penalty in the Assembly, but now he said that “Louis must die that the country may love”. And he agreed with Saint-Just: “Louis cannot be judged, he has already been judged. He has been

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46 Doyle, op. cit., p. 193.
47 At Valmy the Prussian army was led by the Duke of Brunswick, the leader of German Masonry, who quite clearly betrayed his country and an overwhelmingly superior position in order to let the forces of the revolution win (L.A. Tikhomirov, Religiozno-Filosofskie Osnovy Istorii (The Religious-Philosophical Foundations of History), Moscow, 1997, pp. 460-461 (in Russian)).
condemned, or else the Republic is not blameless. To suggest putting Louis XVI on trial, in whatever way, is a step back towards royal and constitutional despotism; it is a counter-revolutionary idea; because it puts the Revolution itself in the dock. After all, if Louis can still be put on trial, Louis can be acquitted; he might be innocent. Or rather, he is presumed to be until he is found guilty. But if Louis can be presumed innocent, what becomes of the Revolution?”

There was a certain logic in these words: since the Revolution undermined all the foundations of the ancien régime, the possibility that the head of that régime might be innocent implied that the Revolution might be guilty. So “revolutionary justice” required straight execution rather than a trial; it could not afford to question the foundations of the Revolution itself. It was the same logic that led to the execution without trial of Tsar Nicholas II in 1918.

But the majority of the deputies were not yet as “advanced” in their thinking as Robespierre. So “during the third week of January 1793,” writes Ridley, “the Convention voted four times on the issue. A resolution finding Louis guilty of treason, and rejecting the idea of an appeal to the people by a plebiscite [so much for Rousseauist democracy!], was carried by 426 votes to 278; the decision to impose the death penalty was carried by 387 to 314. Philippe Egalité [the Duke of Orléans and cousin of the king who became Grand Master of the Masons, then a Jacobin, renouncing his title for the name ‘Philippe Egalité’] voted to convict Louis and for the death penalty. A deputy then proposed that the question of what to do with Louis should be postponed indefinitely. This was defeated by 361 to 360, a single vote. Philippe Egalité voted against the proposal, so his vote decided the issue. On 20 January a resolution that the death sentence should be immediately carried out was passed by 380 to 310, and Louis was guillotined the next day.”

After the execution a huge old man with a long beard who had been prominent in the murdering of priests during the September riots mounted the scaffold, plunged both hands into the king’s blood and sprinkled the people with it, shouting: “People of France! I baptise you in the name of Jacob and Freedom!”

Who was Jacob? Jewry? If so, then the French were now baptised into the ever-restless spirit of the Jewish revolution?...


50 Ridley, op. cit., pp. 136-137.

51 Eliphas Levi, in Fomin, op. cit., p. 38. There are other theories. Some think it was Jacob Molet, the leader of the Templars who was executed by the Catholic Church. Others think it refers to Masons of the Scottish rite who were supporters of the Stuart Jacobites. Others think it was a reference to the Patriarch Jacob’s “struggle with God” in Genesis 32.
“Traditionally,” writes Zamoyski, “the death of a king of France was announced with the phrase: ‘Le Roi est mort, vive le Roi!’ in order to stress the continuity of the institution of monarchy. When the king’s head, was held aloft on that sunless day, the crowd assembled around the scaffold shouted: ‘Vive la Nation!’ The message was unequivocal. The nation had replaced the king as the sovereign and therefore as the validating element in the state. The dead king’s God had been superseded by ‘Our Lord Mankind’, to use the words of one prominent revolutionary.”

“The condemnation of the king,” wrote Camus, “is the crux of contemporary history. It symbolizes the secularization of our history and the disincarnation of the Christian God. Up to now, God played a part in history through the medium of kings. But His representative in history has been killed…”

The execution of the king was the signal for the abandonment of all restraint. The cause of the Revolution became the absolute value to which every other value was to be subordinated and sacrificed.

In February, 1793, after the British broke off relations because of the execution of the king, the Convention declared war on the British and the Dutch, and in effect “bade defiance to the whole of Europe. ‘They threaten you with kings!’ roared Danton to the Convention. ‘You have thrown down your gauntlet to them, and this gauntlet is a king’s head, the signal of their coming death.’ ‘We cannot be calm,’ claimed the ever-bombastic Brissot, ‘until Europe, all Europe, is in flames.’ In token of this defiance, annexations were now vigorously pursued…”

No matter that the Declaration of the Rights of Man had declared for the freedom of every nation: revolutionary casuistry interpreted sovereignty to be the right only of revolutionary nations; all others deserved to become slaves of the Republic. Moreover, on December 15, 1792 “generals were authorized in all occupied territories to introduce the full social programme of the French Republic. All existing taxes, tithes, feudal dues, and servitudes were to be abolished. So was nobility, and all types of privilege. The French motto would be, declared some deputies, War on the castles, peace to the cottages! In the name of peace, help, fraternity, liberty and equality, they would assist all people to establish ‘free and popular’ governments, with whom they would then co-operate.”

But practice did not match theory: the theory of cosmopolitan universalism too often gave way to the practice of imperialist nationalism. Thus when Holland was conquered by the revolutionary armies, “it was compelled to cede various southern territories, including control of the mouth of the

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53 Camus, The Rebel, New York, 1956, p. 120.
54 Doyle, op. cit., p. 201.
55 Doyle, op. cit., p. 199.
Scheldt, and pay for the upkeep of a French occupying army of 25,000 men. Finally, it was forced to conclude an alliance with the French Republic whose chief attraction was to place the supposedly formidable Dutch navy in the balance against Great Britain. This, then, was what the fraternity and help of the French Republic actually meant: total subordination to French needs and purposes."

Imperialism abroad was matched by despotism at home, forced conscription and crippling taxes. And now for the first time there was massive resistance. First came the peasant counter-revolution in the western regions of Brittany and the Vendée, which was crushed with great cruelty with the loss of about 250,000 lives, about ten times more than were claimed by the guillotine. At about the same time the revolutionary army under Dumouriez was defeated by the Austrians at Neerwinden. Dumouriez then changed sides, and it was only the army’s refusal to co-operate that prevented him from marching on Paris to restore the constitution of 1791 with Louis XVII as king.

The peasant revolt in the Vendée was by far the most serious and prolonged that the revolutionaries were to face. It was fought under the banner of the restoration of the king and the Church. The rebels wore “sacred hearts, crosses, and the white cockade of royalism. ‘Long live the king and our good priests,’ was their cry. ‘We want our king, our priests and the old regime.’"

However, the counter-revolution in other parts of the country, and especially among the bourgeoisie of such large cities as Marseilles, Lyons and Bordeaux, was less principled and therefore much less effective. As one general reported of the Bordelais: “They appeared to me determined not to involve themselves in Parisian affairs, but more determined still to retain their liberty, their property, their opulence... They don’t want a king: they want a republic, but a rich and tranquil republic.”

This difference in motivation between different parts of the counter-revolution, and the failure of many of its leaders to condemn the revolution in toto and as such, doomed it to failure in the long term. As long as the

57 General Westermann reported to the Convention: “The Vendée is no more... I have buried it in the woods and marshes of Savenay... According to your orders, I have trampled their children beneath our horses’ feet; I have massacred their women, so they will no longer give birth to brigands. I do not have a single prisoner to reproach me. I have exterminated them all. The roads are sown with corpses. At Savenay, brigands are arriving all the time claiming to surrender, and we are shooting them non-stop... Mercy is not a revolutionary sentiment” (in Davies, op. cit., p. 705).
58 Doyle, op. cit., p. 227.
59 Doyle, op. cit., p. 226.
60 Doyle, op. cit., p. 242.
revolutionaries held the centre, and were able to use the methods of terror and mass conscription to send large armies into the field against their enemies, the advantage lay with them. Again, we see a close parallel with the Russian Civil War, where the Reds won because they held the centre and were more united ideologically than the Whites.

The position of the revolutionaries was strengthened still further by the coup against the Girondist deputies carried out between May 31 and June 2, 1793. “In July 1793,” writes Ridley, “a young Girondin woman, Charlotte Corday, gained admission to Marat’s house by pretending that she wished to give him a list of names of Girondins to be guillotined. She found him sitting as usual in his bath to cure his skin disease, and she stabbed him to death. She was guillotined, and the Girondin party was suppressed.

“In Lyons, the Girondins had gained control of the Freemasons’ lodges. In the summer of 1793 the Girondins there defied the authority of the Jacobin government in Paris, and guillotined one of the local Jacobin leaders. The Lyons Freemasons played a leading part in the rising against the Paris Jacobins; but the Jacobins suppressed the revolt, and several of the leading Girondin Freemasons of Lyons were guillotined.”

And so the Revolution was frenziedly devouring its own children. Or rather, the Masons were devouring their own brothers; for the struggle between the Girondists and the Montagnards was in fact, according to Lev Tikhomirov, a struggle between different layers of Masonry.

Now the Terror went into overdrive. The guillotine fell on traitors, backsliders, suspects, speculators and “egoists”. “The spirit of moderation,” declared Leclerc, needed to be expunged. On September 17 a comprehensive Law of Suspects was passed, which empowered committees “to arrest anyone who ‘either by their conduct, their contacts, their words or their writings,  

61 David’s painting of the dead Marat in his bath gave the revolution an “iconic” representation of its first martyr. See Simon Schama’s excellent analysis of the painting and the painter for BBC television. (V.M.)  
62 Ridley, op. cit., p. 140.  
63 As Pierre Vergniaud said before the Convention in March, 1793: “It must be feared that the Revolution, like Saturn, will devour its children one after the other” (Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 522).  
64 Tikhomirov, op. cit., p. 458. “In the period of the terror the majority of Masonic lodges were closed. As Louis Blanc explains, a significant number of Masons, though extremely liberal-minded, could still not, in accordance with their personal interests, character and public position, sympathize with the incitement of the maddened masses against the rich, to whom they themselves belonged. In the hottest battle of the revolution it was those who split off into the highest degrees who acted. The Masonic lodges were replaced by political clubs, although in the political clubs, too, there began a sifting of the revolutionaries into the more moderate and the extremists, so that quite a few Masons perished on the scaffolds from the hands of their ‘brothers’. After the overthrow of Robespierre on 9 Thermidor the Masonic lodges were again opened.” (op. cit., p. 460).
showed themselves to be supporters of tyranny, of federalism, or to be enemies of liberty’, as well as a number of more specific categories such as former nobles ‘who have not constantly manifested their attachment to the revolution.’ Practically anybody might fall foul of such a sweeping law. In the weeks following even everyday speech acquired a sansculotte style. Those who refused to call each other ‘citizen’ rather than the deferential ‘Monsieur’, and to use the familiar form of address (tutoiement), fell under automatic suspicion. Then on 29 September the Convention passed a General Maximum Law which imposed price controls on a wide range of goods defined as of first necessity from food and drink to fuel, clothing, and even tobacco. Those who sold them above the maximum would be fined and placed on the list of suspects. The Revolutionary Army was at last set on foot…”

The Committee of Public Safety now took over control of the government, subject only to the oversight of the Convention. This anti-democratic move was said to be temporary and justified by the emergency situation. “It is impossible,” said Saint-Just in the Committee’s name, “for revolutionary laws to be executed if the government itself is not constituted in a revolutionary way.” As Lenin was to say in another great revolution: “You can’t make an omelette without breaking eggs”...

The revolutionary government now took terrible revenge on its defeated enemies. On October 12 the Committee “moved a decree that Lyons should be destroyed. Its very name was to disappear, except on a monument among the ruins which would proclaim ‘Lyons made war on Liberty. Lyons is no more.’” Lyons was not completely destroyed, but whole ranges of houses were burnt and thousands were guillotined and shot. “The effect... was designed to be a salutory one. ‘What cement for the Revolution!’ gloated Achard in a letter to Paris.”

In order to carry out its totalitarian programme of control of the whole population, the government issued “certificates of civisme – identity cards and testimonials of public reliability all in one. Originally only foreigners had been required to carry these documents, but the Law of Suspects made the requirement general [thereby showing that for the revolutionary government all citizens were aliens]. Those without them were liable to arrest and imprisonment; and in fact up to half a million people may have been imprisoned as suspects of one sort or another during the Terror. Up to 10,000 may have died in custody, crowded into prisons never intended for such numbers, or makeshift quarters no better equipped. These too deserve to be numbered among the victims of the Terror, although not formally condemned. So do those who were murdered or lynched without trial or official record

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65 Doyle, op. cit., pp. 251-252.
66 Doyle, op. cit., p. 252.
67 Doyle, op. cit., p. 254.
68 Hunt, op. cit., p. 63.
during the chaotic, violent autumn of 1793, when the supreme law of public safety seemed to override more conventional and cumbersome procedures. Altogether the true total of those who died under the Terror may have been twice the official figure – around 30,000 people in just under a year… Nor is it true that most of those killed in the Terror were members of the former ‘privileged orders’, whatever the Revolution’s anti-aristocratic rhetoric might suggest. Of the official death sentences passed, less than 9 per cent fell upon nobles, and less than 7 per cent on the clergy. Disproportionately high as these figures may have been relative to the numbers of these groups in the population as a whole, they were not as high as the quarter of the Terror’s victims who came from the middle classes. And the vast majority of those who lost their lives in the proscriptions of 1793-4 – two-thirds of those officially condemned and doubtless a far higher proportion of those who disappeared unofficially – were ordinary people caught up in tragic circumstances not of their own making, who made wrong choices in lethal times, when indifference itself counted as a crime.”

The incarnation of the revolution in this, its bloodiest phase was the lawyer Maximilien Robespierre. Uniting in his own person the despotism of Louis XIV and the freedom-worship of Rousseau, he said: “I am not a flatterer, a conciliator, an orator, a protector of the people; I myself am the people.”

Again, uniting opposites in thoroughly Hegelian fashion, he said: “The impulse behind the people’s revolutionary government is virtue and terror: virtue without which terror is pernicious; terror without which virtue is impotent… The government of the Revolution is the despotism of liberty over tyranny…”

But Robespierre’s own incarnation of the people was soon judged to be tyranny by the people as he was taken, kicking and screaming, to the guillotine…

**The Sociétés de Pensée**

In order to understand how the French Revolution passed from its first, democratic and relatively non-violent phase to the second, proto-communistic and exceedingly bloody phase, known as the Jacobin terror, it is necessary to study the general intellectual atmosphere of the time.

In seeking the antecedents of Jacobinism, writes Richard Pipes, “a brilliant if little-known French historian, Augustin Cochin… was led to [investigate] the social and cultural circles formed in France in the 1760s and 1770s to promote ‘advanced’ ideas. These circles, which he called sociétés de pensée, were made up of literary associations, Masonic lodges, academies, as well as

69 Doyle, op. cit., pp. 258, 259. For precise figures with breakdown according to class and sex, see Hunt, op. cit., p. 70.
70 Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 524.
various ‘patriotic’ and cultural clubs. According to Cochin, the sociétés de pensée insinuated themselves into a society in which the traditional estates were in the process of disintegration. To join them required severing connections with one’s social group and dissolving one’s class (estate) identity in a community bound exclusively by a commitment to common ideas. Jacobinism was a natural product of this phenomenon: in France, unlike England, the movement for change emanated not from parliamentary institutions but from literary and philosophical clubs.

“These circles, in which the historian of Russia recognizes many of the features of the Russian intelligentsia of a century later, had as their main mission the forging of a consensus: they achieved cohesion not through shared interests but through shared ideas, ruthlessly imposed on their members and accompanied by vicious attacks on all who thought differently: ‘Prior to the bloody terror of ’93, there existed, between 1765 and 1780, a dry terror in the republic of letters, of which the Encyclopedia was the Committee of Public Safety and d’Alembert was Robespierre. It mowed down reputations as the other did heads: its guillotine was defamation…’

“For intellectuals of this kind, the criterion of truth was not life: they created their own reality, or rather, sur-reality, subject to verification only with reference to opinions of which they approved. Contradictory evidence was ignored: anyone inclined to heed such evidence was ruthlessly cast out.

“This kind of thinking led to a progressive estrangement from life. Cochin’s description of the atmosphere in the French sociétés de pensée of the late eighteenth century perfectly fits that prevailing in intelligentsia circles in Russia a century later: ‘Whereas in the real world the arbiter of all thought is proof and its issue is the effect, in this world the arbiter is the opinion of others, and the aim their approbation… All thought, all intellectual effort here exists only by way of concurrence. It is opinion that makes for existence. That is real which others see, that true which they say, that good of which they approve. Thus the natural order is reversed: opinion here is the cause, and not, as in real life, the effect. Appearance takes the place of being, speaking, doing… And the goal… of that passive work is destruction. It consists, in sum, of eliminating, of reducing. Thought which submits to this initially loses the concern for the real, and then, little by little, the sense of the real. And it is precisely to this deprivation that it owes its freedom. It does not gain in freedom, orderliness, clarity except to the extent that it sheds its real content, its hold on that which exists.’ …

“Nowhere is this penchant for creating one’s own reality more apparent – and pernicious – than in the intelligentsia’s conception of the ‘people’. Radicals insist on speaking for and on acting on behalf of the ‘people’ (sometimes described as ‘the popular masses’) against the allegedly self-seeking elite in control of the state and the nation’s wealth. In their view, the
establishment of a just and free society requires the destruction of the status quo. But contact with the people of flesh and blood quickly reveals that few if any of them want their familiar world to be destroyed: what they desire is satisfaction of specific grievances – that is, partial reform, with everything else remaining in place. It has been observed that spontaneous rebellions are conservative rather than revolutionary, in that those involved usually clamor for the restitution of rights of which they feel they have been unjustly deprived: they look backward. In order to promote its ideal of comprehensive change, the intelligentsia must, therefore, create an abstraction called ‘the people’ to whom it can attribute its own wishes. According to Cochin, the essence of Jacobinism lay not in terror but in the striving of the intellectual elite to establish dictatorial power over the people in the name of the people. The justification for procedure was found in Rousseau’s concept of ‘general will’ which defined the will of the people as what enlightened ‘opinion’ declared it to be: ‘For the destruction of the [French revolutionary] regime, the philosophes and politicians, from Rousseau and Mably to Brissot and Robespierre, the true people is an ideal being. The general will, the will of the citizenry, transcends the actual will, such as it is, of the greatest number, as in Christian life grace dominates and transcends nature. Rousseau has said it: the general will is not the will of numbers and it has reason against it; the liberty of the citizen is not the independence of the individual, and suppresses it. In 1789, the true people did not exist except potentially, in the consciousness or imagination of ‘free people’, of ‘patriots’, as they used to be called... that is to say, a small number of initiates, recruited in their youth, trained without respite, shaped all their lives in societies of philosophes... in the discipline of liberty.’ It is only by reducing people of flesh and blood to a mere idea that one can ignore the will of the majority in the name of democracy and institute a dictatorship in the name of freedom.

“This whole ideology and behaviour to which it gave rise – a mélange of ideas formulated by Helvétius and Rousseau – was historically new, the creation of the French Revolution. It legitimized the most savage social experiments. Although for personal reasons Robespierre despised Helvétius (he believed him to have persecuted his idol, Rousseau), his entire thinking was deeply influenced by him. For Robespierre, the mission of politics was the ‘reign of virtue’. Society was divided into ‘good’ and ‘bad’ citizens, from which premise he concluded that ‘all those who do not think as we do must be eliminated from the city’.

“Tocqueville was perplexed by this whole phenomenon when late in life he turned his attention to the history of the French Revolution. A year before his death, he confided to a friend: ‘There is something special about the sickness of the French Revolution which I sense without being able to describe it or analyze its causes. It is a virus of a new and unfamiliar kind. The world has known violent revolution: but the boundless, violent, radical, perplexed, bold, almost insane but still strong and successful personality of these
revolutionaries appears to me to have no parallel in the great social upheavals of the past. From whence comes this new race? Who created it? Who made it so successful? Who kept it alive? Because we still have the same men confronting us, although the circumstances differ, and they have left a progeny in the whole civilized world. My spirit flags from the effort to gain a clear picture of this object and to find the means of describing it fairly. Independently of everything that is comprehensible in the French Revolution, in its spirit and in its deeds, there is something that remains inexplicable. I sense where the unknown is to be found but no matter how hard I try, I cannot lift the veil that conceals it. I feel it through a strange body which prevents me from really touching or seeing it...”

The spirit of the Revolution was “inexplicable” to Tocqueville because it was not human, because it was a spirit from hell...

**Illuminism**

The first stage of the French Revolution, from 1789 to 1791, was almost entirely dominated by Masons, whose numbers grew at an astonishing rate in the pre-revolutionary years. Adam Zamoyski writes that “there were 104 lodges in France in 1772, 198 by 1776, and a staggering 629 by 1789. Their membership included virtually every grandee, writer, artist, lawyer, soldier or other professional in the country, as well as notable foreigners such as Franklin and Jefferson – some 30,000 people.”

Between 800 and 900 masonic lodges,” writes Doyle, “were founded in France between 1732 and 1793, two-thirds of them after 1760. Between 1773 and 1779 well over 20,000 members were recruited. Few towns of any consequence were without one or more lodges by the 1780s and, despite several papal condemnations of a deistic cult that had originated in Protestant England, the élite of society flocked to join. Voltaire was drafted in on his last visit to Paris, and it was before the assembled brethren of the Nine Sisters Lodge that he exchanged symbolic embraces with Franklin.”

However, the Jacobin dictatorship cast Masonry aside, even though several of the leading Jacobins, such as Marat and Danton, were adepts. Philippe d’Orléans, seeing the way the tide was moving against the order, renounced the order – but this did not save him from the guillotine. “The brotherhoods were considered outposts of counter-revolution, many disbanded themselves,

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73 Doyle, *op. cit.*, pp. 64-65. Franklin was an American mason, a famous scientist, and a major player in the American revolution in which French and Americans had co-operated in overthrowing British monarchical rule. The American revolution had demonstrated that the ideas of the philosophes were not just philosophical theory, but could be translated into reality. And the meeting of Franklin and Voltaire showed that science and philosophy could meet in the womb of Masonry to bring forth the common dream - liberty and “the pursuit of happiness”.
some members emigrated, others stopped all work. Only after the coming to power of Napoleon, who protected the order, was its activity renewed and even broadened.\textsuperscript{74}

Jacobinism was much closer to Illuminism, which was founded on May 1, 1776\textsuperscript{75} by a Bavarian professor called Weishaupt, who assumed the name of “Spartacus” (from the slave who rebelled against Rome in the first century BC). Illuminism arose out of the dissatisfaction of a group of Masons with the general state of Masonry. Thus another founder member, Count Mirabeau, noted in the same year of 1776: “The Lodge Theodore de Bon Conseil at Munich, where there were a few men with brains and hearts, was tired of being tossed about by the vain promises and quarrels of Masonry. The heads resolved to graft on to their branch another secret association to which they gave the name of the Order of the I\textipa{llumin\'{e}s}. They modelled it on the Society of Jesus, whilst proposing to themselves something diametrically opposed.”\textsuperscript{76}

“Our strength,” wrote Weishaupt, “lies in secrecy. Therefore we must without hesitation use as a cover some innocent societies. The lodges of blue masonry are a fitting veil to hide our real aims, since the world is accustomed to expecting nothing important or constructive from them. Their ceremonies are considered pretty trifles for the amusement of big children. The name of a learned society is also a magnificent mask behind which we can hide our lower degrees.”\textsuperscript{77}

“Weishaupt constructed his organization on several levels, revealing his most radical plans only to his chosen co-workers. Weishaupt chose the

\textsuperscript{74} O.F. Soloviev, Masonstvo v Mirovoj Politike XX Veke (Masonry in World Politics in the 20th Century), Moscow: Rosspen, 1998, p. 22 (in Russian). The Mason Christopher Hodapp writes: “It was rumoured for many years that Napoleon Bonaparte was a Freemason, but there is no historic proof of it. Still, many of his military officers, members of his Grand Council for the Empire, and 22 of the 30 Marshals of France were. So were his four brothers, three of whom were made kings by Napoleon. The Emperor’s wife, Empress Josephine, was even admitted into a French female lodge in 1804. Regardless of whether Napoleon was ever made a Mason, he did adopt the title Protector of Freemasonry, along with the lengthy list of other titles he assumed when he became emperor in 1804” (Freemasons for Dummies, Indianapolis: Wiley, 2005, p. 42).

\textsuperscript{75} May 1, which has been adopted as International Labour Day by the Socialists, was a feast “of satanic forces – witches, sorcerers, evil spirits, demons” (O.A. Platonov, Ternovij Venets Rossii (Russia’s Crown of Thorns), Moscow: Rodnik, 1998, p. 194 (in Russian)). It was called “Walpurgisnacht” in Germany after the eighth-century English missionary to Germany, St. Walburga, whose feast is May 1.

\textsuperscript{76} Nesta Webster, Secret Societies and Subversive Movements, Christian Book Club of America, 1924, p. 205. According to his second-in-command, Baron von Knigge, Weishaupt, had a “Jesuitical character” and his organisation was “such a machine behind which perhaps Jesuits may be concealed” (quoted in Webster, op. cit., p. 227). He was in fact “a Jew by race who had been baptized a Roman Catholic and had become professor of canon law at the Roman Catholic university of Ingoldstadt in Bavaria” (Jasper Ridley, The Freemasons, London: Constable, 1999, p. 114).

\textsuperscript{77} Platonov, op. cit., p. 195.
members of his organization mainly amidst young people, carefully studying each candidature.

“Having sifted out the unreliable and dubious, the leaders of the order performed on the rest a rite of consecration, which took place after a three-day fast in a dark basement. Every candidate was consecrated separately, having first had his arms and legs bound. [Then] from various corners of the dark basement the most unexpected questions were showered upon the initiate.

“Having replied to the questions, he swore absolute obedience to the leaders of the order. Every new member signed that he would preserve the secrets of the organization under fear of the death penalty.

“However, the newcomer was not yet considered to be a full member of the organization, but received the status of novice and for one to three months had to be under the observation of an experienced illuminé. He was told to keep a special diary and regularly present it to the leaders. The novice filled in numerous questionnaires, and also prepared monthly accounts of all matters linking him with the order. Having passed through all the trials, the novice underwent a second initiation, now as a fully-fledged member.

“After his initiation the new member was given a distinguishing sign, gesture and password, which changed depending on the rank he occupied.

“The newcomer received a special pseudonym (order’s name), usually borrowed from ancient history..., and got to know an ancient Persian method of timekeeping, the geography of the order, and also a secret code.

“Weishaupt imposed into the order a system of global spying and mutual tailing.

“Most of the members were at the lowest level of the hierarchy.

“No less than a thousand people entered the organization, but for conspiratorial purposes each member knew only a few people. As Weishaupt himself noted, ‘directly under me there are to, who are completely inspired by me myself, while under each of them are two, etc. Thus I can stir up and put into motion a thousand people. This is how one must command and act in politics.’”

“Do you realize sufficiently,” he wrote in the discourse of the reception of the Illuminatus Dirigens, “what it means to rule – to rule in a secret society? Not only over the lesser or more important of the populace, but over the best men, over men of all ranks, nations, and religions, to rule without external

force, to unite them indissolubly, to breathe one spirit and soul into them, men distributed over all parts of the world?”

The supposed aim of the new Order was to improve the present system of government and to abolish “the slavery of the peasants, the servitude of men to the soil, the rights of main morte and all the customs and privileges which abase humanity, the corvées under the condition of an equitable equivalent, all the corporations, all the maîtrises, all the burdens imposed on industry and commerce by customs, excise duties, and taxes... to procure a universal toleration for all religious opinions... to take away all the arms of superstitions, to favour the liberty of the press, etc.” This was almost exactly the same programme as that carried out by the Constituent Assembly at the beginning of the French revolution in 1789-91 under the leadership of, among others, the same Count Mirabeau – a remarkable coincidence!

However, this liberal democratic programme was soon forgotten when Weishaupt took over control of the Order. For “Spartacus” had elaborated a much more radical programme, a programme that was to resemble the socialism of the later, more radical stages of the revolution. “Weishaupt had made into an absolute theory the misanthropic gibes [boutades] of Rousseau at the invention of property and society, and without taking into account the statement so distinctly formulated by Rousseau on the impossibility of suppressing property and society once they had been established, he proposed as the end of Illuminism the abolition of property, social authority, of nationality, and the return of the human race to the happy state in which it formed only a single family without artificial needs, without useless sciences, every father being priest and magistrate. Priest of we know not what religion, for in spite of their frequent invocations of the God of Nature, many indications lead us to conclude that Weishaupt had, like Diderot and d’Holbach, no other God than Nature herself...”

Weishaupt proceeded to create an inner secret circle within Masonry. He used the religious forms of Masonry, and invented a few “mysteries” himself. But his aim was the foundation of a political secret organisation controlled by himself.

His political theory, according to Webster, was “no other than that of modern Anarchy, that man should govern himself and rulers should be gradually done away with. But he is careful to deprecate all ideas of violent revolution – the process is to be accomplished by the most peaceful methods. Let us see how gently he leads up to the final conclusion:

79 Webster, op. cit., p. 221.
80 Webster, op. cit., p. 205.
81 Henri Martin, Histoire de France (History of France), XVI, 533; in Webster, op. cit., p. 207.
“‘The first stage in the life of the whole human race is savagery, rough nature, in which the family is the only society, and hunger and thirst are easily satisfied... in which man enjoys the two most excellent goods, Equality and Liberty, to their fullest extent. ... In these circumstances... health was his usual condition... Happy men, who were not yet enough enlightened to lose their peace of mind and to be conscious of the unhappy mainsprings and causes of our misery, love of power... envy... illnesses and all the results of imagination.’

“The manner in which man fell from this primitive state of felicity is then described:

“‘As families increased, means of subsistence began to lack, the nomadic life ceased, property was instituted, men established themselves firmly, and through agriculture families drew near each other, thereby language developed and through living together men began to measure themselves against each other, etc... But here was the cause of the downfall of freedom; equality vanished. Man felt new unknown needs...’

“Thus men became dependent like minors under the guardianship of kings; the human must attain to majority and become self-governing:

“‘Why should it be impossible that the human race should attain to its highest perfection, the capacity to guide itself? Why should anyone be eternally led who understands how to lead himself?’

“Further, men must learn not only to be independent of kings but of each other:

“‘Who has need of another depends on him and has resigned his rights. So to need little is the first step to freedom; therefore savages and the most highly enlightened are perhaps the only free men. The art of more and more limiting one’s needs is at the same time the art of attaining freedom...’

“Weishaupt then goes on to show how the further evil of Patriotism arose:

“‘With the origin of nations and peoples the world ceased to be a great family, a single kingdom: the great tie of nature was torn... Nationalism took the place of human love.... Now it became a virtue to magnify one’s fatherland at the expense of whoever was not enclosed within its limits, now as a means to this narrow end it was allowed to despise and outwit foreigners or indeed even to insult them. This virtue was called Patriotism...’

“And so by narrowing down affection to one’s fellow-citizens, the members of one’s own family, and even to oneself:
“There arose out of Patriotism, Localism, the family spirit, and finally Egoism... Diminish Patriotism, then men will learn to know each other again as such, their dependence on each other will be lost, the bond of union will widen out...”

“... Whilst the ancient religions taught the hope of a Redeemer who should restore man to his former state, Weishaupt looks to man alone for his restoration. ‘Men,’ he observes, ‘no longer loved men but only such and such men. The word was quite lost...’ Thus in Weishaupt’s masonic system the ‘lost word’ is ‘Man,’ and its recovery is interpreted by the idea that Man should find himself again. Further on Weishaupt goes on to show how ‘the redemption of the human race is to be brought about’:

“... These means are secret schools of wisdom, these were from all time the archives of Nature and of human rights, through them will Man be saved from his Fall, princes and nations will disappear without violence from the earth, the human race will become one family and the world the abode of reasonable men. Morality alone will bring about this change imperceptibly. Every father of a family will be, as formerly Abraham and the patriarchs, the priest and unfettered lord of his family, and Reason will be the only code of Man. This is one of our greatest secrets...

“... His first idea was to make Fire Worship the religion of Illuminism; the profession of Christianity therefore appears to have been an after-thought. Evidently Weishaupt discovered, as others have done, that Christianity lends itself more readily to subversive ideas than any other religion. And in the passages which follow we find adopting the old ruse of representing Christ as a Communist and as a secret-society adept. Thus he goes on to explain that ‘if Jesus preaches contempt of riches, He wishes to teach us the reasonable use of them and prepare for the community of goods introduced by Him,’ and in which, Weishaupt adds later, He lived with His disciples. But this secret doctrine is only to be apprehended by initiates...

“Weishaupt thus contrives to give a purely political interpretation to Christ’s teaching:

“'The secret preserved through the Disciplinam Arcani, and the aim appearing through all His words and deeds, is to give back to men their original liberty and equality... Now one can understand how far Jesus was the Redeemer and Saviour of the world.’

“The mission of Christ was therefore by means of Reason to make men capable of freedom: ‘When at last reason becomes the religion of man, so will the problem be solved.’
“Weishaupt goes on to show that Freemasonry can be interpreted in the same manner. The secret doctrine concealed in the teaching of Christ was handed down by initiates who ‘hid themselves and their doctrine under the cover of Freemasonry,’ and in a long explanation of Masonic hieroglyphics he indicates the analogies between the Hiramic legend and the story of Christ. ‘I say then Hiram is Christ.’… In this manner Weishaupt demonstrates that ‘Freemasonry is hidden Christianity… But this is of course only the secret of what Weishaupt calls ‘real Freemasonry’ in contradistinction to the official kind, which he regards as totally unenlightened.”

But the whole of this religious side of Weishaupt’s system was in fact simply a ruse to attract religious men. Weishaupt himself despised religion: “You cannot imagine,” he wrote, “what consideration and sensation our Priest’s degree is arousing. The most wonderful thing is that great Protestant and reformed theologians who belong to Θ [Illuminism] still believe that the religious teaching imparted in it contains the true and genuine spirit of the Christian religion. Oh! men, of what cannot you be persuaded? I never thought that I should become the founder of a new religion.”

Only gradually, and only to a very few of his closest associates, did Weishaupt reveal the real purpose of his order – the revolutionary overthrow of the whole of society, civil and religious. Elements of all religions and philosophical systems, including Christianity and Masonry, were used by Weishaupt to enrol a body of influential men (about 2500 at one time) who would obey him in all things while knowing neither him personally nor the real aims of the secret society they had been initiated into. The use of codes and pseudonyms, and the pyramidal structure of his organization, whereby nobody on a lower level knew what was happening on the one above his, while those on the higher levels knew everything about what was happening below them, was copied by all succeeding revolutionary organizations.

In 1782 Weishaupt convened a Universal Congress of Illuminati in Wilhelmsbad, and was well on the way to taking over Freemasonry (under the guise of its reform) when, in July, 1785, an Illuminatus was struck by lightning and papers found on him led to the Bavarian government banning the organisation. However, both Illuminism and Weishaupt continued in existence – only France rather than Germany became the centre of their operations. Thus the Parisian lodge of the Amis Réunis, renamed the Ennemis Réunis, gathered together all the really radical Masons from various other lodges, many of which were still royalist, and turned them, often unconsciously, into agents of Weishaupt. These adepts included no less than thirty princes. For it was characteristic of the revolution that among those most swept up by its madness were those who stood to lose most from it.

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82 Webster, op. cit., pp. 213-217.
83 Webster, op. cit., pp. 218-219.
84 Ridley, op. cit., p. 115.
Some far-sighted men, such as the Apostolic Nuncio in Vienna and the Marquis de Luchet, warned against Illuminism, and de Luchet predicted almost exactly the course of events that the revolution would take on the basis of his knowledge of the order. But no one paid any attention. But then, in October, 1789 a pamphlet was seized in the house of the wife of Mirabeau’s publisher among Mirabeau’s papers and published two years later.

“Beginning with a diatribe against the French monarchy,” writes Webster, “the document goes on to say that ‘in order to triumph over this hydra-headed monster these are my ideas’:

‘We must overthrow all order, suppress all laws, annul all power, and leave the people in anarchy. The law we establish will not perhaps be in force at once, but at any rate, having given back the power to the people, they will resist for the sake of the liberty which they will believe they are preserving. We must caress their vanity, flatter their hopes, promise them happiness after our work has been in operation; we must elude their caprices and their systems at will, for the people as legislators are very dangerous, they only establish laws which coincide with their passions, their want of knowledge would besides only give birth to abuses. But as the people are a lever which legislators can move at their will, we must necessarily use them as a support, and render hateful to them everything we wish to destroy and sow illusions in their path; we must also buy all the mercenary pens which propagate our methods and which will instruct the people concerning their enemies which we attack. The clergy, being the most powerful through public opinion, can only be destroyed by ridiculing religion, rendering its ministers odious, and only representing them as hypocritical monsters... Libels must at every moment show fresh traces of hatred against the clergy. To exaggerate their riches, to makes the sins of an individual appear to be common to all, to attribute to them all vices; calumny, murder, irreligion, sacrilege, all is permitted in times of revolution.’

‘We must degrade the noblesse and attribute it to an odious origin, establish a germ of equality which can never exist but which will flatter the people; [we must] immolate the most obstinate, burn and destroy their property in order to intimidate the rest, so that if we cannot entirely destroy this prejudice we can weaken it and the people will avenge their vanity and their jealousy by all the excesses which will bring them to submission.’

“After describing how the soldiers are to be seduced from their allegiance, and the magistrates represented to the people as despots, ‘since the people, brutal and ignorant, only see the evil and never the good of things,’ the writer explains they must be given only limited power in the municipalities.
“Let us beware above all of giving them too much force; their despotism is too dangerous, we must flatter the people by gratuitous justice, promise them a great diminution in taxes and a more equal division, more extension in fortunes, and less humiliation. These phantasies [vertiges] will fanaticise the people, who will flatten out all resistance. What matter the victims and their numbers? Spoliations, destructions, burnings, and all the necessary effects of a revolution? Nothing must be sacred and we can say with Machiavelli: “What matter the means as long as one arrives at the end?”’’

As we have seen, the early phase of the revolution was led by the more idealistic kind of Freemasons – men such as the Duc d’Orléans. But its later stages were controlled by the Illuminati with their radically destructive plans. Thus “according to Lombard de Langres [writing in 1820]: ‘France in 1789 counted more than 2,000 lodges affiliated to the Grand Orient; the number of adepts was more than 100,000. The first events of 1789 were only Masonry in action. All the revolutionaries of the Constituent Assembly were initiated into the third degree. We place in this class the Duc d’Orléans, Valence, Syllery, Laclos, Sièyes, Pétion, Menou, Biron, Montesquiou, Fauchet, Condorcet, Lafayette, Mirabeau, Garat, Rabaud, Dubois-Cracé, Thibaud, LarocheLoucauld, and others.’

“Amongst these others [continues Webster] were not only the Brissotins, who formed the nucleus of the Girondin party, but the men of the Terror – Marat, Robespierre, Danton, and Desmoulins.

“It was these fiercer elements, true disciples of the Illuminati, who were to sweep away the visionary Masons dreaming of equality and brotherhood. Following the precedent set by Weishaupt, classical pseudonyms were adopted by these leaders of the Jacobins, thus Chaumette was known as Anaxagoras, Clootz as Anacharsis, Danton as Horace, Lacroix as Publicola, and Ronson as Scaevola; again, after the manner of the Illuminati, the names of towns were changed and a revolutionary calendar was adopted. The red cap and loose hair affected by the Jacobins appear also to have been foreshadowed in the lodges of the Illuminati.

“Yet faithfully as the Terrorists carried out the plan of the Illuminati, it would seem that they themselves were not initiated into the innermost secrets of the conspiracy. Behind the Convention, behind the clubs, behind the Revolutionary Tribunal, there existed, says Lombard de Langres, that ‘most secret convention [convention sécrétissime] which directed everything after May 31, an occult and terrible power of which the other Convention became the slave and which was composed of the prime initiates of Illuminism. This power was above Robespierre and the committees of the government,… it was this occult power which appropriated to itself the treasures of the nation

and distributed them to the brothers and friends who had helped on the great work.”

Weishaupt has been credited with founding the idea of world revolution. That may well be so. Certainly, Weishaupt’s Illuminism represents perhaps the first clearly organised expression of that philosophy which Hieromomonk Seraphim Rose called “the Nihilism of Destruction”. Fr. Seraphim considered that this philosophy was unique to the twentieth century; but the evidence for its existence already in the eighteenth century is overwhelming. With Illuminism, therefore, we enter the atmosphere of the twentieth-century totalitarian revolutions....

The Revolution and Religion

The institution that suffered most in 1789-91 was the Catholic Church. First it lost its feudal dues and lands. Then all the monasteries and convents except those devoted to educational and charitable work were dissolved, and new religious vows were forbidden. The Assembly then “replaced the 135 bishops with 85, one for each department, and provided one curé for every 6,000 inhabitants. Bishops were henceforth to be elected (by an electorate including non-believers, Protestants and Jews) without reference to Rome.”

The weakened position of the Church encouraged the Protestants, and in June 300 died in clashes between Catholics and Protestants in Nîmes. Meanwhile, 150,000 papal subjects living in Avignon and the Comtat agitated for integration with France. Pope Pius VI rejected this, and on March 29 he also rejected the Declaration of the Rights of Man and all the religious legislation so far passed in the Assembly. On July 12 a Civil Constitution for the Clergy was passed, rationalising the Church’s organisation, putting all the clergy on the State’s pay-roll and decreeing the election of the clergy by lay assemblies who might included Protestants and Jews as well as Catholics. The Pope had already, on July 10, pleaded with the King to veto the Civil

86 Webster, op. cit., pp. 244-245.
88 Rose, Nihilism, Forestville, Ca.: Fr. Seraphim Rose Foundation, 1994, p. 54.
89 Zamoyski, op. cit., p. 64.
90 In his letter Quod Aliquantum of March, 1791 he condemned “this absolute liberty which not only assures people of the right not to be disturbed about their religious opinions but also gives them this licence to think, write and even have printed with impunity all that the most unruly imagination can suggest about religion. It is a monstrous right, but it would seem to the Assembly to derive from the equality and freedom natural to all men. But what could be more senseless than to establish among men equality and this unbridled freedom which seems to quench reason... What is more contrary to the rights of the Creator God Who limited human freedom by prohibiting evil, than ‘this liberty of thought and action which the National Assembly accords to man in society as an inalienable right of nature?’” (quoted in Jean Comby, How to Read Church History, London: SCM Press, 1989, volume 2, p. 113).
Constitution, but the king, advised by weak bishops (although only 7 out of 160 took the oath), reluctantly agreed to it.

The acceptance or rejection of the Civil Constitution now became a test of faith for Catholics. As opinion polarised, on October 30 thirty bishops from the Assembly signed an *Exposition of Principles*, explaining that, as Doyle writes, “they could not connive at such radical changes without consulting the Church through either a council or the Pope. Nevertheless patriots saw it as an incitement to disobey the law, and local authorities, clamorously supported by Jacobin clubs, began to enforce it. Bishops began to be expelled from suppressed sees; chapters were dissolved. In October and early November the first departmental bishops were elected. But this time the clergy did not meekly accept its fate. There were protests. ‘I can no more’, declared the incumbent of the doomed see of Senez, ‘renounce the spiritual contract which binds me to my Church than I can renounce the promises of my baptism… I belong to my flock in life and in death… If God wishes to test his own, the eighteenth century, like the first century, will have its martyrs.’ The first elected bishop, the deputy Expilly, who was chosen by the Finistère department, was refused confirmation by the archbishop of Rennes. In Soissons, the bishop was dismissed by the departmental authorities for denouncing the Civil Constitution. It was impossible to dismiss all the 104 priests of Nantes who did the same, but their salaries were stopped. Evidently there was to be no peaceful transition to a new ecclesiastical order, and indignant local authorities bombarded the Assembly with demands for action. Eventually, on 27 November, action was taken. The deputies decided, after two days of bitter debate, to dismiss at once all clerics who did not accept the new order unequivocally. And to test this acceptance they imposed an oath. All beneficed clergy were to swear after mass on the first available Sunday ‘to be faithful to the nation, the King and the law, and to uphold with all their power the constitution declared by the National Assembly and accepted by the king.’ All who refused were to be replaced at once through the procedures laid down in the Civil Constitution.

“The French Revolution had many turning-points: but the oath of the clergy was, if not the greatest, unquestionably one of them. It was certainly the Constituent Assembly’s most serious mistake. For the first time the revolutionaries forced fellow citizens to choose; to declare themselves publicly for or against the new order... With no word from Rome, the king sanctioned the new decree of 26 December, so that oath-taking (or refusal) dominated public life throughout the country in January and February 1791. The clergy in the Assembly themselves set the pattern, in that they were completely divided. Only 109 took the oath, and only two bishops, one of them Talleyrand. As the deadline approached on 4 January the Assembly was surrounded by crowds shouting for nonjurors to be lynched; and the patriots, led unpersuasively by the Protestant Barnave, used every possible argument and procedural ploy to sway waverers. But there were none. And faced with
this example from the majority of clerical deputies, it is little wonder that so many clerics in the country at large became refractories (as nonjurors were soon being called)... Above all, there was a massive refusal of the oath throughout the west...In the end, about 54 per cent of the parish clergy took the oath. This suggests that well over a third of the country was now prepared to signal that the Revolution had gone far enough...”

There is a bitter irony in these events. How often, since 1066 and the Investitures Conflict, had Popes bent western kings to their evil will! However, as present events now demonstrated, these were pyrrhic victories, which, in weakening the Monarchy, ultimately weakened the Church, too, in that Church and Monarchy are the two essential pillars of every Christian society. Right up to the Reformation the Popes had failed to understand that attacks on the throne were also attacks on the altar, and that an accusation of “royal despotism” would almost invariably be linked with one of “episcopal despotism”. The Counter-Reformation Popes were more careful to respect monarchical authority, and Louis XIV’s abrupt about-turn from Gallicanism to Ultramontanism witnessed to their continuing influence. But the constant political intrigues of the papal society of the Jesuits, which made them a kind of “state within the state”, led to their being banned by all the governments of Western Europe - a severe blow from which the power of the Popes never fully recovered and which was an important condition of the success of the revolution. The Masons and even more radical groups like the Illuminati were quick to take the place of the Jesuits as the main threat to established authority, while using the Jesuits’ methods. And now, at the end of the eighteenth century, when papism was in full retreat before the onslaught of enlightened despots like Joseph II and revolutionary democrats like the French National Assembly, and the Popes were desperately in need of the support of “Most Catholic Kings” such as Louis XVI, they paid the price for centuries of papal anti-monarchism. Indeed, since it was Papism that destroyed the Orthodox symphony of powers, and thereby created the conditions for the revolution, there was some sense in Catherine II’s suggestion that the European powers “embrace the Greek religion to save themselves from this immoral, anarchic, wicked and diabolical plague...”

In its second, Jacobin phase the revolution revealed its anti-Christian essence more clearly. Thus the eulogy at the funeral of Marat in July, 1793 proclaimed: “O heart of Marat, sacré coeur... can the works and benevolence of the son of Mary be compared with those of the Friend of the People and his apostles to the Jacobins of our holy Mountain?... Their Jesus was but a false prophet but Marat is a god...”

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91 Doyle, op. cit., pp. 143-144, 145.
92 Catherine II, in Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 520.
93 Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 523.
The revolution was in essence anti-Christian because it gave a new faith instead of Christianity: the cult of the nation. Let us recall the earlier stages in the rise of the cult of the nation: the oath to the nation that Rousseau provided for Napoleon’s native Corsica; the birth of the American nation in 1776; the abortive Irish revolution of 1783; the abortive Dutch revolution of 1785, which declared liberty the “inalienable right” of every citizen, and whose “Leiden draft” declared: “the Sovereign is none other than the vote of the people”.94 These were important harbingers of the future. But they were mere dress-rehearsals for the full emergence of the new faith, whose foundation stone, as we have seen, was the third of the Rights of Man: “The principle of all sovereignty lies in the nation. No body of men, and no individual, can exercise authority which does not emanate directly therefrom.”

It should be understood that this was not simply an expression of patriotism, but precisely a new faith to replace all existing faiths. For “the nation, as Abbé Siéyès put it, recognized no interest on earth above its own, and accepted no law or authority other than its own – neither that of humanity at large nor of other nations”95 – nor, it goes without saying, of God. The nation therefore stood in the place of God; in the strict sense of the word, it was an idol. So Hobsbawm rightly comments: “‘The people’ identified with ‘the nation’ was a revolutionary concept; more revolutionary than the bourgeois-liberal programme which purported to express it.”96

But what precisely was the nation? To this question the prophet of nationalism, Rousseau, had provided the answer. The nation, he said, is revealed in the general will, which was not to be identified with the will of any individual, such as the king, or group, such as a parliamentary majority, but only in some spontaneous, mystical upswelling of emotion that carried all before it and was not to be questioned or criticised by any rational considerations. It was a “holy madness”, to use Lafayette’s phrase.97

“‘He who would dare to undertake to establish a nation would have to feel himself capable of altering, so to speak, human nature, to transform each individual, who by his very nature is a unique and perfect whole, into a mere part of a greater whole, from which this individual would in a sense receive his life and his being,’ Rousseau had written. He understood that any polity, however logical, simple, elegant, poetic or modern, would be inadequate to replace the layered sacrality of something like the Crown of France and the whole theological and mythical charge of the Catholic Church. Human emotions needed something richer to feed on than a mere ‘system’ if they were to be engaged. And engaged they must be, for if one removed religious control of social behaviour and the monarch’s role as ultimate arbiter, the

94 Zamoyski, op. cit., p. 35.
95 Hobsbawm, op. cit., p. 80.
96 Hobsbawm, op. cit., p. 80.
97 Zamoyski, op. cit., p. 88.
very fount-head of civil sanction would dry up. Something had to be put in their place. The question was ultimately how to induce people to be good in a godless society.

“As it was the people themselves who gave the state its legitimacy, it was they who had to be invested with divinity. The monarch would be replaced by a disembodied sovereign in the shape of the nation, which all citizens must be taught to ‘adore’. ‘It is education that must give to the souls of men the national form, and so direct their thoughts and their tastes, that they will be patriotic by inclination, by passion, by necessity,’ Rousseau explained. This education included not only teaching but also sport and public ceremonies designed to inculcate the desired values. ‘From the excitement caused by this common emulation will be born that patriotic intoxication which alone can elevate men above themselves, and without which liberty is no more than an empty word and legislation but an illusion.’

“A precondition of this was the total elimination of Christianity. Being a sentimental person, Rousseau could not remain entirely unmoved by what he saw as the ‘sublime’ core of Christianity. But the existence of a morally independent religion alongside the civil institutions was bound to be destructive. ‘Far from binding the hearts of the citizens to the state, it detaches them from it, as from all earthly things,’ he writes: ‘I can think of nothing more contrary to the social spirit.’ It forced on people ‘two sets of laws, two leaders, two motherlands’, subjecting them to ‘contradictory duties’ and preventing them from being ‘both devout practitioners and good citizens’. Christianity demanded self-denial and submission, but only to God, and not to any creation of Man’s. A Christian’s soul could not be fused with the ‘collective soul’ of the nation, challenging the very basis of Rousseau’s proposition. His assertion that ‘a man is virtuous when his particular will is in accordance in every respect with the general will’, was heresy in Christian terms, according to which virtue consists in doing the will of God. There was no room for someone whose ultimate loyalty was to God in Rousseau’s model, which substituted the nation for God.”

“Anthropologically visualized as a universal ideal female, the nation kindled desire for selfless sacrifice in its cause, and that was the great strength of the French revolution. ‘Since it appeared to be more concerned with the regeneration of the human race than with reforming France, it aroused feelings that no political revolutions had hitherto managed to inspire,’ explained Tocqueville. ‘It inspired proselytism and gave birth to the propagande,’ he continued, and, ‘like Islam, flooded the whole world with its soldiers, its apostles and its martyrs.’”

98 Zamoyski, op. cit., pp. 63-64.
A programme known as de-christianization was now launched. The calendar and festivals of the old religion were replaced by those of the new, civic religion of the nation. Thus July 14, August 10, January 21 (the day of the execution of Louis XVI) and May 31 (the day of the establishment of the Jacobin tyranny) were commanded to be celebrated as feast-days.

Bamber Gascoigne writes: “August 10th was the first anniversary of the day on which the Paris mob had stormed the Tuileries and had put an effective end to the monarchy. The occasion was celebrated with a Festival of Regeneration, also known by the even more uninspiring name of Festival of the Unity and Indivisibility of the Republic. Among the ruins of the Bastille Jacques-Louis David had built a huge figure of a seated woman. She was Mother Nature. From her breasts there spurted two jets of water, at which delegates filled their cups and drank libations. Three months later there was a Festival of Reason, in which an actress from the opera played the Goddess of Reason and was enthroned in the cathedral of Notre-Dame – with the red bonnet of Liberty on her head and a crucifix beneath one of her elegant feet.”

All the churches in Paris were closed, the royal tombs were destroyed. Then there arrived in the Nièvre in September, 1793 the representative Fouché, who “transformed it into a beacon of religious terror. Fouché, himself a former priest, came from the Vendée, where he had witnessed the ability of the clergy to inspire fanatical resistance to the Revolution’s authority. Christianity, he concluded, could not coexist in any form with the Revolution and, brushing aside what was left of the ‘constitutional’ Church, he inaugurated a civic religion of his own devising with a ‘Feast of Brutus’ on 22 September at which he denounced ‘religious sophistry’. Fouché particularly deplored clerical celibacy: it set the clergy apart, and in any case made no contribution to society’s need for children. Clerics who refused to marry were ordered to adopt and support orphans or aged citizens. The French people, Fouché declared in a manifesto published on 10 October, recognized no other cult but that of universal morality; and although the exercise of all creeds was proclaimed to be free and equal, none might henceforth be practised in public. Graveyards should exhibit no religious symbols, and at the gate of each would be an inscription Death is an eternal sleep. Thus began the movement known as dechristianization. Soon afterwards Fouché moved on to Lyons; but during his weeks in Nevers his work had been watched by Chaumette, visiting his native town from Paris. He was to carry the idea back to the capital, where it was energetically taken up by his colleagues at the commune.

“Other representatives on mission, meanwhile, had also taken to attacking the outward manifestations of the Catholic religion. At Abbeville, on the edge of priest-ridden Flanders, Dumont favoured forced public abjuration of orders, preferably by constitutional clergy whose continued loyalty to the

Revolution could only now be proved by such gestures. On October 7 in Rheims, Ruhl personally supervised the smashing of the phial holding the sacred oil of Clovis used to anoint French kings. None of this was authorized by the Convention: on the other hand the adoption on 5 October of a new republican calendar marked a further stage in the divorce between the French State and any sort of religion. Years would no longer be numbered from the birth of Christ, but from the inauguration of the French Republic on 22 September 1792. Thus it was already the Year II. There would be twelve thirty-day months with evocative, seasonal names; each month would have three ten-day weeks (décades) ending in a rest-day (décadi). Sundays therefore disappeared and could not be observed unless they coincided with the less-frequent décadis. The introduction of the system at this moment only encouraged representatives on mission to intensify their lead; and dechristianization became an important feature of the Terror in all the former centres of rebellion when they were brought to heel. Once launched it was eminently democratic. Anybody could join in smashing images, vandalizing churches (the very word was coined to describe this outburst of iconoclasm), and theft of vestments to wear in blasphemous mock ceremonies. Those needing pretexts could preach national necessity when they tore down bells or walked off with plate that could be recast into guns or coinage. Such activities were particular favourites among the Revolutionary Armies. The Parisian detachments marching to Lyons left a trail of pillaged and closed churches, and smouldering bonfires of ornaments, vestments, and holy pictures all along their route. Other contributions took more organization, but Jacobin clubs and popular societies, not to mention local authorities, were quite happy to orchestrate festivals of reason, harmony, wisdom, and other such worthy attributes to former churches; and to recruit parties of priests who, at climactic moments in these ceremonies, would renounce their vows and declare themselves ready to marry. If their choice fell on a former nun, so much the better.

“When Chaumetter returned from Nevers, the Paris Commune made dechristianization its official policy. On 23 October the images of kings on the front of Notre-Dame were ordered to be removed: the royal tombs at Saint-Denis had already been emptied and desecrated by order of the Convention in August. The word Saint began to be removed from street names, and busts of Marat replaced religious statues. Again the Convention appeared to be encouraging the trend when it decreed, on 20 October, that any priest (constitutional or refractory) denounced for lack of civisme by six citizens would be subject to deportation, and any previously sentenced to deportation but found in France should be executed. Clerical dress was now forbidden in Paris, and on 7 November Gobel, the elected constitutional bishop, who had already sanctioned clerical marriage for his clergy, came with eleven of them to the Convention and ceremonially resigned his see. Removing the episcopal insignia, he put on a cap of liberty and declared that the only religion of a free people should be that of Liberty and Equality. In the next few days the
handful of priests who were deputies followed his example. Soon Grégoire, constitutional bishop of Blois, was the only deputy left clinging to his priesthood and clerical dress. The sections meanwhile were passing anti-clerical motions, and on 12 November that of Gravilliers, whose idol had so recently been Jacques Roux, sent a deputation to the Convention draped in ‘ornaments from churches in their district, spoils taken from the superstitious credulity of our forefathers and repossessed by the reason of free men’ to announce that all churches in the section had been closed. This display followed a great public ceremony held in Notre-Dame, or the ‘Temple of Reason’, as it was now redesignated, on the tenth. On this occasion relays of patriotic maidens in virginal white paraded reverently before a temple of philosophy erected where the high altar had stood. From it emerged, at the climax of the ceremony, a red-capped female figure representing Liberty. Appreciatively described by an official recorder of the scene as ‘a masterpiece of nature’, in daily life she was an actress; but in her symbolic role she led the officials of the commune to the Convention, where she received the fraternal embrace of the president and secretaries.

“However carefully choreographed, there was not much dignity about these posturings; and attacks on parish churches and their incumbents (who were mostly now popularly elected) risked making the Revolution more enemies than friends. Small-town and anti-religious Jacobin zeal, for example, provoked a minor revolt in the Brie in the second week in December. To shouts of Long live the Catholic Religion, we want our priests, we want the Mass on Sundays and Holy Days, crowds of peasants sacked the local club. Several thousands took up arms and joined the movement, and only a force of National Guards and sansculottes from the Revolutionary Army restored order in a district whose tranquillity was vital to the regular passage of food supplies to the capital from southern Champagne. But even before this the Committee of Public Safety was growing anxious about the counterproductive effects of dechristianization. Robespierre in particular, who believed that religious faith was indispensable to orderly, civilized society, sounded the alarm. On November 21 he denounced anti-religious excesses at the Jacobin club. They smacked of more fanaticism than they extinguished.101 The people believed in a Supreme Being, he warned, whereas atheism was aristocratic.102 At the same time he persuaded the Committee to circularize popular societies warning them not to fan superstition and fanaticism by persecution. On 6 December, finally, the Convention agreed to reiterate the principle of religious freedom in a decree which formally prohibited all

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101 He said: “There are people who are superstitious in perfectly good faith. They are sick people whom we must restore to good health by winning their confidence. A forced curé would drive them to fanaticism. Priests have been denounced for saying the Mass. They will continue to do so all the longer if you try to prevent them. He who wants to prevent them is more fanatic than the priest himself” (in Gascoigne, op. cit., p. 214). (V.M.)

102 He said: “Atheism is aristocratic; the idea of a great being who watches over oppressed innocence, is altogether popular... If God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him” (Hunt, op. cit., p. 68). (V.M.)
violence or threats against the ‘liberty of cults’. But by then it was too late. The
eexample of Paris had encouraged Jacobin zealots everywhere, and with the
repression of revolt in full swing and the role of priests in the Vendée
particularly notorious, the remaining trappings of religion were too tempting
a target to ignore. The commune’s response to Robespierre on 23 November
had been to decree the closing of all churches in the capital; and soon local
authorities were shutting them wholesale throughout the country. By the
spring, churches were open for public worship only in the remotest corners of
France, such as the Jura mountains. By then, perhaps 20,000 priests had been
bullied into giving up their status, and 6,000 had given their renunciation the
ultimate confirmation by marrying. In some areas, such as Provence,
dechristianization only reached its peak in March or April 1794.”

On October 31 the Girondists went to the guillotine. By the Law of 4
December extreme centralisation was decreed, heralding the acceleration of
the Terror within the central administration. In March it was the turn of the
Hébertists; in April – of the Dantonists. On March 27 the Revolutionary Army
was disbanded. By the end of April the commune had been purged. As the
Girondin Manon Roland said just before his execution: “Oh, Liberty! How
many crimes are committed in thy name!”

Robespierre was still alive, preaching the new, revolutionary definition of
virtue and religion. A cult of the goddess reason was instituted, and by the
Decree of 7 May it was declared that the French people recognised a Supreme
Being and the immortality of the soul, and that a cult worthy of the Supreme
Being was the fulfilment of a man’s civic duties. Thus the emphasis was still
on man’s civic duties: religion had no function outside the State, in accordance
with the words of Abbé Guillaume Raynal in 1780: “The State, it seems to me,
is not made for religion, but religion for the State.” It was the same with
morality, which was now defined to include among the highest virtues “the
hatred of bad faith and tyranny, the punishment of tyrants and traitors, help
to the unhappy, respect for the weak, protection to the oppressed, to do all the
good possible to others and to be unjust to nobody.”

On 8 June, Robespierre moved that “the nation should celebrate the
Supreme Being. Thus every locality was given a month to make its
preparations. The fact that 8 June was also Whit Sunday [Pentecost] may or
may not have been a coincidence; if not, it could have been conceived either
as a challenge or as an olive branch to Christianity. In the event little direction
was given to the localities on how to organize the festival. Some adopted the
Props of all-too-recent festivals of reason, merely painting out old slogans
with new ones. Others used the opportunity to allow mass to be said publicly

103 Doyle, op. cit., pp. 259-262.
104 Roland, in Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 523.
105 Raynal, in Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 518.
106 Hunt, op. cit., p. 66.
for the first time in months. But in Paris the organization of the occasion was entrusted to the experienced hands of the painter David, himself a member of the Committee of General Security. He built an artificial mountain in the Champ de Mars, surmounted by a tree of liberty, and thither a mass procession made its way from the Tuileries. At its head marched the members of the Convention, led by their president, who happened that week to be Robespierre. He used the opportunity to deliver two more eulogies of virtue and republican religion, pointedly ignoring, though not failing to notice, the smirks of his fellow deputies at the posturings of this pseudo-Pope. Others found it no laughing matter. 'Look at the bugger,' muttered Thuriot, an old associate of Danton. 'It's not enough for him to be master, he has to be God.'”

Like the other gods of the revolution (on February 12, 1792 the Jacobin club had ceremoniously called Voltaire, Rousseau, Franklin and Mirabeau “gods”), Robespierre did not survive its terror. On 22 Prairial (10 June, 1794), witnesses and defending counsels were decreed to be no longer necessary in trials – so no one was safe. On 9 Thermidor (27 June) Robespierre fell from power. The next day, screaming in terror, he was executed.

While the fall of Robespierre marked the end of the most fanatical phase in the revolution, normal life was not restored quickly. “On 18 September 1794, the Convention had carried the drift of the Revolution since 1790 to a logical conclusion when it finally renounced the constitutional Church. The Republic, it decreed, would no longer pay the costs or wages of any cult – not that it had been paying them in practice for a considerable time already. It meant the end of state recognition for the Supreme Being, a cult too closely identified with Robespierre. But above all it marked the abandonment of the Revolution’s own creation, the constitutional Church. For the first time ever in France, Church and State were now formally separated. To some this decree looked like a return to dechristianization, and here and there in the provinces there were renewed bursts of persecution against refractories. But most read it, correctly, as an attempt to deflect the hostility of those still faithful to the Church from the Republic. The natural corollary came with the decree of 21 February 1795 which proclaimed the freedom of all cults to worship as they liked. The tone of the law was grudging, and it was introduced with much gratuitous denigration of priestcraft and superstition. Religion was defined as a private affair, and local authorities were forbidden to lend it any recognition or support. All outward signs of religious affiliation in the form of priestly dress, ceremonies, or church bells remained strictly forbidden. The faithful would have to buy or rent their own places of worship and pay their own priests or ministers…”

107 Doyle, op. cit., p. 277.
108 Zamoyski, op. cit., p. 67.
Babeuf and the Directory

Let us summarise the effects of the revolution so far.

As regards the Church, writes Comby, it was deprived of its autonomous position within the State and its geography “was completely reshaped. The dioceses were reduced from 135 to 185, one per department, of which ten were archdioceses. There was to be one parish for every 6000 inhabitants. Bishops and priests would be elected by the same electors, including non-Catholics, who elected the various officials of the department or district. In this way, the legislators thought to return to the origins of the church. A bishop would require his metropolitan (archbishop) to install him; he would write to the pope only to inform him of his appointment and to assure him that he was in communion with him.”110

As for the nobles, writes Hampson, they “were never proscribed as such and their property was not confiscated unless they went into exile or were condemned for political offences. Some noble families suffered very heavy casualties during the Terror; others survived without much difficulty. The ‘anti-feudal’ legislation of the Constituent Assembly bore heavily on those who income was derived mainly from manorial dues; those whose wealth came from their extensive acres may have gained more from the abolition of tithes than they lost from increased taxation. Some made profitable investments in church land which were the ‘best buy’ of the revolution since massive inflation reduced to a nominal figure the price paid by those who had opted to buy in instalments…Over the country as a whole the proportion of land owned by the nobility was somewhat reduced by the revolution but in most parts a substantial proportion of the landowners still came from the nobility, and the land was the most important source of wealth until well into the nineteenth century…

“The urban radicals whom the more radical – but nevertheless gentlemanly – revolutionary leaders liked to eulogize as sans-culottes, fared badly… As an observer reported in 1793, ‘That class has suffered badly; it took the Bastille, was responsible for the tenth of August and so on… Hébert and Marat, two of the most extreme of the radical journalists, agreed that the sans-culottes were worse off than they had been in 1789. Soon, of course, all this was going to change… but it never did…

“The revolution did not ‘give the land to the peasants’. They already possessed about a quarter of it, although most of them did not own enough to be self-sufficient. The Church lands were mostly snapped up by the wealthier farmers or by outside speculators… The prevailing economic theories persuaded the various assemblies to concentrate very heavily on direct

110 Comby, op. cit., p. 112.
taxation, most of which fell on the land. Requisitioning of food, horses and carts was borne exclusively by the peasants.

“Once again the revolution greatly increased the impact of the state on the day-to-day life of the community. This was especially obvious where religion was concerned.”

After Thermidor and the execution of Robespierre, a new phase of the Revolution began. In 1795 a committee of five, the Directory, was established. Fearing coups from the royalist right as well as from the Jacobin left, it continued the slow torture of the Dauphin, known in history as Louis XVII, who died in prison on June 10.

“With the Directory,” writes Edmund Wilson, “the French Revolution had passed into the period of reaction which was to make possible the domination of Bonaparte. The great rising of the bourgeoisie, which, breaking out of the feudal forms of the monarchy, dispossessing the nobility and the clergy, had presented itself to society as a movement of liberation, had ended by depositing the wealth in the hands of a relatively small number of people and creating a new conflict of classes. With the reaction against the Terror, the ideals of the Revolution were allowed to go by the board. The five politicians of the Directory and the merchants and financiers allied with them were speculating in confiscated property, profiteering in army supplies, recklessly inflating the currency and gambling on the falling gold louis. And in the meantime, during the winter of 1795-96, the working people of Paris were dying of hunger and cold in the streets.”

This situation led to attempts to overthrow the government, the most significant of which was that of “Gracchus” Babeuf, who “rallied around him those elements of the Revolution who were trying to insist on its original aims. In his paper, The Tribune of the People, he denounced the new constitution of 1795, which had abolished universal suffrage and imposed a high property qualification. He demanded not merely political but also economic equality. He declared that he would prefer civil war itself to ‘this horrible concord which strangles the hungry’. But the men who had expropriated the nobles and the Church remained loyal to the principle of property itself. The Tribune of the People was stopped, and Babeuf and his associates were sent to prison.

“While Babeuf was in jail, his seven-year-old daughter died of hunger. He had managed to remain poor all his life. His popularity had been all with the poor. His official posts had earned him only trouble. Now, as soon as he was free again, he proceeded to found a political club, which opposed the policies of the Directory and which came to be known as the Society of the Equals. They demanded in a Manifesto of the Equals (not, however, at that time made

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111 Hampson, op. cit. pp. 235, 238.
public) that there should be ‘no more individual property in land; the land belonged to no one... We declare that we can no longer endure, with the enormous majority of men, labor and sweat in the service and for the benefit of a small minority. It is has now been long enough and too long that less than a million individuals have been disposing of that which belongs to more than twenty millions of their kind... Never has a vaster design been conceived or put into execution. Certain men of genius, certain sages, have spoken of it from time to time in a low and trembling voice. Not one of them has had the courage to tell the whole truth... People of France! Open your eyes and your heart to the fullness of happiness. Recognize and proclaim with us the Republic of Equals!

“The Society of Equals was also suppressed; Bonaparte himself closed the club. But, driven underground, they now plotted an insurrection; they proposed to set up a new directory. And they drafted a constitution that provided for ‘a great national community of goods’ and worked out with some precision the mechanics of a planned society. The cities were to be deflaed and the population distributed in villages. The State was to ‘seize upon the new-born individual, watch over his early moments, guarantee the milk and care of his mother and bring him to the maison nationale, where he was to acquire the virtue and enlightenment of a true citizen.’ There was thus to be equal education for all. All able-bodied persons were to work, and the work that was unpleasant or arduous was to be accomplished by everybody’s taking turns. The necessities of life were to be supplied by the government, and the people were to eat at communal tables. The government was to control all foreign trade and to pass on everything printed.

“In the meantime, the value of the paper money had depreciated almost to zero. The Directory tried to save the situation by converting the currency into land warrants, which were at a discount of eight-two per cent the day they were issued; and there was a general belief on the part of the public that the government had gone bankrupt. There were in Paris along some five hundred thousand people in need of relief. The Babouvistes placarded the city with a manifesto...; they declared that Nature had given to every man an equal right to the enjoyment of every good, and it was the purpose of society to defend that right, that Nature had imposed on every man the obligation to work, and that no one could escape this obligation without committing a crime; that in ‘a true society’ there would be neither rich nor poor; that the object of the Revolution had been to destroy every inequality and to establish the well-being of all; that they Revolution was therefore ‘not finished’, and that those who had done away with the Constitution of 1793 were guilty of lese majesté against the people...

“Babeuf’s ‘insurrectionary committee’ had agents in the army and the police, and they were doing such effective work that the government tried to send its troops out of Paris, and, when they refused to obey, disbanded them.
During the early days of May, 1796, on the eve of the projected uprising, the Equals were betrayed by a stool pigeon and their leaders were arrested and put in jail. The followers of Babeuf made an attempt to rally a sympathetic police squadron, but were cut down by a new Battalion of the Guard which had been pressed into service for the occasion.

“Babeuf was made a public example by being taken to Vendôme in a cage – an indignity which not long before had filled the Parisians with fury when the Austrians had inflicted it on a Frenchman…

“[At this trial] the vote, after much disagreement, went against Babeuf. One of his sons had smuggled in to him a tin dagger made out of a candlestick, and when he heard the verdict pronounced, he stabbed himself in the Roman fashion, but only wounded himself horribly and did not die. The next morning (May 27, 1797) he went to the guillotine. Of his followers thirty were executed and many sentenced to penal servitude or deportation.”

_Napoleon Bonaparte_

The revolution appeared to have lost its way, consumed by poverty, corruption and mutual blood-letting. It was saved by a young soldier, Napoleon Bonaparte, who was as sincerely faithful to the spirit of the French revolution as Cromwell had been to the English. Madame de Stael called Napoleon Robespierre on horseback After all, he came from Corsica, which in 1755 had successfully rebelled from Genoa, and for which Rousseau wrote one of his most seminal works, _Project de constitution pour la Corse_, in 1765. But, like Cromwell (and Caesar), he found that in order to save the republic he had to take control of it and rule it like a king.

His chance came on 19 Brumaire (November 10), 1799, when he overthrew the Directory, describing parliamentarism as “hot air”, and frightened the two elective assemblies into submission. On December 13 a new constitution was proclaimed with Bonaparte as the first of three Consuls with full executive powers. And on December 15 the three Consuls declared: “Citizens, the Revolution is established upon its original principles: it is consummated…”

Paul Johnson writes: “The new First Consul was far more powerful than Louis XIV, since he dominated the armed forces directly in a country that was now organized as a military state. All the ancient restraints on divine-right kingship – the Church, the aristocracy and its resources, the courts, the cities and their charters, the universities and their privileges, the guilds and their immunities – all had been swept away by the Revolution, leaving France a

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113 Wilson, _op. cit._, pp. 72-74, 79.
114 Cohen and Major, _op. cit._, p. 530.
legal blank on which Bonaparte could stamp the irresistible force of his personality.”115

But, again like Caesar and Cromwell, he could never confess to being a king in the traditional sense. Under him, in Davies’ phrase, “a pseudo-monarchy headed pseudo-democratic institutions.” 116 So, as J.M. Roberts writes, while Napoleon re instituted monarchy, “it was in no sense a restoration. Indeed, he took care so to affront the exiled Bourbon family that any reconciliation with it was inconceivable. He sought popular approval for the empire in a plebiscite and got it.117

“This was a monarchy Frenchmen had voted for; it rested on popular sovereignty, that is, the Revolution. It assumed the consolidation of the Revolution which the Consulate had already begun. All the great institutional reforms of the 1790s were confirmed or at least left intact; there was no disturbance of the land sales which had followed the confiscation of Church property, no resurrection of the old corporations, no questioning of the principle of equality before the law. Some measures were even taken further, notably when each department was given an administrative head, the prefect, who was in his powers something like one of the emergency emissaries of the Terror….”118

Cromwell had eschewed the trappings of monarchy, but Napoleon embraced them avidly. The trend towards monarchy and hierarchy developed; and “earlier than is generally thought,” writes Philip Mansel, “the First Consul Bonaparte aligned himself with this monarchical trend, acquiring in succession a guard (1799), a palace (1800), court receptions and costumes (1800-02), a household (1802-04), a dynasty (1804), finally a nobility (1808)… The proclamation of the empire in May 1804, the establishment of the households of the Emperor, the Empress and the Imperial Family in July, the coronation by the pope in December of that year, were confirmations of an existing monarchical reality.”119

Moreover, Napoleon spread monarchy throughout Western Europe. Kingdoms were established or re-established with still greater monarchical power - and all ruled by Napoleon’s relations by blood or marriage. According to Stendhal, Napoleon’s court “totally corrupted” him “and exalted his amour propre to the state of a disease… He was on the point of making Europe one vast monarchy.”120

116 Davies, op. cit., p. 701.
117 The result of the plebiscite was 3,571,329 ‘yes’ votes to 2,570 ‘noes’. As Johnson points out, “Bonaparte was the first dictator to produce fake election figures.” (op. cit., pp. 49-50). (V.M.)
120 Mansel, op. cit., p. 43.
“‘The French empire shall become the metropolitan of all other sovereignties,’ Napoleon once said to a friend. ‘I want to force every king in Europe to build a large palace for his use in Paris. When an Emperor of the French is crowned, these kings shall come to Paris, and they shall adorn that imposing ceremony with their presence and salute it with their homage.’”

“As one of his secretaries Baron Meneval wrote, he saw himself as ‘the pillar of royalty in Europe’. On January 18th, 1813, he wrote to his brother Jerome that his enemies, by appealing to popular feeling, represented ‘upheavals and revolutions… pernicious doctrines.’ In Napoleon’s opinion his fellow monarchs were traitors to ‘their own cause’ when in 1813 they began to desert the French Empire, or in 1814 refused to accept his territorial terms for peace…”

Jocelyn Hunt writes: “Kings before 1791 were said to be absolute but were limited by all kinds of constraints and controls. The Church had an almost autonomous status. Bonaparte ensured that the Church was merely a branch of the civil service. Kings were anointed by the Church, and thus owed their authority to God: Bonaparte took power through his own strength, camouflaged as ‘the General Will’ which, as Correlli Barnett acidly remarks, ‘became synonymous with General Bonaparte’. When he became emperor in 1804, he crowned himself...

“The First Consul’s choice of ministers was a far more personal one than had been possible for the kings of France. Bonaparte established a system of meeting his ministers individually, in order to give his instructions. In the same way, Bonaparte chose which ‘ordinary’ citizens he would consult; kings of France had mechanisms for consulting ‘the people’ but these had fallen into disuse and thus, when the Estates General met in 1789, the effect was revolutionary. Bonaparte’s legislative body was, until 1814, submissive and compliant…

“Police control and limitations on personal freedom had been a focus of condemnation by the Philosophes before the Revolution, but had not been entirely efficient: a whole industry of importing and distributing banned texts had flourished in the 1770s and 1780s. Bonaparte’s police were more thorough, and so swingeing were the penalties that self-censorship rapidly became the

122 Mansel, op. cit., p. 43.
123 Johnson writes: “He liked the vague and abstract notion of Rousseau’s concept, the General Will, offering a ruling elite that knew its business the opportunity to harness the people to a national effort without any of the risks of democracy. In practice an elite always formed itself into a pyramid, with one man at its summit. His will expressed the General Will… and gave it decisiveness, the basis for action. Constitutions were important in the sense that window-dressing was important in a shop. But the will was the product to be sold to the nation and, once sold, imposed” (op. cit., p. 17). (V.M.)
safest path for a newspaper to take. Bonaparte closed down sixty of the seventy-three newspapers in Paris in January, 1800, and had a weekly summary prepared of all printed material, but he was soon able to tell his Chief of Police, Fouché, ‘They only print what I want them to.’ In the same way, the hated lettres de cachet appear limited and inefficient when compared to Bonaparte’s and Fouché’s record of police spies, trials without jury and imprisonment without trial. Bonaparte’s brief experience as a Jacobin leader in Ajaccio had taught him how to recognise, and deal with, potential opponents.

“The judiciary had stood apart from the kings of the ancien régime: while the King was nominally the supreme Judge, the training of lawyers and judges had been a matter for the Parlements, with their inherent privileges and mechanisms. The Parlements decided whether the King’s laws were acceptable within the fundamental laws of France. Under the Consulate, there were no such constraints on the legislator. The judges were his appointees, and held office entirely at his pleasure; the courts disposed of those who opposed or questioned the government, far more rapidly than had been possible in the reign of Louis XVI. Imprisonment and deportation became regularly used instruments of control under Bonaparte.

“Kings of France were fathers to their people and had a sense of duty and service. Bonaparte, too, believed that he was essential to the good and glory of France, but was able to make his own decisions about what constituted the good of France in a way which was not open to the king. Finally, while the monarchy of France was hereditary and permanent, and the position of First Consul was supposed to be held for ten years, Bonaparte’s strength was demonstrated when he changed his own constitution, first to give him the role for life and then to become a hereditary monarch. All in all, no monarch of the ancien régime had anything approaching the power which Bonaparte had been permitted to take for himself…

“When a Royalist bomb plot was uncovered in December, 1800, Bonaparte seized the opportunity to blame it on the Jacobins, and many were guillotined, with over a hundred more being exiled or imprisoned. The regime of the Terror had operated in similar ways to remove large numbers of potential or actual opponents. Press censorship and the use of police spies ensured that anti-government opinions were not publicly aired. The Declaration of the Rights of Man had guaranteed freedom of expression; but this freedom had

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124 As he said to Metternich: “You see me master of France; well, I would not undertake to govern her for three months with liberty of the press” (Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 530). (V.M.)
125 Johnson writes: “Fouché, who operated the world’s first secret police force, and who was the prototype of Himmler or Beria, was an important element in Bonaparte’s legacy of evil, for some of his methods were widely imitated in Austria and Prussia, where they became permanent, and even in harmless Sweden, where they were carried out by Bonaparte’s marshal Jean-Baptiste Bernadotte” (op. cit., p. 105). (V.M.)
already been eroded before Bonaparte’s coup. The Terror had seen both moral and political censorship, and the Directory had on several occasions exercised its constitutional right to censor the press. Bonaparte appears merely to have been more efficient…

“Bonaparte certainly held power without consulting the French people; he took away many of the freedoms they had been guaranteed in 1789; he taxed them more heavily than they had been taxed before. [In 1803 he wrote:] ‘I haven’t been able to understand yet what good there is in an opposition. Whatever it may say, its only result is to diminish the prestige of authority in the eyes of the people’.”126

In 1804, he even declared himself emperor with the name Napoleon, after which Beethoven tore out the title-page of his *Eroica* symphony, which had been dedicated to him, and said: “So he too is nothing but a man. Now he also will trample all human rights underfoot, and only pander to his own ambition; he will place himself above everyone else and become a tyrant…”127 As de Tocqueville wrote: “Absolute government found huge scope for its rebirth [in] that man who was to be both the consummator and the nemesis of the Revolution.”128

So Napoleon was undoubtedly a despot, but a despot who could claim many precedents for his despotism in the behaviour of the Jacobins and Directory. And if he was not faithful to the forms of the revolution in its early phase, replacing democracy (of a despotic kind) with monarchy (of a populist kind), he nevertheless remained faithful to its fundamental principles, the principle, on the one hand, that nobody and nothing should be independent of the State (the principle of totalitarianism), and on the other, the principle that the Nation was the supreme value, and serving and dying for the Nation - the supreme glory.

However, writes Adam Zamoyski, “it was not so much a matter of France ‘über alles’. ‘European society needs a regeneration,’ Napoleon asserted in conversation in 1805. ‘There must be a superior power which dominates all the other powers, with enough authority to force them to live in harmony with one another – and France is the best placed for that purpose.’ He was, like many a tyrant, utopian in his ambitions. ‘We must have a European legal system, a European appeal court, a common currency, the same weights and measures the same laws,’ Napoleon once said to Joseph Fouché: ‘I must make of all the peoples of Europe one people, and of Paris the capital of the world.’”129

127 Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 531.
And yet “at bottom,” as Johnson notes, “Bonaparte despised the French, or perhaps it would be more exact to say the Parisians, the heart of the ‘political nation’. He thought of them, on the basis of his experience during the various phases of the Revolution, as essentially frivolous.”

The truth is, therefore, that it was neither the State nor the Nation that Bonaparte exalted above all, – although he greatly increased the worship of both in later European history, – but himself. So the spirit that truly reigned in the Napoleonic era can most accurately be described as the spirit of the man-god, of the Antichrist, of whom Bonaparte himself, as the Russian Holy Synod quite rightly said, was a forerunner. This antichristian quality is most clearly captured in Madame De Staël’s characterization: “I had the disturbing feeling that no emotion of the heart could ever reach him. He regards a human being like a fact or a thing, never as an equal person like himself. He neither hates nor loves… The force of his will resides in the imperturbable calculations of his egotism. He is a chess-master whose opponents happen to be the rest of humanity… Neither pity nor attraction, nor religion nor attachment would ever divert him from his ends… I felt in his soul cold steel, I felt in his mind a deep irony against which nothing great or good, even his own destiny, was proof; for he despised the nation which he intended to govern, and no spark of enthusiasm was mingled with his desire to astound the human race…”

Napoleon and Catholicism

The Revolution had already swept away all the complex structures of feudalism, thereby preparing the way for the totalitarian state. But Napoleon went further. Thus in addition to the measures discussed above, he abolished trade unions, introduced a standardised system of weights and measures, and a standardised system of education and legislation, the famous Code Napoléon. Everything, from religion and charity to economics and the government of friendly sister-republics, such as Holland, had to be controlled from the centre. And the centre was Napoleon.

Napoleon’s attitude towards religion was on the one hand respectful and on the other hand manipulative and utilitarian. His respectfulness is revealed in the following perceptive remark: “There are only two forces in the world: the sword and the spirit; by spirit I mean the civil and religious institutions; in the long run the sword is always defeated by the spirit.” On the other hand, his essentially unbelieving, utilitarian attitude is revealed in the following: “I see in religion not the mystery of the Incarnation but the mystery of order in society.”

130 Johnson, op. cit., p. 119.
131 De Staël, in Johnson, op. cit., p. 119.
133 Quoted in Cronin, op. cit., p. 211.
chimneys smoke in my palace while he dies of cold – that I have ten changes of raiment in my wardrobe while he is naked – that on my table at each meal there is enough to sustain a family for a week? It is religion, which says to him that in another life I shall be his equal, indeed that he has a better chance of being happy there than I have.”

In other words, religion was powerful, and as such had to be respected. But it was powerful not because it was true, but because it was a – perhaps the – major means of establishing order in society. More particularly, it was the major means of establishing obedience to his rule – which is why he issued an Imperial Catechism whose purpose was to “bind by religious sanctions the conscience of the people to the august person of the Emperor”:

Q: Why are we bound in all these duties towards our Emperor?
A: Because God… has made him the agent of His power on earth. Thus it is that to honour and serve our Emperor is to honour and serve God Himself.

Napoleon, writes Doyle, “never made the mistake of underestimating either the power of religion or the resilience of the Church. Under orders in the spring of 1796 to march on Rome to avenge the murder by a Roman mob of a French envoy, he was confronted by a Spanish emissary from the pontiff. ‘I told him [the Spaniard reported], if you people take it into your heads to make the pope say the slightest thing against dogma or anything touching on it, you are deceiving yourselves, for he will never do it. You might, in revenge, sack, burn and destroy Rome, St. Peter’s etc. but religion will remain standing in spite of your attacks. If all you wish is that the pope urge peace in general, and obedience to legitimate power, he will willingly do it. He appeared to me captivated by this reasoning…’ Certainly he continued while in Italy to treat the Pope with more restraint than the Directory had ordered: and when, early the next year, the Cispadane Republic was established in territories largely taken from the Holy See, he advised its founders that: ‘Everything is to be done by degrees and with gentleness. Religion is to be treated like property.’ Devoid of any personal faith, in Egypt he even made parade of following Islam in the conviction that it would strengthen French rule. By the time he returned to Europe, it was clear that Pope Pius VI would not after all be the last...

134 Quoted in Gascoigne, op. cit., p. 216.
135 Quoted in Gascoigne, op. cit., p. 217.
136 Quoted in Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 532. In 1816 Napoleon gave another, less honest account of his motives: “As soon as I had power, I immediately re-established religion. I made it the groundwork and foundation upon which I built. I considered it as the support of sound principles and good morality, both in doctrine and in practice. Besides, such is the restlessness of man, that his mind requires that something undefined and marvellous which religion offers; and it is better for him to find it there, than to seek it of Cagliostro, of Mademoiselle Lenormand, or of the fortune-tellers and imposters” (Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 532).
“This approach bore one important fruit: in his Christmas sermon for 1797 the new Pope, Pius VII, declared that Christianity was not incompatible with democracy – a very major concession to the revolution that later Popes would take back.

“On his second entry into Milan, in June 1800, he convoked the city’s clergy to the great cathedral, and declared, even before Marengo was fought: ‘It is my firm intention that the Christian, Catholic and Roman religion shall be preserved in its entirety, that it shall be publicly performed… No society can exist without morality; there is no good morality without religion. It is religion alone, therefore, that gives to the State a firm and durable support...’”

Religious toleration was both in accordance with the ideals of democracy and politically expedient. Thus to the same clergy convocation he said: “The people is sovereign; if it wants religion, respect its will.” And to his own Council of State he said: “My policy is to govern men as the majority wish. That, I believe, is the way to recognize the sovereignty of the people. It was... by turning Mohammedan that I gained a hold in Egypt, by turning ultramontane that I won over people in Italy. If I were governing Jews, I should rebuild Solomon’s temple.”

It is in this astonishingly cynical attitude to religion that Napoleon reveals his modernity, making him perhaps the closest forerunner to the Antichrist that had yet appeared on the stage of world history, closer even, in some ways, than Lenin or Stalin. For the Antichrist will not – at first – persecute religion; he will rather try to be the champion of all religions – in order to subdue them all to his will. And he will rebuild Solomon’s temple...

Napoleon’s first task in the religious sphere was to heal the breach between the Constitutional Church, which had accepted the revolution, and the non-jurors, who had rejected it. Only the non-jurors were recognised by the Pope, so an agreement had to be reached with Rome. Finally, on July 15, 1801, a Concordat was signed.

“This document,” writes Cronin, “opens with a preamble describing Roman Catholicism as ‘the religion of the great majority of the French people’ and the religion professed by the consuls. Worship was to be free and public. The Pope, in agreement with the Government, was to re-map dioceses in such a way as to reduce their number by more than half to sixty. The holders of

137 Doyle, op. cit., pp. 385-386.
138 Cronin, op. cit., p. 212. Napoleon’s remark about gaining a hold in Egypt by turning Mohammedan was literally true. He “promised respect for the Islamic religion, even discussing with the leading ulama the terms on which a mass conversion of his army might be considered (circumcision proved a stumbling block).” (John Darwin, After Tamerlane: The Rise & Fall of Global Empires, 1400-2000, London: Penguin Books, 2008, pp. 182-183).
bishoprics were to resign and if they declined to do so, were to be replaced by the Pope. The First Consul was to appoint new bishops; the Pope was to invest them. The Government was to place at the disposal of bishops all the un-nationalized churches necessary for worship, and to pay bishops and curés a suitable salary.

“The Concordat was an up-to-date version of the old Concordat, which had regulated the Church in France for almost 300 years. But it was less Gallican, that is, it gave the French hierarchy less autonomy. Napoleon conceded to the Pope not only the power of investing bishops, which he had always enjoyed, but the right, in certain circumstances, to depose them, which was something new. Napoleon did this in order to be able to effect a clean sweep of bishops.

“Napoleon did not discuss the Concordat beforehand with his Council of State. When he did show it to them they criticized it as insufficiently Gallican. The assemblies, they predicted, would never make it law unless certain riders were added. Finally seventy ‘organic articles’ were drawn up and added to the Concordat [without consulting the pope]. For example, all bulls from Rome were to be subject to the Government’s placet, one of which asserted that the Pope must abide by the decisions of an ecumenical council…”

In April, 1802, Napoleon reopened the churches in France, which proved to be one of his most popular measures, and it enabled him to enlist the Church in support of his government – as did, of course, his coronation by the Pope.

Moreover, notes Johnson, “by making peace with the Church, he prepared the way for a reconciliation with the old landowners and aristocrats who had been driven into exile by the Revolution, and whom he wanted back to provide further legitimacy to his regime.”

“But even while seeking the Church’s support,” writes Cronin, “Napoleon kept firmly to the principle that the temporal and spiritual are two separate realms, and had to be kept separate in France. He might easily have used his growing authority to subordinate the Church to the State, but although he was occasionally tempted to do so, he quickly drew back… Equally, Napoleon refrained from subordinating the State to the Church. When bishops urged him to shut all shops and cabarets on Sundays so that the faithful should not be enticed from Mass, Napoleon replied: ‘The curé’s power resides in exhortations from the pulpit and in the confessional; police spies and prisons are bad ways of trying to restore religious practices.’”

139 Cronin, op. cit., pp. 216-217.
140 Johnson, op. cit., p. 48.
141 Cronin, op. cit., p. 220.
However, while Napoleon wanted the Church to flourish, he was too fundamentally irreligious to allow it to escape the general control of the State. This was made abundantly clear at his coronation in 1804, when instead of allowing the Pope to crown him, he took the crown from his hands and crowned himself! "For the pope’s purposes," he said to Cardinal Fesch, "I am Charlemagne... I therefore expect the pope to accommodate his conduct to my requirements. If he behaves well I shall make no outward changes; if not, I shall reduce him to the status of bishop of Rome..." Not for nothing did Napoleon say: 'If I were not me, I would like to be Gregory VII'. Gregory had secularised the papacy by making it into a secular kingdom. Napoleon had done the same from the opposite direction...

However, the pope continued to put up a resistance. "As part of his war with England, Napoleon wanted the pope to submit to the obligations of the continental blockade: the ban on trade with England and her allies. The pope refused, and the situation deteriorated. In 1808 Rome was occupied by French troops. In May 1809 the Papal States were reunited with the French empire. The pope excommunicated the usurpers." On 6 July the pope was put under house arrest at Savona (near Genoa) until March 1812. The bull of excommunication was published in France despite the police. Pius VII then refused to consecrate the bishops nominated by Napoleon and there were soon seventeen dioceses without a bishop. So that he could marry Maria Theresa of Austria, Napoleon obtained an annulment of his marriage with Josephine from the religious authorities in Paris, who were cooperative. The Roman cardinals who were in Paris refused to attend the wedding, which took place in 1810.

"In order to get out of the impasse caused by having dioceses without bishops, Napoleon summoned a national council in Paris in 1811. The bishops affirmed their loyalty to the pope but did not want to incur the emperor’s displeasure, and undertook to win over Pius VII. However, he would not give way. Napoleon had him taken to Fontainebleu in June 1812. When subjected to force the pope made some concessions (the Concordat of Fontainebleu)

142 Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 532.
144 When Napoleon removed the pope from his status as temporal ruler (in exchange for a handsome salary), he said to him: “Our Lord Jesus Christ,” he said, “although a descendant of David, did not want an earthly kingdom…” Pius then excommunicated Napoleon for his “blasphemy” and refused to invest his nominees to vacant bishoprics.”

In 1811 Monsieur Emery, the director of Saint-Sulpice, defended the Pope, reminding Napoleon “that God had given the Pope spiritual power over all Christians. ‘But not temporal power,’ objected Napoleon. ‘Charlemagne gave him that, and I, as Charlemagne’s successor, intended to relieve him of it. What do you think of that, Monsieur Emery?’ ‘Sire, exactly what Bossuet thought. In his Declaration du clergé de France he says that he congratulates not only the Roman Church but the Universal Church on the Pope’s temporal sovereignty because, being independent, he can more easily exercise his functions as father of all the faithful.’ Napoleon replied that what was true for Bossuet’s day did not apply in 1811, when western Europe was ruled by one man, not disputed by several” (Cronin, op. cit., pp. 220-223) (V.M.)
which he very quickly went back on. Military disasters led the emperor to send the pope to Rome, where he made a triumphal entrance on 24 May 1814.”

Thus in France, as in England, the established Church survived the Revolution. The restoration of the one-man-rule under Napoleon went hand-in-hand with the restoration of the Church, if not to a position of independence, still less of “symphony” with the State, at any rate of greater influence than during the 1790s. In the longer term, however, the Catholic Church’s authority and influence continued to decline...

La Grande Nation

With regard to the Nation, Napoleon managed to persuade his fellow-countrymen that everything he did was for the glory of France, and that nothing was more important to him than the glory of France. And so while his despotism angered some Frenchmen, for most of them the boost to their pride was ample compensation for the loss of their freedom. “As Frenchmen accorded more and more weight to Napoleon’s wishes, so the notion of honour came to the fore in the French Republic: honour and its sister concept, glory, patriotism à outrance and the chivalry that had made Napoleon crown Josephine.”

If the nation was the new Church, and Napoleon its new Christ, the revolution itself was the Holy Spirit. It blew where it wished, overthrowing kings, liberating subject peoples and making them into “real” nations. This liberation of nations was conceived as being a democratic, egalitarian process; it by no means implied the superiority of any one nation over the others, which would simply be a repetition, on the collective level, of the despotism that the revolution had come to destroy. The religion of the French revolution was a universalist religion based on equal rights for all men and all nations. It was believed that once the kings had been removed, the general will of each nation would reveal itself, spreading peace not only within, but also between, nations. Thus “sooner or later,” said Mirabeau to the National Assembly, “the influence of a nation that... has reduced the art of living to the simple notions of liberty and equality – notions endowed with irresistible charm for the human heart, and propagated in all the countries of the world – the influence

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145 Comby, op. cit., p. 119.
146 Cronin, op. cit., p. 253.
147 Christ Himself, according to a revolutionary pamphlet of 1790-91, “was a true sans-culotte, a full-blooded republican. He developed all the principles of moral equality and the purest patriotism. He faced every danger; he rebelled against the great who in all periods have abused their powers. He castigated the harshness of the rich; he attacked the pride of kings and priests. The Son of God rebelled against the aristocrats of the nation” (in Comby, op. cit., p. 114).
of such a nation will undoubtedly conquer the whole of Europe for Truth, Moderation and Justice, not immediately perhaps, not in a single day…”148

But it was not long before such noble sentiments were being transformed into a purely pagan pride. “‘You are, among the nations, what Hercules was amongst the heroes,’ Robespierre assured his countrymen. ‘Nature has made you sturdy and powerful; your strength matches your virtue and your cause is that of the gods.’ France was unique in her destiny, she was La Grande Nation, and all interests were necessarily subordinate to hers. Her service was the highest calling, since it naturally benefited mankind.”149 Soon it became evident to other nations, whether those bordering France or her overseas colonies, that the French believed not so much in the Nation (i.e. any and every nation) as the Nation (one particular nation, the only truly Great Nation) – which could only be France. Thus in 1802 Napoleon himself said: “Never will the French Nation give chains to men whom it has once recognized as free.”150 And yet in 1799, eight years after the French colony of Haiti became the first country to declare its freedom in the wake of the revolution, Napoleon tried to stamp out the rebellion, killing, according to the French academic Claude Ribbe, more than 100,000 slaves in many barbarous ways.151

In 1802 Napoleon’s forces tried to reintroduce slavery, but his troops were defeated by black soldiers singing the Marseillaise…152

148 Davies, op. cit., p. 675.
149 Zamoyski, op. cit., p. 110.
150 Zamoyski, op. cit., p. 130.
151 Ian Sparks, “How Napoleon’s ‘massacre of 100,000 blacks inspired Hitler”, Daily Mail, November 30, 2005, p. 35.
152 Mark Almond, Revolution, London: De Agostini, 1996, p. 85. In fact, with regard to the abolition of slavery the revolutionary French were behind their enemies, the anti-revolutionary British. “Gradually in the 18th century an anti-slavery lobby built up in Europe, notably in Britain, the superpower of the seas. In 1772 Lord Mansfield, a judge, ruled that a runaway slave there could not be forced back by his master to the West Indies. The ruling was interpreted (questionably, but this was the effect) as confirming that there could be no slavery in Britain. In America, it created fears that Britain might try to abolish slavery in its colonies. The desire to maintain slavery was not the least motive for the American war of independence, in which some blacks fought on the British side. In 1807 Britain banned the slave trade, and began using its navy to stop it. But slavery itself did not end in the British Caribbean until 1838, in the United States (in practice) 1865, in Spanish-owned Cuba 1886, in Brazil 1888” (“Guilty Parties”, The Economist, December 31, 1999, p. 90).

However, the British government’s first response to slave rebellions was depressingly similar to Napoleon’s. Thus James Walvin writes: “The emergence of the independent black republic of Haiti from the wreckage of plantation slavery in St. Domingue sent shock waves throughout the Americas. It also sent refugees (white and black) fleeing to other islands, especially to neighbouring Jamaica, and to North America, with terrifying tales of what had happened. Defenders of the slave trade (and slavery) felt vindicated. Here was living proof of all their warnings: if you tamper with the slave system, catastrophe would inevitably follow. It was a powerful blow against British abolition [the movement for which had been building up for over fifty years] and it was reinforced by subsequent military disasters.

“St Domingue was a temptation to the British. It was a fruitful colony whose sugar and coffee threatened to displace British Caribbean produce on world markets. For William Pitt, the opportunity to seize St. Domingue, and to add it to Britain’s necklace of Caribbean
And that was only the beginning. In the next thirteen years Napoleon created a swathe of suffering and destruction throughout Europe from Lisbon to Moscow that had not been seen since the invasions of the Huns and the Goths. In retrospect, the seemingly irrational and chaotic system of old Europe, whereby kings could buy and sell territories to which they were quite unrelated by birth or upbringing, turned out to have kept the peace far better than the system of more clearly defined, homogeneous nation-states that emerged as a result of the Napoleonic wars. This is not to say, of course, that there were no wars under the old system. But they tended to be short in duration, with relatively few casualties, which were mainly confined to the warrior class. And they were very quickly patched up by some redistribution of territories among the monarchs. By contrast, the revolutionary wars that began after 1792 were more like the religious wars of pre-1648 vintage: much bloodier and crueler, involving far greater casualties among the civilian populations. Moreover, they never came to a real end, since the losers felt bound to recover the territories lost and avenge the wounds inflicted on their national or regional pride. After all, if the people, and not the king, was now sovereign, victory in war had to be won over the people (or rather, the “enemies” of “the people”) as well as the king. Thus as Napoleon exported the ideals of Freedom, Equality and Fraternity into neighbouring countries, their freedom was destroyed, their equality with their “brothers” who had “liberated” them was jettisoned, and the dream of universal brotherhood became the nightmare of universal war. For “abroad, liberty simply meant French rule.”

How did the internationalist dream turn into a nationalist nightmare? The problem was partly a conceptual one: it turned out to be notoriously difficult to define what “the nation” was, by what criteria it should be defined (territory? religion? blood? language?). Revolutionary definitions of who was a “patriot” – that is, the true member of the nation - invariably meant defining large sections of the population who did not accept this definition or did not come under it as being “aliens” or “traitors” or “enemies of the people”.

possessions, proved too good to resist. But Pitt’s plans took little notice of Haitian leader and former slave Toussaint L’Ouverture’s rebellious slaves on the island or of tropical disease, and the British invading force was soon overwhelmed. The loss of life was horrendous and the whole endeavour proved a military debacle whose significance was camouflaged by being so distant from the metropolis. Pitt’s aims of augmenting Britain’s slave possessions ended in the deaths of more than 40,000 men...” (“The Cause of a Nation”, Abolition Bicentenary, BBC History Magazine, vol. 8, no. 3, March, 2007, p. 7).

For example, during the siege of Saragossa in 1808-09, 54,000 Spanish civilians were killed. A French officer later recorded one episode: “With a petard, we brought down the door of the church, which the monks were defending to the death. Behind them a mass of men, women and children had taken refuge at the foot of the altar, and were crying for mercy. But the smoke was too thick for us to distinguish the victims we would have wished to spare. We wrought havoc everywhere, and death alone stifled their cries...” (Quoted in The Economist, December 31, 1999, p. 41).

Doyle, op. cit., p. 419.
But the problem went deeper: even when a certain degree of unanimity had been achieved in the definition of the nation, - as Napoleon achieved it for France, for example, in the period 1800-1813, - there were now no accepted limits on the national will, no authority higher than the nation itself. This inevitably resulted in nationalism in the evil sense of the word that has become so tragically familiar to us in twentieth-century fascism – not a natural pride in one’s own nation and its achievements, but the exaltation of the nation to the level of divinity. Thus faith in the nation becomes the ultimate value, the defence of which justified any and every sacrifice of self and others. If in “Dark Age” (i.e. Orthodox) and Medieval (i.e. Catholic) Europe, men had seen in the Church a higher, supranational authority which arranged “Truces of God” and served, at least in principle, as a higher court of appeal to which kings and nations submitted, this was now finally swept away by article three of the Rights of Man, which pitted the “general wills” of an ever-increasing number of sovereign nations against each other in apparently endless and irreconcilable hostility.

Unless, that is, they all recognized France, the revolutionary nation par excellence, as their true nation. And there were some who did this; Thomas Jefferson, for example, American ambassador to Paris, said: “Every man has two countries – his own, and France.” Others, while not recognizing France as their own nation, nevertheless welcomed the conquering French armies into their own land. Thus as late as 1806 the German philosopher Hegel called Napoleon “that world spirit” and hoped that he would defeat his opponents: “Everyone prays for the success of the French army.”

Such a substitution of loyalty to the messianic revolutionary nation of the time rather than one’s own was to manifest itself again in the twentieth century, when millions of people around the world betrayed their own country for the sake of the greater glory of the Soviet Union...

However, as captivation turned to captivity, pious internationalism (or French messianism) turned into violent xenophobia, and enthusiasm into disillusion. Among the nations that had been “forced to be free” by the French, only the Poles remained faithful to the Napoleonic vision. Perhaps because they, alone among the traditional nations of Europe, were completely under the domination of foreign powers...

Doyle writes: “An exuberant, uncompromising nationalism lay behind France’s revolutionary expansion in the 1790s: but when the French found, after this first impact of a nation in arms on its neighbours, was that the neighbours responded in kind. They found that the doctrine of the sovereignty of the nation, proclaimed by them at the outset of the Revolution in 1789, could be turned against them by other peoples claiming their own national sovereignty. In states long united by custom and language, such as
the Dutch Republic, all the French example did was to reinforce patriotic sentiments already strong. In areas never before united, like Italy, it created a powerful national sentiment for the first time by showing that archaic barriers and divisions could be swept away. The first Italian nationalists placed their hopes in French power to secure their ends, but from the start their attitude was double-edged. ‘Italy,’ declared the winning entry for an essay competition on the best form of Italian government, sponsored by the new French regime in Milan in 1796, ‘has almost always been the patrimony of foreigners who, under the pretext of protecting us, have consistently violated our rights, and, while giving us flags and fine-sounding names, have made themselves masters of our estate. France, Germany and Spain have held lordship over us in turn… it is therefore best to provide… the sort of government capable of opposing the maximum of resistance to invasion.’ The tragedy for nationalistic Italian Jacobins was that, when popular revulsion against the French invaders swept the peninsula in 1798 and 1799, they found themselves identified with the hated foreigners. Elsewhere, peoples and intellectual nationalists found themselves more at one; and not the least of the reasons why France’s most inveterate enemies were able to resist her successfully was the strength of volunteering. An Austrian call for volunteers against the French produced 150,000 men in 1809. Three years later the Russians were able to supplement their normal armed forces with over 420,000 more or less willing recruits to drive out the alien invader. Only nationalism could successfully fight nationalism: and when it did, as Clausewitz… saw, it would be a fight to the death.”

Again, as Hobsbawm notes, the Anglo-French conflict had “a persistence and stubbornness unlike any other. Neither side was really – a rare thing in those days, though a common one today – prepared to settle for less than total victory”. The legacy of the revolution, therefore, was total war: war between classes, war between nations, war between religions. Such was the “fraternity” of the revolution...

**The Jews and the Revolution**

Of all the nationalisms stirred up by the revolution, the most important was that of the Jews. In fact, it was the French revolution that gave the Jews the opportunity to burst through into the forefront of world politics for the first time since the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. There were 39,000 of them in France in 1789; most (half according to one estimate, nine-tenths according to another) were Yiddish-speaking Ashkenazim living in Alsace and Lorraine.

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155 Doyle, op. cit., p. 417.
157 In his book *The First Total War* (London: Bloomsbury, 2007) David Bell argues that many of the elements of “total war” – conscription, total disregard for the rules of combat, guerilla warfare, the perverse idea of war for the sake of peace – were first practised, not in the First World War, as often thought, but by Napoleon.
158 Doyle, op. cit., p. 411.
which France had acquired under the terms of the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648. “It is important,” writes Nesta Webster, “to distinguish between these two races of Jews [the Ashkenazi and the Sephardim] in discussing the question of Jewish emancipation at the time of the Revolution. For whilst the Sephardim had shown themselves good citizens and were therefore subject to no persecutions, the Ashkenazim by their extortionate usury and oppressions had made themselves detested by the people, so that rigorous laws were enforced to restrain their rapacity. The discussions that raged in the National Assembly on the subject of the Jewish question related therefore mainly to the Jews of Alsace.”

The eighteenth century had already witnessed some important changes in the relationship between the State and Jewry. In England, the Jews had achieved emancipation de facto, if not de jure. This was helped by the small number of Jews in Britain, and the non-ideological, approach of the British government.

It was a different matter on the continent, where a more ideological approach prevailed. In 1782 the Masonic Austrian Emperor Joseph II published his Toleranzpatent, whose purpose was that “all Our subjects without distinction of nationality and religion, once they have been admitted and tolerated in our States, shall participate in common in public welfare,… shall enjoy legal freedom, and encounter no obstacles to any honest way of gaining their livelihood and of increasing general industriousness… Existing laws pertaining to the Jewish nation… are not always compatible with these Our most gracious intentions.” Most restrictions on the Jews were removed, but these new freedoms applied only to the “privileged Jew” – that is, the Jew whom the State found “useful” in some way – and not to the “foreign Jew”. Moreover, even privileged Jews were not granted the right of full citizenship and craft mastership. For Joseph wanted to grant tolerance to the Jews, but not full equality.

As for France, “already, in 1784, the Jews of Bordeaux had been accorded further concessions by Louis XVI; in 1776 all Portuguese Jews had been given religious liberty and the permission to inhabit all parts of the kingdom. The decree of January 28, 1790, conferring on the Jews of Bordeaux the rights of French citizens, put the finishing touch to this scheme of liberation. [The Sephardic Jews of South-West France and papal Avignon, who were already more assimilated than their Ashkenazi co-religionists in Alsace, were given full citizenship in July, 1790.] But the proposal to extend this privilege to the Jews of Alsace evoked a storm of controversy in the Assembly and also violent insurrections amongst the Alsace peasants.”

159 Webster, op. cit., p. 247.
161 Webster, *op. cit.*, p. 247.
In their first debate on the subject, on September 28, 1789, they made a further important distinction between the nation and the individuals constituting the nation. Thus Stanislas Comte de Clermont-Tonnerre argued that “there cannot be a nation within a nation”, so “the Jews should be denied everything as a nation but granted everything as individuals.”\textsuperscript{162} A separate nation of the Jews could not be allowed to exist within France. For “virtually all – moderates no less than radicals, Dantonists no less than Robespierrists, Christians as well as deists, pantheists, and atheists – held that equality of status in the state they were in their various ways intent on establishing was bound up of necessity with the elimination of all groups, classes, or corporations intermediate (and therefore mediating) between the state itself and the citizen.”\textsuperscript{163}

Vital writes: “The immediate issue before the Assembly was the admission of certain semi-pariah classes – among them actors and public executioners – to what came to be termed ‘active citizenship’. It was soon apparent, however, that the issues presented by the Jews were very different. It was apparent, too, that it would make no better sense to examine the Jews’ case in tandem with that of the Protestants. The latter, like the Jews, were non-Catholics, but their national identity was not in doubt, nor, therefore, their right to the new liberties being decreed for all. Whatever else they were, they were Frenchmen. No one in the National Assembly thought otherwise. But were the Jews Frenchmen? If they were not, could they become citizens? The contention of the lead speaker in the debate, Count Stanislaw de Clermont-Tonnerre, was that the argument for granting them full rights of citizenship needed to be founded on the most general principles. Religion was a private affair. The law of the state need not and ought not to impinge upon it. So long as religious obligations were compatible with the law of the state and contravened it in no particular it was wrong to deprive a person, whose conscience required him to assume such religious obligations, of those rights which it was the duty of all citizens qua citizens to assume. One either imposed a national religion by main force, so erasing the relevant clause of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen to which all now subscribed. Or else one allowed everyone the freedom to profess the religious opinion of his choice. Mere tolerance was unacceptable. ‘The system of tolerance, coupled.. to degrading distinctions, is so vicious in itself, that he who is compelled to tolerate remains as dissatisfied with the law as is he whom it has granted no more than such a form of tolerance.’ There was no middle way. The enemies of the Jews attacked them, and attacked him, Clermont-Tonnerre, on the grounds that they were deficient morally. It was also held of the Jews that they were unsociable, that their laws prescribed usury, that they were forbidden to mix with the French by marriage or at table or join them in defence of the country or in any other common enterprise. But these reproaches were either unjust or specious. Usury was blameworthy beyond a doubt, but it was the laws of

\textsuperscript{163} Vital, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 49.
France that had compelled the Jews to practise it. And so with most of the other charges. Once the Jews had title to land and a country of their own the practice of usury would cease. So would the unsociability that was held against them. So would much of their religious eccentricity [ces travers religieux]. As for the further argument, that they had judges and laws of their own, why so they did, and on this matter he, Clermont-Tonnerre, would say to his critics (coming to the passage in his address to the Assembly that would be quoted over and over again in the course of the two centuries that followed), that that indeed was impermissible.

"As a nation the Jews must be denied everything, as individuals they must be granted everything; their judges can no longer be recognized; their recourse must be to our own exclusively; legal protection for the doubtful laws by which Jewish corporate existence is maintained must end; they cannot be allowed to create a political body or a separate order within the state; it is necessary that they be citizens individually.’

"There remained the question, what if, as some argued, it was the case that the Jews themselves had no interest in citizenship? Why in that case, he went on, ‘if they do not want it, let them say so, in which case expel them [s’ils veulent ne l’être pas, qu’ils le disent, et alors, qu’on les bannisse]’ The idea of a society of non-citizens within the state and a nation within a nation was repugnant to him. But in fact, the speaker concluded, that was not at all what the Jews wanted. The evidence was to the contrary. They wished to be incorporated into the nation of France.

"Clermont-Tonnerre was promptly contradicted on this last, vital point by the abbé Maury. The term ‘Jew’, said the abbé did not denote a religious sect, but a nation, one which had laws which it had always followed and by which it wished to continue to abide. ‘To proclaim the Jews citizens would be as if to say that, without letters of naturalization and without ceasing to be English or Danish, Englishmen and Danes could become Frenchmen.’ But Maury’s chief argument was of a moral and social order. The Jews were inherently undesirable, socially as well as economically. They had been chased out of France, and then recalled, no less than seven times - chased out by avarice, as Voltaire had rightly put it, readmitted by avarice once more, but in foolishness as well.

"The Jews have passed seventeen centuries without mingling with the other nations. They have never engaged in anything but trade in money; they have been the plague of the agricultural provinces; not one of them has ever dignified [su ennoblir] his hands by driving a plough. Their laws leave them no time for agriculture; the Sabbath apart, they celebrate fifty-six more festivals than the Christians in each year. In Poland they possess an entire province. Well, then! While the sweat of Christian slaves waters the furrows in which the Jews’ opulence germinates they themselves, as their fields are
cultivated, engage in weighing their ducats and calculating how much they can shave off the coinage without exposing themselves to legal penalties.’

“They have never been labourers, Maury continued, not even under David and Solomon. And even then they were notorious for their laziness. Their sole concern was commerce. Would you make soldiers of them, the abbé asked. If you did, you would derive small benefit from them: they have a horror of celibacy and they marry young. He knew of no general who would wish to command an army of Jews either on the Sabbath – a day on which they never gave battle – or indeed at any other time. Or did the Assembly imagine that they could make craftsmen of them when their many festivals and sabbath days presented an insurmountable obstacle to such an enterprise. The Jews held 12 million mortgages in Alsace alone, he informed his colleagues. Within a month of their being granted citizenship they would own half the province outright. In ten years’ time they would have ‘conquered’ all of it, reducing it to nothing more than a Jewish colony – upon which the hatred the people of Alsace already bore for the Jews would explode.

“It was not that he, Maury, wished the Jews to be persecuted. ‘They are men, they are our brothers; anathema on whoever speaks of intolerance!’ Nor need their religious opinions disturb anyone [!!!]. He joined all others in agreeing that they were to be protected. But that did not mean that they could be citizens. It was as individuals that they were entitled to protection, not as Frenchmen.

“Robespierre took the opposite line, supporting Clermont-Tonnerre. All who fulfilled the generally applicable conditions of eligibility to citizenship were entitled to the rights that derived from it, he argued, including the right to hold public office. And so far as the facts were concerned, much of what Maury had said about the Jews was ‘infinitely exaggerated’ and contrary to known history. Moreover, to charge the Jews themselves with responsibility for their own persecution at the hands of others, was absurd.

“‘Vices are imputed to them… But to whom should these vices be imputed if not to ourselves for our injustice?… Let us restore them to happiness, to country [patrie], and to virtue by restoring them to the dignity of men and citizens; let us reflect that it can never be politic, whatever anyone might say, to condemn a multitude of men who live among us to degradation and oppression.’”164

Thus spoke the man who was soon to lead the most degrading and oppressive régime in European history to that date. Indeed, it is striking how those who spoke most fervently for the Jews – apart from leaders of the Jewish community such as the banker Cerfbeer and Isaac Beer – were Freemasons or Illuminati.

Thus in the two years before the crucial debate on September 27, 1791, writes General Nechvolodov, “fourteen attempts were made to give the Jews civic equality and thirty-five major speeches were given by several orators, among them Mirabeau, Robespierre, Abbé Grégoire, Abbé Sièyes, Camille Desmoulins, Vernier, Barnave, Lameth, Duport and others.

“’Now there is a singular comparison to be made,’ says Abbé Lemann, ‘- all the names which we have just cited and which figure in the Moniteur as having voted for the Jews are also found on the list of Masons... Is this coincidence not proof of the order given, in the lodges of Paris, to work in favour of Jewish emancipation?’

“And yet, in spite of the revolutionary spirit, the National Assembly was very little inclined to give equality of civil rights to the Jews. Against this reform there rose up all the deputies from Alsace, since it was in Alsace that the majority of the French Jews of that time lived....

“But this opposition in the National Assembly did not stop the Jews. To attain their end, they employed absolutely every means.

“According to Abbé Lemann, these means were the following:

“First means: entreaty. A charm exercised over several presidents of the Assembly. Second: the influence of gold. Third means: logic. After the National Assembly had declared the ‘rights of man’, the Jews insisted that these rights should logically be applied to them, and they set out their ideas on this subject with an ‘implacable arrogance’.

“Fourth means: recourse to the suburbs and the Paris Commune, so as to force the National Assembly under ‘threat of violence’ to give the Jews equality.

“’One of their most thorough historians (Graetz),’ says Abbé Lemann, ‘did not feel that he had to hide this manoeuvre. Exhausted, he says, by the thousand useless efforts they had made to obtain civil rights, they thought up a last means. Seeing that it was impossible to obtain by reason and common sense what they called their rights, they resolved to force the National Assembly to approve of their emancipation.

“’To this end, naturally, were expended vast sums, which served to establish the ‘Christian Front’ which they wanted.

“’In the session of the National Assembly of January 18, 1791, the Duke de Broglie expressed himself completely openly on this subject: ‘Among them,’ he said, ‘there is one in particular who has acquired an immense fortune at
the expense of the State, and who is spending in the town of Paris considerable sums to win supporters of his cause.’ He meant Cerfbeer.

“At the head of the Christian Front created on this occasion were the lawyer Godard and three ecclesiastics: the Abbés Mulot, Bertoliot and Fauchet.

“Abbé Fauchet was a well-known illuminatus, and Abbé Mulot – the president of the all-powerful Paris Commune, with the help of which the Jacobins exerted, at the time desired, the necessary pressure on the National and Legislative Assemblies, and later on the Convention.

“What Gregory, curé of Embermeuil, was for the Jews in the heart of the National Assembly, Abbé Mulot was in the heart of the Commune.

“However, although they were fanatical Jacobins, the members of the Commune were far from agreeing to the propositions of their president that they act in defence of Jewish rights in the National Assembly. It was necessary to return constantly to the attack, naturally with the powerful help of Cerfbeer’s gold and that of the Abbés Fauchet and Bertoliot. This latter declared during a session of the Commune on this question: ‘It was necessary that such a happy and unexpected event as the revolution should come and rejuvenate France... Let us hasten to consign to oblivion the crimes of our fathers.’

“Then, during another session, the lawyer Godard bust into the chamber with fifty armed ‘patriots’ dressed in costumes of the national guard with three-coloured cockades. They were fifty Jews who, naturally provided with money, had made the rounds of the sections of the Paris Commune and of the wards of the town of Paris, talking about recruiting partisans of equality for the Jews. This had its effect. Out of the sixty sections of Paris fifty-nine declared themselves for equality (only the quartier des Halles abstained). Then the Commune addressed the National Assembly with an appeal signed by the Abbés Mulot, Bertoliot, Fauchet and other members, demanding that equality be immediately given to the Jews.

“However, even after that, the National Assembly hesitated in declaring itself in the manner provided. Then, on September 27, the day of the penultimate session of the Assembly before its dissolution, the Jacobin deputy Adrien Duport posed the question of equality for the Jews in a categorical fashion. The Assembly knew Adrien Duport’s personality perfectly. It knew that in a secret meeting of the chiefs of Freemasonry which preceded the revolution, he had insisted on the necessity of resort to a system of terror. The Assembly yielded. There followed a decree signed by Louis XVI granting French Jews full and complete equality of rights...”

The power of the Jewish minority was revealed especially during the reign of terror under Robespierre, when 2300 Catholic churches were converted into “temples of Reason”. At that point some voices were raised, writes Tikhomirov, “demanding that the ban be spread onto the Jews also, and that circumcision be forbidden. These demands were completely ignored, and were not even put to the vote. In the local communes individual groups of especially wild Jacobins, who had not been initiated into higher politics, sometimes broke into synagogues, destroying the Torah and books, but it was only by 1794 that the revolutionary-atheist logic finally forced even the bosses to pose the question of the annihilation not only of Catholicism, but also of Jewry. At this point, however, the Jews were delivered by 9 Thermidor, 1794. Robespierre fell and was executed. The moderate elements triumphed. The question of the ban of Jewry disappeared of itself, while the Constitution of Year III of the Republic granted equal rights to the Jews.” 166

But this was not the end of the matter. In the late 1790s a new wave of Ashkenazis entered France from Germany, attracted by the superior status their French brothers now enjoyed. This was to lead to further disturbances in Alsace, which it was left to Napoleon to deal with...

“Nevertheless,” as Paul Johnson writes, “the deed was done. French Jews were now free and the clock could never be turned back. Moreover, emancipation in some form took place wherever the French were able to carry the revolutionary spirit with their arms. The ghettos and Jewish closed quarters were broken into in papal Avignon (1791), Nice (1792) and the Rhineland (1792-3). The spread of the revolution to the Netherlands, and the founding of the Batavian republic, led to Jews being granted full and formal rights by law there (1796). In 1796-8 Napoleon Bonaparte liberated many of the Italian ghettos, French troops, young Jews and local enthusiasts tearing down the crumbling old walls.

“For the first time a new archetype, which had always existed in embryonic form, began to emerge from the shadows: the revolutionary Jew. Clericalists in Italy swore enmity to ‘Gauls, Jacobins and Jews’. In 1793-4 Jewish Jacobins set up a revolutionary regime in Saint Esprit, the Jewish suburb of Bayonne. Once again, as during the Reformation, traditionalists saw a sinister link between the Torah and subversion.” 167

However, the above picture of the Jewish struggle for emancipation in Paris and, later, Bayonne should not obscure the fact that there was still very strong opposition to the idea of emancipation from within Jewry itself led especially by the rabbinic leaders of Ashkenazi Jewry in Poland. In France, it had been the less typical, socially marginalized Jews who had pressed for

166 Tikhomirov, op. cit., p. 365.
emancipation. Even the more acculturated Sephardic Jews of Bourdeaux and Bayonne had been slow to ask for emancipation, first, because they feared that they might have to pay for liberties which they already enjoyed de facto, and secondly, because they wanted to be clearly delineated from the Ashkenazi Jews of Alsace. The latter, continues Vital, “had been slower still to ask for liberation. There is no evidence of their authorized representatives pressing for anything remotely of the kind before the Revolution; and when they made their own first approach to the new National Assembly it was to ask for no more than an end to the special taxes laid upon them and the abolition of the residential, and travel restrictions to which they were subject. The greatest anxiety of the Alsatians was to retain their own internal communal autonomy — to which end, with only rare exceptions, they (at all events, their authorized representatives) were prepared to forgo emancipation altogether. Only when they learned that other branches of French Jewry, the small community in Paris among them, were prepared to yield to the demand that they give up their ancient corporate status did the Alsatians and Lorrainers fall, reluctantly, into line.”

The question: to emancipate or not to emancipate? was to cause bitter divisions in Jewry that have continued to the present day. It brought into sharp focus another question: was it possible for the Jews, while remaining Jewish, ever to become an integral part of non-Jewish society? And if not, how were they to live — as a separate nation with its own homeland and language as the other Gentile nations, or in some other way?

The extreme revolutionary zeal of many of the champions of Jewish emancipation, on the one hand, and the equally extreme bigotry and ghetto-creating mentality of the opponents of emancipation, on the other, suggested that there was no easy solution to this problem, even with the best intentions of the Gentile and/or Christian rulers. For, as Norman Stone points out, “Jewish emancipation was a double-edged operation. It required a fundamental change in the conduct and the attitudes both of the host societies and of the Jews themselves. It demanded the dismantling not only of the constraints imposed on Jews from outside but also of the ‘internal ghetto’ in Jewish minds. Modern concern with the roots of anti-Semitism sometimes overlooks the severity of the Jews’ own laws of segregation. Observant Jews could not hold to the 613 rules of dress, diet, hygiene and worship if they tried to live outside their own closed community; and intermarriage was strictly forbidden. Since Judaic law taught that Jewishness was biologically inherited in the maternal line, Jewish women were jealously protected. A girl who dared to marry out could expect to be disowned by her family, and ritually pronounced dead. Extreme determination was needed to withstand such acute social pressures…”

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168 Vital, op. cit., p. 103.
Napoleon and the Jews

If the French revolution gave the Jews their first political victory, Napoleon gave them their second. On May 22, 1799, the Paris *Moniteur* published the following report from Constantinople on April 17: “Buonaparte has published a proclamation in which he invites all the Jews of Asia and Africa to come and place themselves under his flag *in order to re-establish ancient Jerusalem*. He has already armed a great number and their battalions are threatening Aleppo.” This was not the first time that the Jews had persuaded a Gentile ruler to restore them to Jerusalem. The Roman Emperor Julian the Apostate had allowed the Jews to return to Jerusalem and start rebuilding the Temple. However, fire came out from the foundations and black crosses appeared on the workers’ garments, forcing them to abandon the enterprise.¹⁷⁰

And the Jews were to be thwarted again. For British sea-power prevented Napoleon from reaching Jerusalem and making himself, as was reported to be his intention, king of the Jews. The Jews would have to wait over a century before another Gentile power – this time, the British – again offered them a return to Zion.

Napoleon now learned what many rulers before and after had learned: that kindness towards the Jews does not make them more tractable. Nechvolodov writes: “Since the first years of the Empire, Napoleon I had become very worried about the Jewish monopoly in France and the isolation in which they lived in the midst of the other citizens, although they had received citizenship. The reports of the departments showed the activity of the Jews in a very bad light: ‘Everywhere there are false declarations to the civil authorities; fathers declare the sons who are born to them to be daughters… Again, there are Jews who have given an example of disobedience to the laws of conscription; out of sixty-nine Jews who, in the course of six years, should have formed part of the Moselle contingent, none has entered the army.’

‘By contrast, behind the army, they give themselves up to frenzied speculation.

‘Unfortunately,’ says Thiers describing the entry of the French into Rome in his *History of the Revolution*, ‘the excesses, not against persons but against property, marred the entry of the French into the ancient capital of the world… Berthier had just left for Paris, Massena had just succeeded him. This hero was accused of having given the first example. He was soon imitated. They began to pillage the palaces, convents and rich collections. Some Jews in the rear of the army bought for a paltry price the magnificent objects which the looters were offering them.’

“It was in 1805, during Napoleon’s passage through Strasbourg, after the victory of Austerlitz, that the complaints against the Jews assumed great proportions. The principal accusations brought against them concerned the terrible use they made of usury. As soon as he returned to Paris, Napoleon judged it necessary to concentrate all his attention on the Jews. In the State Council, during its session of April 30, he said, among other things, the following on this subject:

”’The French government cannot look on with indifference as a vile, degraded nation capable of every iniquity takes exclusive possession of two beautiful departments of Alsace; one must consider the Jews as a nation and not as a sect. It is a nation within a nation; I would deprive them, at least for a certain time, of the right to take out mortgages, for it is too humiliating for the French nation to find itself at the mercy of the vilest nation. Some entire villages have been expropriated by the Jews; they have replaced feudalism... It would be dangerous to let the keys of France, Strasbourg and Alsace, fall into the hands of a population of spies who are not at all attached to the country.’”

Napoleon eventually decided on an extraordinary measure: to convene a 111-strong Assembly of Jewish Notables in order to receive clear and unambiguous answers to the following questions: did the Jewish law permit mixed marriages; did the Jews regard Frenchmen as foreigners or as brothers; did they regard France as their native country, the laws of which they were bound to obey; did the Judaic law draw any distinction between Jewish and Christian debtors? At the same time, writes Johnson, Napoleon “supplemented this secular body by convening a parallel meeting of rabbis and learned laymen, to advise the Assembly on technical points of Torah and halakhah. The response of the more traditional elements of Judaism was poor. They did not recognize Napoleon’s right to invent such a tribunal, let alone summon it...”

However, if some traditionalists did not welcome it, other Jews received the news with unbounded joy. “According to Abbé Lemann,” writes Nechvolodov, “they grovelled in front of him and were ready to recognize him as the Messiah. The sessions of the Sanhedrin [composed of 46 rabbis and 25 laymen from all parts of Western Europe] took place in February and March, 1807, and the Decision of the Great Sanhedrin began with the words: ’Blessed forever is the Lord, the God of Israel, Who has placed on the throne of France and of the kingdom of Italy a prince according to His heart. God has seen the humiliation of the descendants of ancient Jacob, and He has chosen Napoleon the Great to be the instrument of His mercy... Reunited today under his powerful protection in the good town of Paris, to the number

171 Nechvolodov, op. cit, pp. 221-222.
172 Johnson, op. cit, p. 310.
of seventy-one doctors of the law and notables of Israel, we constitute a Great Sanhedrin, so as to find in us a means and power to create religious ordinances in conformity with the principles of our holy laws, and which may serve as a rule and example to all Israelites. These ordinances will teach the nations that our dogmas are consistent with the civil laws under which we live, an do not separate us at all from the society of men...

“The Jewish delegates,” writes Platonov, “declared that state laws had the same obligatory force for Jews, that every honourable study of Jewish teaching was allowed, but usury was forbidden, etc. [However,] to the question concerning mixed marriages of Jews and Christians they gave an evasive, if not negative reply. ‘Although mixed marriages between Jews and Christians cannot be clothed in a religious form, they nevertheless do not draw upon them any anathema.’

On the face of it, the convening of the Sanhedrin was a great triumph for Napoleon, who could now treat Jewry as just another religious denomination, and not a separate nation, “appropriating for the state what had traditionally been a subversive institution”. However, the Jews did not restrain their money-lending and speculative activities, as Napoleon had pleaded with them. On the contrary, only one year after the convening of the Great Sanhedrin, when it became evident that their financial excesses were continuing, Napoleon was forced to adopt repressive measures against them.

Moreover, he created rabbinic consistories in France having disciplinary powers over Jews and granted rabbis the status of state officials - a measure that was strengthen the powers of the rabbis over their people. In time Jewish consistories were created all over Europe. They “began the stormy propaganda of Judaism amidst Jews who had partially fallen away from the religion of their ancestors, organised rabbinic schools and spiritual seminaries for the education of youth in the spirit of Talmudic Judaism.”

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175 Eliane Glaser, “Napoleon’s Jews: A Law unto Themselves”, BBC History Magazine, vol. 8, no. 8, August, 2007, p. 36. This did not mean, however, that the complaints of the citizens of Alsace were ignored. According to the “infamous decree” of March 17, 1808, writes Vital, “existing debts to Jews [in Alsace] were to be heavily and arbitrarily reduced. But the stipulations of the decree went a great deal further. Restrictions were to be levelled on the freedom of Jews to engage in a trade of their choice and to move from one part of the country to another without special permission. They were to submit to special commercial registration. They were not to employ the Hebrew language in their commercial transactions. Unlike all other citizens, they were to be forbidden to offer substitutes in case of conscription for military service. And the entry of foreign Jews into France was to be conditional either on military performance or on satisfaction of specified property qualifications.” (op. cit., p. 59).
The decree lasted for ten years, but was not then renewed by the Restoration government.
Moreover, as Tikhomirov points out, “no laws could avert the international links of the Jews. Sometimes they even appeared openly, as in Kol Ispoel Khaberim (Alliance Israélite Universelle), although many legislatures forbade societies and unions of their own citizens to have links with foreigners. The Jews gained a position of exceptional privilege. For the first time in the history of the diaspora they acquired greater rights than the local citizens of the countries of the dispersion. One can understand that, whatever the further aims for the resurrection of Israel might be, the countries of the new culture and statehood became from that time a lever of support for Jewry.”

Indeed, the main result of the Great Sanhedrin, writes Nechvolodov, “was to unite Judaism still more. “Let us not forget from where we draw our origin,” said Rabbi Salomon Lippmann Cerfbeer on July 26, 1808, in his speech for the opening of the preparatory assembly of the Sanhedrin: ‘Let it no longer be a question of “German” or “Portuguese” Jews; although disseminated over the surface of the globe, we everywhere form only one unique people.’”

As we have seen, the emancipation of the Jews in France led to their emancipation in other countries. Even after the fall of Napoleon, on June 8, 1815, the Congress of Vienna decreed that “it was incumbent on the members of the German Confederation to consider an ‘amelioration’ of the civil status of all those who ‘confessed the Jewish faith in Germany.’” Gradually, though not without opposition, Jewish emancipation spread throughout Europe.

*The Latin American Revolutions*

Another kind of nationalism owed its origins to the impact of Napoleon, not on whole societies, but directly on certain individuals, who then tried to imitate Napoleon’s impact on society as a whole. Such individuals were generally ambitious adventurers who managed by hook or by crook to impose themselves on weakened government structures and then claim for themselves the mandate of the people, as if their individual will represented the “general will” of the people. Simple despotism, in other words, disguised as liberation from despotism. Very often these “liberated” peoples had no idea that they had been a distinct nation before, and would have been much happier without any “liberator”. They were indeed “forced to be free”, in Rousseau’s phrase.

The most famous of the “liberators” was Simon Jose Antonio de la Santissima Trinidad de Bolivar. Bolivar is a good example of the terrible spiritual damage done to a whole generation of young men by the heroic

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image of Napoleon. Just as Napoleon himself stood between the rationalism of the Enlightenment and the passion of the Romantic age, uniting them in the image of himself fighting for both the ideals of the Enlightenment and the death-defying glory of the romantic hero, so did Bolivar and a host of similar adventurers in Central and South America aspire to unite national “liberation” with personal glory.

“Bolivar arrived in the French capital just in time for Napoleon’s coronation as Emperor of the French, an event he watched with fascination. In March 1805 ... he saw Napoleon crown himself king of Italy. ‘I centred my attention on Napoleon and saw nothing but him out of that crowd of men,’ he wrote. He travelled on to Rome under the spell of this vision and there, after considering what he had seen, he ascended the Monte Sacro, where he fell on his knees and swore an oath before Rodriguez to liberate South America.”

Bolivar seized his chance after Napoleon deposed King Ferdinand VII of Spain, which eventually unleashed a strong nationalist backlash in Spain – but not before breaking the legal links between Spain and its colonies in the Americas. Returning to Venezuela, Bolivar proceeded to win, lose and finally reconquer Caracas from the Spaniards in a series of civil wars distinguished by appalling savagery on both sides. Although the Venezuelan Republic had been proclaimed on a whites-only franchise in 1811, thereby excluding all Indians and blacks from “the nation”, and although Bolivar himself was a slave-owner and to all intents and purposes Spanish, on reconquering Caracas in 1813 he immediately likened all royalist Spaniards to wandering Jews, to be “cast out and persecuted”, and declared: “Any Spaniard who does not work against tyranny in favour of the just cause, by the most active and effective means, shall be considered an enemy and punished as a traitor to the country and in consequence shall inevitably be shot. Spaniards and Canarios, depend upon it, you will die, even if you are simply neutral, unless you actively espouse the liberation of America.”

Bolivar was as good as his word, and proceeded to slaughter the whole Spanish population of Caracas – whereupon the people he had supposedly come to liberate, the Indians and blacks, both free and slave, marched against him under the slogan of “Long live Ferdinand VII”! After murdering a further 1200 Spaniards in retaliation, Bolivar then harangued the inhabitants of Caracas, saying: “You may judge for yourselves, without partiality, whether I have not sacrificed my life, my being, every minute of my time in order to make a nation of you.”

Like his idol Napoleon, and many Latin American strongmen since, Bolivar did not like the people expressing its will in elections, which he called “the greatest scourge of republics [which] produce only anarchy”. The liberator of Mexico, Agustin de Iturbide, agreed, proclaiming himself

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180 Zamoyski, op. cit., p. 151.
181 Almond, op. cit., p. 89.
182 Zamoyski, op. cit., p. 156.
Emperor in 1822. But such unrepublican immodesty was nothing compared to Bolivar’s, who “hung in the dining room of his villa outside Bogota a huge portrait of himself being crowned by two genii, with the inscription: ‘Bolivar is the God of Colombia’.”

Nor, in the end, did he have much time for the people he had liberated. Shortly after the assassination of his right-hand man, General José Antonio de Sucre, when he was in self-imposed exile in Europe, he admitted that independence was the only benefit he had brought “at the cost of everything else”, and declared: “America is ungovernable. He who serves the revolution ploughs the sea... This country will inexorably fall into the hands of uncontrollable multitudes, thereafter to pass under... tyrants of all colours and races. Those who have served the revolution have ploughed the sea. The only thing to do in America is emigrate.” And again: “America can be ruled only by an able despotism.”

Despotism also prevailed in another “liberated” country of the region, Paraguay, where it became a “secular replacement” for the former “Jesuit communist empire”. “After independence,” writes David Landes, “like other debris states of the great Hispanic empire, Paraguay had fallen almost immediately under the control of dictators. The laws said republic, but the practice was one-man rule – a mix of benevolent despotism and populist tyranny. The first of these dictators..., Dr. Gaspar Rodriguez de Francia, was something special. A Jacobin ideologue, and like many of the French variety, a lawyer by training, Francia was committed to a republic of equals and him more equal than the rest. He was he was the ‘organic leader’, the elitist embodying the popular will... Dr. Francia and his successors, Lopez father and son, would turn the country into an enlightened Sparta – egalitarian, literate, disciplined, and brave.”

“It is generally accepted that the former Spanish colonies never again achieved the wealth in which they had basked before 1810. Some maintain that they were also better governed, more lawful and more peaceful under Spanish rule than at any time since, and there is something to be said for this view.

“Slavery was finally abolished in the former Spanish colonies in the late 1850s, but economic slavery remained endemic throughout the region. The manner in which independence and nationhood were forced upon these societies gave rise to systemic instability. The various Liberators could not count on devotion to a cause to animate their troops and supporters, as the

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183 Zamoyski, op. cit., p. 229.
184 Quoted in Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 546.
186 Horton Box, The Origins of the Paraguayan War, University of Illinois, 1927.
cause was imaginary. Nor could they mobilize one whole section of the population on behalf of a specific interest for any length of time. And they certainly could not depend on colleagues, who were bound, sooner or later, to contest their authority. They therefore had to keep rearranging alliances and decapitating any faction that grew too strong. In order to enlist the loyalty and sympathy of the lower orders, they would make a point of drawing these into the army. But as such recruits became professionals, they cut their links with the classes they came from and grew into arrogant Praetorians who carried with them an element of incipient mutiny.”

The Nature of Romanticism

Reference has already been made to that broader movement, known as Romanticism, which fed into the development of nationalism from the other side of the Rhine. Romanticism was born as a reaction to the Enlightenment and, more generally, to the whole classical concept of civilisation. If the English Enlightenment dominated the cultural life of the early 18th century, and the French Enlightenment - the later part of the century, then German Romanticism dominated the intellectual and cultural life of the early 19th century with offshoots well into the modern age.

Napoleon, the French conqueror of Germany, united the two streams in himself. For, on the one hand, he spread the rationalist ideals of the French Enlightenment throughout Europe. And on the other, he was the object and idol of Romantic enthusiasm, the “world spirit” triumphing over all adversity.

Hume had shown that the empirical, rationalist view of the world had, paradoxically, no rational foundations, for it led to a denial of the objective existence of God, the soul, morality and even of the external world. Kant desperately attempted to rescue something from Hume’s withering criticism. But ultimately he begat, not a rebirth of empiricism on rational foundations, but the German philosophy of idealism, which turned everything on its head by defining the material world as spirit, the objective as the subjective, the irrational as the rational.

Jacques Barzun attempts to define Romanticism as follows: “In Romanticism thought and feeling are fused; its bent is toward exploration and discovery at whatever risk of error or failure; the religious emotion is innate and demands expression. Spirit is a reality but where it is placed varies and is secondary: the divine may be reached through nature or art. The individual self is a source of knowledge on which one must act; for one is embarked – engagé, as the 20C Existentialists say. To act, enthusiasm must overcome indifference or despair; impulse must be guided by imagination and reason. The search is for truths, which reside in particulars, not in generalities; the world is bigger and more complex than any set of abstractions, and it includes

188 Zamoyski, op. cit., p. 230.
the past, which is never fully done with. Meditating on past and present leads to the estimate of man as great and wretched. But heroes are real and indispensable. They rise out of the people, whose own mind-and-heart provides the makings of high culture. The errors of heroes and peoples are the price of knowledge, religion, and art, life itself being a heroic tragedy.”

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

The Romantic conception of a dynamic, unfinished world undermined faith in eternal values and verities, and, combined with the idea of ever-oscillating polarities, paved the way for the Hegelian schema of thesis-antithesis-synthesis - albeit usually without the synthesis. Thus according to Goethe, writes Ellendea Proffer, “at the heart of everything lies a contradiction - attraction and repulsion, creation and destruction - that men see as good and evil, heaven and hell. Goethe felt that moral concepts were really only one facet of the whole, a whole in which immorality and amorality are at least equally represented. The main thing is activity - the surge of life, an everlasting repetition that never progresses, good never really does triumph over evil, but the movement in itself is what is important. All these contradictions are inseparable from one another and from God Himself.”

Sir Isaiah Berlin’s definition is also illuminating: “Since the Greeks, and perhaps long before them, men have believed that to the central questions about the nature and purpose of their lives, and of the world in which they

189 Barzun, op. cit., p. 491.
lived, true, objective, universal and eternal answers could be found. If the answers could not be discovered by me, then perhaps by someone more expert or wiser than I; if not in the circumstances in which I found myself, then in others more propitious: in an innocent and happy past – a Garden of Eden from which our ancestors had for their sins been expelled, or perhaps in a golden age that still lay in the future, which posterity (perhaps after much labour and suffering) would, or at any rate could, one day reach. It was assumed that all the truly central problems were soluble in principle even if not in practice. Somewhere true answers to all genuine questions must exist, if not in the minds of men, then in the mind of an omniscient being – real or imaginary, material or ideal, a personal deity, or the universe come to full consciousness of itself.

“This presupposition, which underlies most classical and Christian thought, orthodox and heretical, scientific and religious, was connected with the belief that, whether men knew it or not, the whole of life on earth was in some sense bound up with the search for answer to the great, tormenting questions of fact and of conduct; of what there is, was, will be, can be; of what to do, what to live by, what to seek, hope for, admire, fear, avoid; whether the end of life was happiness or justice or virtue or self-fulfilment or grace and salvation. Individuals, schools of thought, entire civilisations differed about what the answers were, about the proper method of discovering them, about the nature and place of moral or spiritual or scientific authority – that is to say, about how to identify the experts who are qualified to discover and communicate the answers. They argued about what constitutes such qualifications and justifies such claims to authority. But there was no doubt that the truth lay somewhere; that it could in principle be found. Conflicting beliefs were held about the central questions: whether the truth was to be found in reason or in faith, in the Church or the laboratory, in the insights of the uniquely privileged individual – a prophet, a mystic, an alchemist, a metaphysician – or in the collective consciousness of a body of men – the society of the faithful, the traditions of a tribe, a race, a nation, a social class, an academy of experts, an elite of uniquely endowed or trained beings – or, on the contrary, in the mind or heart of any man, anywhere, at any time, provided that he remained innocent and uncorrupted by false doctrines. What was common to all these views – incompatible enough for wars of extermination to have been fought in their name – was the assumption that there existed a reality, a structure of things, a rerum natura, which the qualified enquirer could see, study and, in principle, get right. Men were violently divided about the nature and identity of the wise – those who understood the nature of things – but not about the proposition that such wise men existed or could be conceived, and that they would know that which would enable them to deduce correctly what men should believe, how they should act, what they should live by and for.
“This was the great foundation of belief which romanticism attacked and weakened. Whatever the differences between the leading romantic thinkers – the early Schiller and the later Fichte, Schelling and Jacobi, Tieck and the Schlegels when they were young, Chateaubriand and Byron, Coleridge and Carlyle, Kierkegaard, Stirner, Nietzsche, Baudelaire – there runs through their writings a common notion, held with varying degrees of consciousness and depth, that truth is not an objective structure, independent of those who seek it, the hidden treasure waiting to be found, but is itself in all its guises created by the seeker. It is not to be brought into being necessarily by the finite individual: according to some it is created by a greater power, a universal spirit, personal or impersonal, in which the individual is an element, or of which he is an aspect, an emanation, an imperfect reflection. But the common assumption of the romantics that runs counter to the philosophia perennis is that the answers to the great questions are not to be discovered so much as to be invented. They are not something found, they are something literally made. In its extreme Idealistic form it is a vision of the entire world. In its more familiar form, it confines itself to the realm of values, ideals, rules of conduct – aesthetic, religious, social, moral, political – a realm seen not as a natural or supernatural order capable of being investigated, described and explained by the appropriate method – rational examination or some more mysterious procedure – but as something that man creates, as he creates works of art; not by imitating, or even obtaining illumination from, pre-existent models or truths, or by applying pre-existent truths or rules that are objective, universal, eternal, unalterable but by an act of creation, the introduction into the world of something literally novel – the activity, natural or supernatural, human or in part divine, owing nothing to anything outside it (in some versions because nothing can be conceived as being outside it), self-subsistent, self-justified, self-fulfilling. Hence that new emphasis on the subjective and ideal rather than the objective and the real, on the process of creation rather than its effects, on motives rather than consequences; and, as a necessary corollary of all this, on the quality of the vision, the state of mind or soul of the acting agent – purity of heart, innocence of intention, sincerity of purpose rather than getting the answer right, that is, accurate correspondence to the ‘given’. Hence the emphasis on activity, movement that cannot be reduced to static segments, the flow that cannot be arrested, frozen, analysed without being thereby fatally distorted; hence the constant protest against the reduction of ‘life’ to dead fragments, of organism to ‘mere’ mechanical or uniform units; and the corresponding tendency towards similes and metaphors drawn from ‘dynamic’ sciences – biology, physiology, introspective psychology – and the worship of music, which, of all the arts, appears to have the least relation to universally observable, uniform natural order. Hence, too, the celebration of all forms of defiance directed against the ‘given’ – the impersonal, the ‘brute fact’ in morals or in politics – or against the static and the accepted, and the value placed on minorities and martyrs as such, no matter what the ideal for which they suffered.
“This, too, is the source of the doctrine that work is sacred as such, not because of its social function, but because it is the imposition of the individual or collective personality, that is, activity, upon inert stuff. The activity, the struggle is all, the victory nothing: in Fichte’s words, ‘Frei sein ist nichts – frei werden ist der Himmel’ (‘To be free is nothing – to become free is very heaven’). Failure is nobler than success. Self-immolation for a cause is the thing, not the validity of the cause itself, for it is the sacrifice undertaken for its sake that sanctifies the cause, not some intrinsic property of it.

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

Romanticism and German Nationalism

Romanticism is individualism par excellence: but it has a collectivist analogue in nationalism. M.S. Anderson writes: “From one point of view, to be a romantic was to stress the individual and the unique, genius, originality, spontaneity. Yet at the same time the romantic sense of history emphasized the impossibility of escaping completely from the past and asserted that the development of human institutions was continuous, not something that proceeded by jumps. Moreover the populism which some of the more politically radical romantics affected, like the organic conception of the state

and the emphasis on corporate bodies and peasant communities which appealed to others, did not square easily with assertive individualism.”

“For Byronic romantics,” writes Berlin, “‘I’ is indeed an individual, the outsider, the adventurier, the outlaw, he who defies society and accepted values, and follows his own – it may be to his doom, but this is better than conformity, enslavement to mediocrity. But for other thinkers ‘I’ becomes something much more metaphysical. It is a collective – a nation, a Church, a Party, a class, an edifice in which I am only a stone, an organism of which I am only a tiny living fragment. It is the creator; I myself matter only in so far as I belong to the movement, the race, the nation, the class, the Church; I do not signify as a true individual within this super-person to whom my life is organically bound. Hence German nationalism: I do this not because it is good or right or because I like it – I do it because I am a German and this is the German way to live. So also modern existentialism – I do it because I commit myself to this form of existence. Nothing makes me; I do not do it because it is an objective order which I obey, or because of universal rules to which I must adhere; I do it because I create my own life as I do; being what I am, I give it direction and I am responsible for it. Denial of universal values, this emphasis on being above all an element in, and loyal to, a super-self, is a dangerous moment in European history, and has led to a great deal that has been destructive and sinister in modern times; this is where it begins, in the political ruminations and theories of the earliest German romantics and their disciples in France and elsewhere.”

Thus modern European nationalism is the fruit of the union of two ideas coming from two different directions: the French Enlightenment idea of the sovereignty and rights of the Nation, and the German Romantic idea of the uniqueness and self-justification of the Nation.

However, if these were the general ideological sources of modern nationalism, in the particular cases of French and German nationalism the immediate causes were more mundane: in the French case, pride, the pride of knowing that France was the first nation to proclaim and realise the ideals of the revolution, and in the German case wounded pride, “some form of collective humiliation” as a result of Napoleon’s victories. In its early stages Kant, Hegel and Goethe had all praised the Revolution; and Kant’s disciple, Fichte, had even declared that “henceforth the French Republic alone can be the country of the Just”. “But,” writes Zamoyski, “as the revolution progressed, the feeling grew in Germany that the French, with their habitual shallowness, had got it all wrong. They had allowed the pursuit of liberty to degenerate into mob rule and mass slaughter of innocent people because they

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perceived liberty in mechanical terms. German thinkers were more interested in ‘real liberty’, and many believed that it was the ‘corrupt’ nature of the French that had doomed the revolution to failure. Such conclusions allowed for a degree of smugness, suggesting as they did that the French Enlightenment, for all its brilliance, had been flawed, while German intellectual achievements had been more profound and more solid.

“Fichte identified Germany’s greatness as lying in her essentially spiritual destiny. She would never stoop to conquer others, and while nations such as the French, the English or the Spanish scrambled for wealth and dominance, Germany’s role was to uphold the finest values of humanity. Similar claims to a moral mission for Germany were made by Herder, Hölderlin, Schlegel and others…

“It had been central to Herder’s argument that each nation, by virtue of its innate character, had a special role to play in the greater process of history. One after another, nations ascended the world stage to fulfil their ordained purpose. The French were crowding the prosenium, but there was a growing conviction that Germany’s time was coming, and her destiny was about to unfold. The Germans certainly seemed ready for it. The country was awash with under-employed young men, and since the days of the proto-romantic movement of Sturm und Drang the concept of action, both as a revolt against stultifying rational forces and as a transcendent act of self-assertion, had become well established. Fichte equated virtually any action, provided it was bold unfettered, with liberation.

“The problem was that the nation was still not properly constituted. Some defined it by language and culture, or, like Fichte, by a level of consciousness. The Germans were, according to him, more innately creative than other nations, being the only genuine people in Europe, an Urvolk, speaking the only authentic language, Ursprache. Others saw the nation as a kind of church, defined by the ‘mission’ of the German people. Adam Müller affirmed that this mission was to serve humanity with charity, and that any man who dedicated himself to this common purpose should be considered a German. In his lectures of 1806, Fichte made the connection between committed action and nationality. Those who stood up and demonstrated their vitality were part of the Urvolk, those who did not were un-German. Hegel saw the people as a spiritual organism, whose expression, the collective spirit or Volksgeist, was its validating religion. The discussion mingled elements of theology, science and metaphysics to produce uplifting and philosophically challenging confusion.

196 Thus: “The genius of foreigners will be like the amiable hummingbird [or] the industrious and skilful bee which gathers in the honey… but the German spirit will be the eagle which will lift his heavy body on powerful wings and, through a long and exciting flight, climbs ever higher and higher towards the sun” (Addresses to the German Nation). (V.M.)
“But in the absence of clear geographical or political parameters, Germany’s national existence was ultimately dependent on some variant of the racial concept. And this began to be stated with increasing assertiveness. ‘In itself every nationality is a completely closed and rounded whole, a common tie of blood relationship unites all its members; all... must be of one mind and must stick together like one man’, according to Joseph Görres, who had once been an enthusiastic internationalist. ‘This instinctive urge that binds all members into a whole is a law of nature which takes preference over all artificial contracts... The voice of nature in ourselves warns us and points to the chasm between us and the alien’.

“The location and identification of this ‘closed and rounded whole’ involved not just defining German ethnicity, but also delving into the past in search of a typically German and organic national unit to set against the old rationalist French view of statehood based on natural law and the rights of man. The bible of this tendency was Tacitus’s *Germania*. Placed in its own time, this book is as much about Rome as about Germanic tribes. It imagines the ultimate non-Rome, a place that had not been cleared and cultivated, and a people innocent of the arts of industry and leisure. The forest life it describes is the antithesis to the classical culture of Rome. It is also in some ways the original noble savage myth, representing everything that decadent Rome had lost; beneath Tacitus’s contempt for the savage denizens of the forest lurks a vague fear that by gaining in civilization the Romans had forfeited certain rugged virtues.

“The German nationalists picked up this theme, which mirrored their relation to French culture. Roma and Germania, the city and the forest, corruption and purity, could stand as paradigms for the present situation. The ancient Teutonic hero Arminius (Hermann) had led the revolt of the German tribes against Rome and defeated the legions in the Teutonburg Forest. His descendants who aspired to throw off the ‘Roman’ universalism of France could take heart.”

Dostoyevsky developed the theme of the age-old opposition between Germany and Rome, of the perpetual revolt of the former against the latter: “Germany’s aim is one; it existed before, always. It is her Protestantism – not that single formula of Protestantism which was conceived in Luther’s time, but her continual Protestantism, her continual protest against the Roman world, ever since Arminius, - against everything that was Rome and Roman in aim, and subsequently - against everything that was bequeathed by ancient Rome to the new Rome and to all those peoples who inherited from Rome her idea, her formula and element; against the heir of Rome and everything that constitutes this legacy...

“Ancient Rome was the first to generate the idea of the universal unity of men, and was the first to start thinking of (and firmly believing in) putting it practically into effect in the form of universal empire. However, this formula fell before Christianity – the formula but not the idea. For this idea is that of European mankind; through this idea its civilization came into being; for it alone mankind lives.

“Only the idea of the universal Roman empire succumbed, and it was replaced by a new ideal, also universal, of a communion in Christ. This new ideal bifurcated into the Eastern ideal of a purely spiritual communion of men, and the Western European, Roman Catholic, papal ideal diametrically opposed to the Eastern one.

“This Western Roman Catholic incarnation of the idea was achieved in its own way, having lost, however, its Christian, spiritual foundation and having replaced it with the ancient Roman legacy. [The] Roman papacy proclaimed that Christianity and its idea, without the universal possession of lands and peoples, are not spiritual but political. In other words, they cannot be achieved without the realization on earth of a new universal Roman empire now headed not by the Roman emperor but by the Pope. And thus it was sought to establish a new universal empire in full accord with the spirit of the ancient Roman world, only in a different form.

“Thus, we have in the Eastern ideal – first, the spiritual communion of mankind in Christ, and thereafter, in consequence of the spiritual unity of all men in Christ and as an unchallenged deduction therefrom – a just state and social communion. In the Roman interpretation we have a reverse situation: first it is necessary to achieve firm state unity in the form of a universal empire, and only after that, perhaps, spiritual fellowship under the rule of the Pope as the potentate of this world.

“Since that time, in the Roman world this scheme has been progressing and changing uninterruptedly, and with its progress the most essential part of the Christian element has been virtually lost. Finally, having rejected Christianity spiritually, the heirs of the ancient Roman world likewise renounced [the] papacy. The dreadful French revolution has thundered. In substance, it was but the last modification and metamorphosis of the same ancient Roman formula of universal unity. The new formula, however, proved insufficient. The new idea failed to come true. There even was a moment when all the nations which had inherited the ancient Roman tradition were almost in despair. Oh, of course, that portion of society which in 1789 won political leadership, i.e. the bourgeoisie, triumphed and declared that there was no necessity of going any further. But all those minds which by virtue of the eternal laws of nature are destined to dwell in a state of everlasting universal fermentation seeking new formulae of some ideal and a new word indispensable to the progress of the human organism, - they all rushed to the
humiliated and the defrauded, to all those who had not received their share in the new formula of universal unity proclaimed by the French revolution of 1789. These proclaimed a new word of their own, namely, the necessity of universal fellowship not for the equal distribution of rights allotted to a quarter, or so, of the human race, leaving the rest to serve as raw material and a means of exploitation for the happiness of that quarter of mankind, but, on the contrary – for universal equality, with each and every one sharing the blessings of this world, whatever these may prove. It was decided to put this scheme into effect by resorting to all means, i.e., not by the means of Christian civilisation – without stopping at anything.

“Now, what has been Germany’s part in this, throughout these two thousand years? The most characteristic and essential trait of this great, proud and peculiar people – ever since their appearance on the historical horizon – consisted of the fact that they never consented to assimilate their destiny and their principles to those of the outermost Western world, i.e. the heirs of the ancient Roman tradition. The Germans have been protesting against the latter throughout these two thousand years. And even though they did not (never did so far) utter ‘their word’, or set forth their strictly formulated ideal in lieu of the ancient Roman idea, nevertheless, it seems that, within themselves, they always were convinced that they were capable of uttering this ‘new word’ and of leading mankind. They struggled against the Roman world as early as the times of Arminius, and during the epoch of Roman Christianity they, more than any other nation, struggled for the sovereign power against the new Rome.

“Finally, the Germans protested most vehemently, deriving their formula of protest from the innermost spiritual, elemental foundation of the Germanic world: they proclaimed the freedom of inquiry, and raised Luther’s banner. This was a terrible, universal break: the formula of protest had been found and filled with a content; even so it still was a negative formula, and the new, positive word was not yet uttered.

“And now, the Germanic spirit, having uttered this ‘new word’ of protest, as it were, fainted for a while, quite parallel to an identical weakening of the former strictly formulated unity of the forces of his adversary. The outermost Western world, under the influence of the discovery of America, of new sciences and new principles, sought to reincarnate itself in a new truth, in a new phase.

“When, at the time of the French revolution, the first attempt at such a reincarnation took place, the Germanic spirit became quite perplexed, and for a time lost its identity and faith in itself. It proved impotent to say anything against the new ideas of the outermost Western world. Luther’s Protestantism had long outlived its time, while the idea of free inquiry had long been accepted by universal science. Germany’s enormous organism more than ever
began to feel that it had no flesh, so to speak, and no form for self-expression. It was then that the pressing urge to consolidate itself, at least outwardly, into a harmonious organism was born in Germany in anticipation of the new future aspects of her eternal struggle against the outermost Western world…”

This “pressing urge” could only be satisfied by the creation of a powerful state, the German Reich. For, wrote Fichte: “Though… the bones of our national unity… may have bleached and died in the storms and rains and burning suns of several centuries, yet the reanimating breath of the spirit world has not ceased to inspire. It will yet raise the dead bones of our national body and join them bone to bone so that they shall stand forth grandly with a new life… No man, no god, nothing in the realm of possibility can help us, but we alone must help ourselves, as long as we deserve it.”

Striking here is the Biblical imagery on the one hand (the vision of the dead bones is from Ezekiel 37), and the explicit affirmation that “no man, no god” can help the German nation in its quest for resurrection. How different this quasi-Christian, but in fact pagan call was from the much more Christian call to arms issued by the Russian Church and State to its people only five years later! This shows that the revival of German nationalism owed less to the resurrection of Christian faith than to the resurrection of paganism, and of the myths of the pagan German gods; whose final burial would come over a century later, in the ruins of Nazi Berlin...

“Fichte,” writes Paul Johnson, “was much impressed by Niccolò Machiavelli and saw life as a continuing struggle for supremacy among the nations. The nation-state most likely to survive and profit from this struggle was the one which extended its influence over the lives of its people most widely. And such a nation-state – Germany was the obvious example – would naturally be expansive. ‘Every nation wants to disseminate as widely as possible the good points which are peculiar to it. And, in so far as it can, it wants to assimilate the entire human race to itself in accordance with an urge

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198 F.M. Dostoyevsky, The Diary of a Writer, May-June, 1877, chapter III, 1; Haslemere: Ianmead, 1984, pp. 727, 728-730. “It may perhaps be accidental,” writes Sir Karl Popper, “but it is in any case remarkable, that there is still a cultural frontier between Western Europe and the regions of Central Europe which coincide very nearly with those regions that did not enjoy the blessings of Augustus’ Roman Empire, and that did not enjoy the blessings of the Roman peace, i.e. of the Roman civilization. The same ‘barbarian’ regions are particularly prone to be affected by mysticism, even though they did not invent mysticism. Bernard of Clairvaux had his greatest successes in Germany, where later Eckhart and his school flourished, and also Boehme.


199 Fichte, Addresses to the German Nation, 1807; in Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 535.
planted in men by God, an urge on which the community of nations, the friction between them, and their development towards perfection rest.’

“This was a momentous statement because it gave the authority of Germany’s leading academic philosopher to the proposition that the power impulse of the state was both natural and healthy, and it placed the impulse in the context of a moral world view. Fichte’s state was totalitarian and expansive, but it was not revolutionary. Its ‘prince’ ruled by hereditary divine right. But ‘the prince belongs to his nation just as wholly and completely as it belongs to him. Its destiny under divine providence is laid in his hands, and he is responsible for it.’ So the prince’s public acts must be moral, in accordance with law and justice, and his private life must be above reproach. In relations between states, however, ‘there is neither law nor justice, only the law of strength. This relationship places the divine, sovereign fights of fate and of world rule in the prince’s hands, and it raises him above the commandments of personal morals and into a higher moral order whose essence is contained in the words, Salus et decus populi suprema lex esto.’

This was an extreme and menacing statement that justified any degree of ruthlessness by the new, developing nation-state in its pursuit of self-determination and self-preservation. The notion of a ‘higher moral order’, to be determined by the state’s convenience, was to find expression, in the 20th century, in what Lenin called ‘the Revolutionary Conscience’ and Hitler ‘the Higher Law of the Party’. Moreover, there was no doubt what kind of state Fichter had in mind. It was not only totalitarian but German. In his Addresses to the German Nation (1807), he laid down as axiomatic that the state of the future can only be the national state, in particular the German national state, the German Reich.”

The German War of Liberation

It was the German Masons who first changed towards Napoleon. As Tikhomirov writes, “having betrayed their fatherland at first, they raised their voices against the French, by virtue of which the German national movement arose.”

The cause was undoubtedly, as Zamoyski writes, “Napoleon’s crushing defeat of the Prussians at the Battle of Jena in 1806. The humiliation of seeing the prestigious army created by the great Frederick trounced by the French led to painful self-appraisal and underlined the need for regeneration. But it also stung German pride and dispelled the last shreds of sympathy for France—and, with them, the universalist dreams of the previous decade.

201 Tikhomirov, op. cit., p. 455.
“The French became villains, and Napoleon himself was even portrayed as the Antichrist, a focus for the crusading struggle of deliverance that would regenerated Germany. Poets composed patriotic verse and anti-Napoleonic songs…

“An analogous wave of renewal swept through society. In 1808 the Tugenbund or League of Virtue, a society for the propagation of civic virtue, was formed in Königsberg and quickly ramified through Prussia. In 1809 Ludwig Jahn founded the more middle-class Deutsche Bund, based in Berlin. Joseph Görres demanded that all foreign elements be expunged from national life, so that essential German characteristics might flourish, and declared that no power could stand in the way of a nation intent on defending its soul. ‘That to which the Germans aspire will be granted to them, the day when, in their interior, they will have become worthy of it.’ Even the archetypically Enlightenment cosmopolitan Wilhelm von Humboldt was turning into a Prussian patriot. He was reorganizing the state education system at the time, and manage to transform it into a curiously spiritual one in which education and religion of state are inextricably intertwined.

“But while the mood changed, reality had not. Germany was still divided and cowered under French hegemony. To the deep shame of much of her officer corps, Prussia was still an ally of France when Napoleon invaded Russia in 1812. Her forces, which did not take part in the march on Moscow, were to support the French and secure their flank in East Prussia. And it was when the frozen remnants were trudging back into Prussia and Poland that this support would have been most welcome. But it was precisely then that the Prussian military judged it safe to show their colours. General von Yorck, in command of 14,000 men in East Prussia, found himself in a pivotal position. With his support, Marshal Macdonald would be able to hold the line of the River Niemen and keep the Russians out of Poland; without it, he had no option but full retreat. The Prussian general had been in touch with the Russians for some time, through the intermediary of a young German officer in Russian service by the name of Carl von Clausewitz. On Christmas Day 1812 Yorck met the commander of the Russian advance guard and, by a convention he signed with them at Tauroggen, repudiated Prussia’s alliance with France. It was an act of mutiny, the first in a series of acts by the German army to ‘save’ the fatherland against the orders of its political leaders. It was also the signal for all the nationalists to come out into the open.

“The irascible Ernst Moritz Arndt was well to the fore. ‘Oh men of Germany!’ he exhorted, ‘feel again your God, hear and fear the eternal, and you heard and fear also your Volk; you feel again in God the honour and dignity of your fathers, their glorious history rejuvenates itself again in you, their firm and gallant virtue reblossoms in you, the whole German Fatherland stands again before you in the august halo of past centuries… One faith, one love, one courage, and one enthusiasm must gather again the whole German
Volk in brotherly community... Be Germans, be one, will to be one by love and loyalty, and no devil will vanquish you.'

“The king of Prussia did not feel quite brave enough to ‘be German’ yet. He ordered the arrest of Yorck, and then moved to Breslau, where he was out of reach of the French. In March 1813, when he saw that it was safe for him to jump on the anti-Napoleon bandwagon, Frederick William announced the formation of citizens’ volunteer forces, the Landwehr and the Landsturm. On 17 March he issued a proclamation to the effect that his soldiers would ‘fight for our independence and the honour of the Volk,’ and summoned every son of the fatherland to participate. ‘My cause is the cause of my Volk,’ he concluded, less than convincingly. But nobody was looking too closely at anyone’s motives in the general excitement. The cause of the German fatherland justified everything. ‘Strike them dead!’ Heinrich von Kleist had urged the soldiers setting off to war with the French. ‘At the last judgement you will not be asked for your reasons!’

“The campaign of 1813, when the patched-up Napoleonic forces attempted to stand up to the combined armies of Russia, Prussia, Sweden and Austria, and finally succumbed at Leipzig, should, according to Chateaubriand, go down in history as ‘the campaign of young Germany, of the poets’. That was certainly the perception. The by no means young Fichte finished his lecture on the subject of duty and announced to his students at Berlin that the course was suspended until they gained liberty or death. He marched out of the hall amid wild cheers, and led the students off to put their names down for the army...

“The War of Liberation, Freiheitskrieg, was, above all, a war of purification and self-discovery. It did not stop with the expulsion of French forces from Germany in 1813. If anything, it was in the course of 1814, when Napoleon’s forces were fighting for survival on French soil, that the War of Liberation really got going in Germany...

“But the War of Liberation was being waged no less vehemently at the cultural level. The poets were not squeamish when it came to singing of the national crusade, while the painters rallied to the cause in a memorable way. Caspar David Friedrich, who had already done so much to represent the symbolic German landscape as an object of worship through a series of paintings in which people are depicted contemplating its wonder like so many saints adoring the nativity in a medieval triptych, now turned to glorifying the nation. He painted several representations of an imaginary tomb of Hermann, evocatively set among craggy boulders and fir trees. And he also produced various set-pieces representing the war. Other painters depicted groups of patriotic German volunteers going forth in their hats to free the fatherland. Joseph Görres led a movement demanding the completion of Cologne Cathedral as a sign of German regeneration. ‘Long shall Germany
live in shame and humiliation, a prey to inner conflict and alien arrogance, until her people return to the ideals from which they were seduced by selfish ambition, and until true religion and loyalty, unity of purpose and self-denial shall again render them capable of erecting such a building as this,’ he wrote."202

And yet the majority of the German people no longer believed either in the Catholicism that had erected Cologne cathedral, or in the Protestantism that had first raised the word of protest against the Franco-Roman world. (Or if the peasantry believed, the intellectuals did not.) In fact, the attempt to resurrect the past was actually a sign that the past was definitely dead. Thus German nationalism was a new, degenerate religion taking up the void in the European soul that was left by the death of Christianity.

From now on, European man would only rarely be induced to die for God or Church or Sovereign. But he could be induced to die for his country. For the nation was now seen to incarnate the highest value, whether that value was defined as simply racial superiority (Germany), or cultural eminence (France), or the rule of law in freedom (England). “The nation,” writes Mosse, “was the intermediary between the individual and a personal scheme of values and ethics; outside the nation no life or creativity was possible.”203

However, Mosse argues, “it must never be forgotten that the vision of a better life was a part of all nationalisms. In none of the ideologies discussed was the worship of the nation something in and of itself; it was always the necessary way to a better life, a new freedom...

“All believed that once they had been united by a true national spirit greater happiness for everybody would be the result.”204

_The Ideology of Counter-Revolution_

“European politics in the nineteenth century,” writes Golo Mann, “fed on the French Revolution. No idea, no dream, no fear, no conflict appeared which had not been worked through in that fateful decade: democracy and socialism, reaction, dictatorship, nationalism, imperialism, pacifism.” 205 However, of these ideas the one that dominated immediately after the defeat

   Görres put it as follows: “Let the nation learn to trace itself to its source, delve into its roots: it will find in its innermost being a fathomless well-spring which rises from subterranean treasure; many minds have already been enriched by drawing on the hoard of the Niebelungen; and still it lies there inexhaustible, in the depths of its lair.” (in Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 535)
204 Mosse, op. cit., p. 83.
205 Mann, op. cit., p. 35.
of Napoleon was reaction, not the relatively mild, liberal form of reaction we have discussed in the previous section, but reaction as the enemy of all liberalism.

Napoleon’s escape from Elba in 1814, and the closeness of the struggle that finally succeeded in overthrowing him in 1815, meant that, as Davies writes, the Congress of Vienna that reconvened after Waterloo “met in chastened mood. The representatives of the victorious powers could not be accused, as in the previous year, of ‘dancing instead of making progress’. They were ready to risk nothing. They were determined, above all, to restore the rights of monarchy – the sacred institution considered most threatened by the Revolution. In so doing - with the partial exception of Tsar Alexander, as we shall see in the next chapter - they paid little attention to the claims either of democracy or of nationality…

“The spirit of the settlement, therefore, was more than conservative: it actually put the clock back. It was designed to prevent change in a world where the forces of change had only been contained by a whisker. The Duke of Wellington’s famous comment on Waterloo was: ‘a damned nice thing, the nearest run thing you ever saw in your life’. Such was the feeling all over Europe. The issue between change and no change was so close that the victors felt terrified of the least concession. Even limited, gradual reform was viewed with suspicion. ‘Beginning reform,’ wrote the Duke in 1830, ‘is beginning revolution.’ What is more, France, the eternal source of revolutionary disturbances, had not been tamed. Paris was to erupt repeatedly – in 1830, 1848, 1851, 1870. ‘When Paris sneezes,’ commented the Austrian Chancellor, Metternich, ‘Europe catches cold.’ French-style democracy was a menace threatening monarchy, Church, and property – the pillars of everything he stood for. It was, he said, ‘the disease which must be cured, the volcano which must be extinguished, the gangrene which must be burned out with a hot iron, the hydra with jaws open to swallow up the social order’.

“In its extreme form, as embodied by Metternich, the reactionary spirit of 1815 was opposed to any sort of change which did not obtain prior approval. It found expression in the first instance in the Quadruple Alliance of Russia, Prussia, Austria, and Britain, who agreed to organize future congresses whenever need arose, and then in a wider ‘Holy Alliance’ organized by the Tsar. The former produced the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle (1818), which readmitted France to the concert of respectable nations. The latter produced the proposal that the powers should guarantee existing frontiers and governments in perpetuity.”

France was readmitted to the concert of nations because the victorious powers judged that it was an ideology, Jacobinism, rather than a nation, France, that was the real enemy, while former revolutionaries who no longer

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practised revolution could be forgiven (the reverse judgement was made in
1919). For, as Eric Hobsbawn writes, “it was now known that revolution in a
single country could be a European phenomenon; that its doctrines could
spread across the frontiers and, what was worse, its crusading armies could
blow away the political systems of a continent. It was now known that social
revolution was possible; that nations existed as something independent of
states, peoples as something independent of their rulers, and even that the
poor existed as something independent of the ruling classes. ‘The French
Revolution,’ De Bonald had observed in 1796, ‘is a unique event in history.’
The phrase is misleading: it was a universal event. No country was immune
from it. The French soldiers who campaigned from Andalusia to Moscow,
from the Baltic to Syria – over a vaster area than any body of conquerors since
the Mongols, and certainly a vaster area than any previous single military
force in Europe except the Norsemen – pushed the universality of their
revolution home more effectively than anything else could have done. And
the doctrines and institutions they carried with them, even under Napoleon,
from Spain to Illyria, were universal doctrines, as the governments knew, and
as the peoples themselves were soon to know. A Greek bandit and patriot
expressed their feelings completely: ‘According to my judgement,’ said
Koloktrones, ‘the French Revolution and the doings of Napoleon opened the
eyes of the world. The nations knew nothing before, and the people thought
that kings were gods upon the earth and that they were bound to say that
whatever they did was well done. Through this present change it is more
difficult to rule the people.’”

The French revolution had another long-term effect: it justified all kinds of
crime in the name of politics. As Paul Johnson writes: “Perhaps the most
significant characteristic of the dawning modern world, and in this respect it
was a true child of Rousseau, was the tendency to relate everything to politics.
In Latin America, every would-be plunderer or ambitious bandit now called
himself a ‘liberator’; murderers killed for freedom, thieves stole for the people.
In Spain, during the 1820s, believers and nonbelievers, those who liked kings
and those who hated them, began to regard their faith, or lack of it, as a
justification for forming private armies which defied the lawful authorities.
Organized crime now took a party label and put forward a program and
thereby became better organized and a more formidable threat to society.

“Thus violence acquired moral standing and the public was terrorized for
its own good. Many years before, Samuel Johnson, in upholding the rights of
authority, had qualified his defense by pointing to a corresponding and
inherent human right to resist oppression: ‘Why all this childish jealousy of
the power of the Crown?… In no government can power be abused long.
Mankind will not bear it. If a sovereign oppresses his people to a great degree,

207 Hence Tom Paine’s declaration: “My country is the world, and my religion is to do good”
(The Age of Reason (1793)).
they will rise and cut off his head.’ The French Revolution had lowered the threshold of abuse at which men rose. It proved that cutting off royal heads was easier than had previously been thought and did not bring down the heavens. That undoubted fact was now a permanent temptation to every enemy of society who wished to acquire moral respectability for his crimes. It operated, in particular, throughout the Mediterranean area, where every government oppressed its subjects to some degree and there were usually no lawful forms of redress. In the past, men with a grievance had suffered in silence or taken to the hills and robbed. Now the hitherto resigned joined secret societies, and the bandits called themselves politicians.”

These secret societies continued the revolution on an international scale; they were the direct descendants of the Jacobins and Illuminati. Thus Johnson again: “Like the Comintern in the 1930s, they were a European phenomenon and, to some extent, coordinated and centrally directed. But unlike the Comintern, they did not have an ultimate national base, where they could be trained and from which money and arms could flow.

“The most important figure, or so it was supposed, was Filipo Michele Buonarrotti (1761-1837), a Pisan by birth, and proud of his descent from Michelangelo. Becoming a naturalized French citizen, he took part in the French Revolution and was imprisoned and deported for his part in the conspiracy organized by François-Emile Babeuf, the proto-communist who tried to overthrow the Directory. He came out of prison in 1809 and immediately resumed underground work in northern Italy with Republican elements in the French occupation and local malcontents and ‘patriots’. He founded a network called the Adelphi, which migrated to Geneva when the Austrians took over Lombardy and changed its name to the Sublime Perfect Masters.

“The Sublime Perfect Masters combined illuminism, freemasonry and radical politics with a good deal of pretentious symbolism. Its structure was hierarchical, only the most senior levels knowing its inner secrets, and Buonarrotti came closer to the isolated cell system of modern terrorist groups, which makes them so difficult to destroy, even if penetrated. The various police forces never discovered much about his apparatus, which is the reason we know so little about it. In theory it was formidable, since it had links with a Directive Committee in Paris which coordinated Orleanist, Jacobin, Bonapartist, and Republican subversion, with various German groups, such as the Tugendbund and the Unbedingren; with Spanish Masons and communeros; and even with a Russian group called the Union of Salvation, the whole supposedly existing under a mysterious body, also in Geneva, called the Grand Firmament. In Italy, the Sublime Perfect Masters had links with the Carbonari, which operated in the center and the south. Contact was maintained by special handshakes, secret codes, invisible ink and other

209 Johnson, op. cit., p. 662.
devices... But it is a notable fact that Buonarrotti, in particular, and the networks, in general, never once succeeded in organizing a successful conspiracy or one which can fairly be said to have got off the ground. Moreover when uprisings did take place and governments were overthrown, as in Spain in 1820, Buonarrotti – like Marx, and indeed Lenin, later – was taken completely by surprise.”

The major powers had many problems in their struggle against the revolution. One was that it required large resources and in particular a much larger police (and secret police) apparatus than any state had hitherto possessed. Secondly, the powers were not united amongst themselves. France was still distrusted; Austria did not want Russian Cossacks settling problems on her territory; Britain, which had played such an important role in defeating Napoleon, was nevertheless not averse to helping this or that revolutionary movement (particularly in the Iberian Peninsula and South America) if this suited her balance-of-power politics, and was opposed to “interventionism on ideological grounds, as practiced by the Holy Alliance, because its object was to impose or sustain a particular type of government, which ran directly counter to the Zeitgeist”.

The Zeitgeist was anti-monarchist; and even the monarchs felt they could not go completely against it. They made their first compromise with it in the conditions they imposed on France in 1818. For, as Hobsbawm writes, while “the Bourbons were restored,... it was understood that they had to make concessions to the dangerous spirit of their subjects. The major changes of the Revolution were accepted, and that inflammatory device, a constitution, was granted to them – though of course in an extremely moderate form – under the guise of a Charter ‘freely conceded’ by the returned absolute monarch, Louis XVIII.” Another compromise was the granting of senior posts to former revolutionaries, “reconciling”, if that were possible, the reactionary King Louis XVIII with some of the men who had caused his brother Louis XVI’s death.

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210 Johnson, op. cit., pp. 665-666. The highest members of the Carbonari swore the following oath: “Property boundaries shall be erased, all possessions shall be reduced to communal wealth, and the one and only patria, most gentle of mothers, shall furnish food, education and work to the whole body of her beloved and free children. This is the redemption invoked by the wise. This is the true recreation of Jerusalem. This is the manifest and inevitable decisions of the Supreme Being” (Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 547). (V.M.)

211 In Spain, for example, the left-wing and Masonic Isabelinos “were supported by Palmerston and by the British Legion of volunteers from Britain... They were also supported by the government of Louis Philippe [of France]. Metternich and Tsar Nicholas were not in a position to help the Carlists” (Jasper Ridley, The Freemasons, London: Constable, 1999, p. 200).

212 Johnson, op. cit., p. 691.

213 Hobsbawm, op. cit., p. 129.

214 “Suddenly the door opened; and silently there entered vice leaning on the arm of crime, M. de Talleyrand supported by Fouché... the trusty regicide, kneeling, put the hand which had made Louis XVI’s head roll in the hands of the martyred king’s brother; the apostate bishop
And yet making concessions to the Zeitgeist was only a short-term solution. For appeasement can never tame a really determined enemy, but rather whets his appetite for more. So it was no use saying, as Friedrich von Gentz, Metternich’s secretary, said to the Laibach Congress of the Holy Alliance, 1821: “Revolution must be fought with flesh and blood. Moral weapons are manifestly powerless.” The truth was precisely the opposite: it was moral weapons that had to be found.

What was needed was another, more powerful spirit to oppose the corrupt spirit of the times, a positive doctrine of religious and political authority that was deeper and truer than the revolutionary doctrine. But none of the great powers was able to provide a positive teaching to reinforce and justify their alternately conciliatory and repressive measures, for the simple reason that none of them – with the exception of Russia – was Orthodox, and very few, even in Russia, were capable of communicating that positive message to those infected with the revolutionary contagion. What the great powers did have was a negative teaching, a teaching on the evil of the revolution that had some truth in it, but, precisely because it was only negative, little effectiveness.

The most fervently anti-revolutionary power, as was to be expected, was the Vatican, which was trying to make up for its lapse in the time of Napoleon. Thus in his encyclical Mirari vos (1832), Pope Gregory XVI declared that antimonarchism was a crime against the faith, and that liberty of conscience flowed from “the most fetid fount of indifferentism”. The Vatican was supported by such writers as Chateaubriand, who “contributed Le Génie du Christianisme, an immensely influential book which vindicated Christianity and presented it in a way that appealed to modern intellectuals. His vision of a spiritually refreshed Catholicism emerging from the blood and suffering of the revolution with a chivalric monarchism rising above the power struggles of the recent past, inspired most of the French Romantics. But submission to the will of God was no longer appealing to generations that had become used to the concept of the centrality of Man in the universe…”

stood surety for the oath” (Viscount de Chateaubriand, Mémoires d’Outremer, in Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 543).

216 Gentz knew this as well as anyone. For he understood that the cause of the revolution lay in the changing religious beliefs of men, from the true religion to Protestantism to revolutionary secularism, even if he misidentified the true religion with Catholicism: “Protestantism is the first, the true, the only source of all the vast evils under which we groan today. Had it merely confined itself to reasoning, we might have been able and obliged to tolerate it, for a tendency to argue is rooted in human nature. However, once governments agreed to accept Protestantism as a permitted form of religion, an expression of Christianity, a right of man; once they… granted it a place in the State beside, or even on the ruins of, the only true church, the religious, moral and political order of the world was immediately dissolved... The entire French Revolution, and the even worse revolution which is about to break over Germany, have sprung from this same source.” (in Hobsbawm, op. cit., p. 282).
217 Zamoyski, op. cit., p. 179.
But the most eloquent defenders of the old order were two French aristocrats, Count Joseph de Maistre, a former envoy of Sardinia to Russia, and Viscount Louis de Bonald. Thus De Maistre wrote: “All grandeur, all power, all subordination rests on the executioner: he is the horror and bond of human association. Remove this incomprehensible agent from the world, and at that moment order gives way to chaos, thrones topple, and society disappears. God, Who is the author of sovereignty, is the author also of punishment.”218 Between God, the ultimate executioner, and kings, there is the power of the pope – the highest on earth. “Without the pope Christianity is no longer, and as an inevitable consequence, the social order is smitten in the heart. The church must be governed like any other organization; otherwise there would no longer be aggregation, cohesion, unity. This government is therefore by nature infallible, that is to say absolute; otherwise the pope would not govern... There is nothing shocking about the idea of all Christian rulers united by religious brotherhood in a kind of universal republic under the measured supremacy of the supreme spiritual power.”219

Here is the idea of medieval Christendom reborn! And De Maistre’s exaltation of the papacy and opposition to any kind of power independent of it was supported by De Bonald, who wrote: “Today... who does not see the danger of granting anyone and everyone... the terrible liberty to indoctrinate, in religion and in politics, a public which everywhere is made up largely of mistaken, ignorant, and violent men?... There is no true liberty of the press... except under the guarantee of censorship to prevent licence of thought. There is no civil liberty without laws to prevent actions that create disorder.”220

Berlin writes on these deeply conservative authors: “What the entire Enlightenment has in common is denial of the central Christian doctrine of original sin, believing instead that man is born either innocent and good, or morally neutral and malleable by education or environment, or, at worst, deeply defective but capable of radical and indefinite improvement by rational education in favourable circumstances, or by a revolutionary reorganisation of society as demanded, for example, by Rousseau. It is this denial of original sin that the Church condemned most severely in Rousseau’s Émile, despite its attack on materialism, utilitarianism and atheism. It is the powerful reaffirmation of this Pauline and Augustinian doctrine that is the sharpest single weapon in the root-and-branch attack on the entire Enlightenment by the French counter-revolutionary writers Maistre, Bonald and Chateaubriand, at the turn of the century.”221

218 De Maistre, The St. Petersburg Dialogues; in Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 543.
219 De Maistre, On the Pope, 1819.
And yet de Maistre was wrong in thinking that the Catholic idea, the idea that the evil passions can be tamed by blind obedience to an unquestioned, absolute authority, could stop the revolution. The Catholic idea was now dead – Napoleon killed it when he took the crown from the Pope and crowned himself. Only the Orthodox idea, the idea brought to Paris by the Russian Tsar, remained…

**Liberty and Liberalism**

At first sight the post-Napoleonic era appears to be an era of political reaction punctuated by occasional revolutionary eruptions, as in 1830 and 1848 – which, however, did not succeed in overthrowing the major monarchical powers. This general picture is misleading. Although the paroxysm of the first French revolution was not repeated on the same scale before 1871, the revolution in ideas was continuing apace. If Jacobinism remained confined to the underground, liberalism – that English philosophy which dominated the first phase of the French revolution – penetrated wider and deeper in all states. Also increasingly influential was that other product of the revolution – nationalism, which became especially important in the later nineteenth century.

The Bourbon restoration in 1815 did not restore full absolutism – the idea of liberty had bitten too deep for that. While Louis XVIII’s powers were declared to rest on a divine mandate, a bicameral legislature on the English model was established. And in 1821 the rights of citizens to freedom of religion and thought were reaffirmed. Louis’s successor, Charles X attempted to turn the clock back, and his coronation ceremony in Rheims in 1825 had all the ceremonials of the ancien régime, including the medieval practice of touching for scrofula. But he was not popular, and in 1830 he was overthrown. However, if the ancient régime was discredited, so were the Jacobin and Napoleonic tyrannies that followed it. So a political theory had to be devised that would guard against both the one and the other, both the old and the modern forms of tyranny. Such a theory was liberalism.

“The core beliefs of mid-nineteenth century liberalism,” writes John Darwin, “sprang from the contemplation of this fearful period of European history. Escape from the cycle of war and revolution required political institutions that would defend the state equally against popular revolt and parvenu despotism. Rulers must be more ‘legitimate’. They needed the loyalty of a wider range of communities and interests. Their servants and officials must be kept in check, ideally by a representative body. That raised the question of who should represent whom. Most of all it raised the question of how far a government should regulate the social and economic life of its

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citizens. Liberalism’s answer to this was the key to its position, the fundamental premise of its political theory.

“It was brilliantly sketched by the Swiss-born Frenchman Benjamin Constant, whose political writings were a fierce rejection of revolutionary violence and Napoleonic tyranny. Constant argued that ordinary people were bound to resist interference in their private and social lives and that arbitrary acts by the state destroyed the mutual trust between individuals on which all social and commercial relations depended. He distinguished between the proper (and narrow) sphere of authority and the wider realm (what would now be called ‘civil society’) in which the self-regulation of private interests should prevail. Modern societies, he suggested, were too complex to be ruled politically after the fashion of an ancient city state – the model to which many earlier writers (including Rousseau) had appealed. Diversity, pluralism and localism were the secret of stability and freedom. Secondly, the legislators, to whom the executive should answer, should be drawn from those least likely to favour the extension of arbitrary power or to be seduced by a demagogue. Politics should be the preserve of the propertied, who would exert a wholesome (and educated) influence on the ‘labouring poor’. The propertied were the true guardians of the public interest. Thirdly, it was necessary for property rights and other civil freedoms to be protected by well-established rules – an idea that implied the codification of the law and its machinery.

“Constant advanced a further crucial justification for his liberal system: it alone was compatible with social progress. All forms of arbitrary government tended sooner or later to impose uniformity. Yet without freedom of thought all societies were condemned to stagnate, since the expression and exchange of ideas was the means of advance in every sphere. Indeed, without the free circulation of ideas, governments themselves would scarcely know what course to pursue. Neither Constant nor the liberal thinkers who followed him intended to promote an anarchy of ideas. Their real concern was with the intellectual freedom of the educated, enlightened and propertied. For (or so they assumed) it was these who were the real political nation, the defenders of freedom, the engineers of improvement. Under their tutelage, civil society would be freed, but also dynamic.

“Of course, a sea of arguments swirled around these beliefs. Could a hereditary monarch be trusted as head of state, or was a republic the only safe form of representative government? Could women be part of the political nation, or was their ‘physical faculty’ a decisive bar? Did commercial and industrial wealth confer political virtue on its possessors, or did this spring only from property in land? Was religion the enemy of freedom of thought or the vital prop of social morality? Should the laws embody the ‘custom of the country’ (and become the subject of historical inquiry) or (as the ‘utilitarian’ followers of Jeremy Bentham believed) emancipate society from the ‘dead hand’ of the past? Then there was the question that vexed liberalism more
perhaps than any other: was the achievement of ‘nationality’ – a shared ethnic, linguistic and (sometimes) religious identity – the essential precondition for liberal institutions to function properly? And what if the pursuit of nationality conflicted with the central tenets of the liberal programme: freedom of thought and the strict limitation of government power? Was nationalism a forward-looking ideology or (except in a few and ‘progressive’ places) a creed of the backward and benighted?”

**History and Historicism**

We shall return to the potential conflict between liberalism and nationalism later. But more needs to be said about the link between liberalism and the concept of historical progress.

Great sea-changes in human thought are often accompanied by changes in the honour accorded to particular human faculties. The Renaissance, for example, exalted reason; hence the heretical mind-set that exaggerates the power of reason that we know as rationalism. The Romantic era, on the other hand, tended to downgrade reason in favour of the irrational faculties of will, imagination and emotion, which in artistic geniuses were considered capable of attaining higher truths than those attained by philosophers and scientists. Another human faculty that came into prominence during the Romantic era was memory, both collective and individual. The nineteenth century marks the heyday of historiography and historicism and the belief that the truth about a man, a nation or an epoch is to be discovered above all in his or its history: “In my beginning is my end”.

George Mosse writes: “A revival of history underlay the new concept of liberty in the post-Napoleonic generation. This revival had been foreshadowed by the Italian historian, Giambattista Vico, who in his *Scienza Nuova*, the New Science (1725), had confronted the rationalism of his age with a philosophy of history. Vico felt that history also worked according to natural laws, laws which determined its movement which Vico took to be cyclical. Civilizations arose and decayed, descending from the age of the gods to that of the heroic and on to the human age and its subsequent decay. Vico’s cyclical theory of history had little impact on his contemporaries. Much later, at the end of the nineteenth century, Benedetto Croce refurbished Vico’s status as a historian, and still later Oswald Spengler espoused, in part, his theories. Nevertheless, to this post-Napoleonic generation, Vico displayed a philosophy of history governed by natural laws which moved through the engine of the human spirit. Central to this spirit was a concept of liberty.

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224 Pascal’s famous dictum: “The heart has its reasons that reason knows nothing of” expressed the essence of the Romantic faith over a century before Romanticism.
“What emerged, then, from Vico’s thought was a concept of liberty which worked as a natural law in history and through history. ‘Everything is history,’ the Neapolitan maintained, a remark Croce was fond of repeating later on. While accepting the primacy of the spirit in the human struggle for liberty, the adherents of the religion of liberty abandoned the cyclical rhythm of history in favor of a concept of progress based, as it was, on the optimistic belief of the Enlightenment in the triumph of reason. Now, however, this concept of progress was combined with an awareness of the importance of historical development. Human progress developed through the laws of history and not through the inevitable triumph of reason alone. A concept of liberty was central to this human progress in the sense of liberty’s progress as a part of man’s progress through history.

“But had liberty not led to the Terror, to Jacobin tyranny and, in the end, to Napoleon’s iron grip on Europe? Would liberty, even if conceived in historical terms, not lead to new excesses? The adherents of this new liberty had to face this problem. They believed in liberty but hated what Robespierre and Napoleon had made out of this human longing. The emphasis on history helped here, for such an emphasis precluded sudden innovations. They went one step further and repudiated the revolutionary concept of democracy, a concept they felt led not to liberty but to absolutism. They blamed Rousseau’s doctrine of the general will and Robespierre’s use of it. Madame de Staël, in her Considerations upon the French Revolution (1816), spoke of the Revolution as a crisis in the history of liberty. She contrasted ancient liberty, sanctified by history, to the modernity of despotism. Jacobin popular democracy was, for her, just another form of tyranny; liberty had to be obtained in another way, a way outlined by the French constitution of 1791 and the constitution of England (for Madame de Staël admired the English constitution as did Montesquieu before her). ‘It is a beautiful sight this constitution, vacillating a little as it sets out from its port, like a vessel launched at sea, yet unfurling its sails, it gives full play to everything great and generous in the human soul.’ Through such a constitution liberty unfolds within the historical process. Liberty was all-important to this talented and famous woman; she hated the Terror but she did not lay it at the doorstep of the Revolution. The ancien régime had so corrupted the morals of the people that despotism, not liberty, had to be the outcome of their justified revolt. She held to the oft-repeated view that the champions of reaction, not the revolutionaries, were the ultimate causes of revolutions.”

The short period of reaction that began in France under the absolutist monarchy of Charles X came to an end with the “July Days” revolution of 1830, which introduced a constitutional monarchy headed by another Bourbon, Louis-Philippe, the Duke of Orléans. At almost the same time, in 1832, the British parliament passed the Reform Act, which rationalized and

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extended the franchise, consolidating the role of the middle class in government. With liberalism triumphant in these two countries (as also, of course, in the United States), the concept of liberty acquired a second wind throughout Europe. Everybody could see that reaction was over and liberalism was here to stay. Its progress might be checked temporarily. It might be appeased for a time with concessions that fell short of the full liberal programme. But even emperors, such as Napoleon III, would have to seek a popular mandate and pay at least nominal deference to constitutional ideals.

And yet history was a fickle thing. Could it not be cyclical, as Vico supposed? If it had brought liberalism in on the crest of one wave, could it not bring monarchy and autocracy back on another?... Moreover, history to a French liberal such as Madame de Staël or Benjamin Constant was something quite different from what it meant to the new wave of romantic philosophers that were beginning to make their reputations across the Rhine – Hegel, in particular. For these philosophers, history was not the work of free, enlightened individuals, but a determined, impersonal process; not the history of liberty, but the incarnation of a force, or fate, that pays no attention to individual hopes and fears - the individual’s freedom of choice is an illusion based on ignorance. Thus the Christian concept of Divine Providence, which provides for human freedom within God’s overall purpose, was replaced by a pseudo-theological, determinist concept called “History”.

There is a paradox here, because a central pillar – perhaps the central pillar - of German romantic philosophy was the cult of the personality, of freedom and creativity. And yet this same philosophy in its philosophy of history, known as historicism, denies personal freedom. As Fr. Georges Florovsky writes: “The romantic cult of personality, unrepeatable, autonomous and self-sufficient, which itself ascribes its own laws, the Fichtean pathos of the freedom of moral creativity, Schelling’s aestheticism of genius, Schleiermacher’s religion of feeling and mood – all this is too well known. And this whole series is completed by Hegelianism, in which freedom, the freedom of creative self-definition becomes the main theme of cosmic development. And yet at the same time, in these individualistic systems, personality, strictly speaking... disappears, there is no place in them for the creative personality. We shall not understand the real reason for this unexpected event if we search for it in the ‘pantheism’ of the world-feeling of the time: after all, it was not a matter of dissolving the personality in nature, but of finding the whole of nature within oneself, as in an autonomous ‘microcosm’. The resolution of the enigma must be sought, not in a world-feeling, but in a world-understanding. Logical providentialism – that is how best to express the characteristic trait of this world-understanding; and it is precisely this idea of the sheer logicalness of the world, the rationality of history, so to speak, the rational transparency of the cosmic process that is the profound source of the inner dissonances of idealistic individualism.
“The world, both in its stasis and in its movement, is seen as the realization of a certain reasonable plan. Moreover, - this is very essential, - this plan is recognized as not exceeding the power of human attainment. Every moment of historical development is presented as the incarnation of some ‘idea’ that admits of an abstract formulation. Also in the succession of these ‘epochs’ is revealed a definite logical order, and the whole series is oriented in the direction of a certain accomplished structure in which the fullness of its reasonable content is revealed. That necessity with which the whole system of affirmations in space proceeds in its smallest details as from the axioms of geometry, is also seen in cosmic evolution, in the advancing pace of human history. The role of axioms is played here by the elementary motifs of the Reason that creates the universe, which are accepted as something accessible to human knowledge, so that, proceeding from them, we can as it were divine in advance every bend in the evolutionary flow. The course of history turns out to be unambiguously determined. And thought does not stop at the ‘beginning’ of the world, but also penetrates into the mysteries of that ‘which was when there was nothing’, and demonstrates the fated necessity of the building of the Absolute First-Cause of all itself. It demonstrates that the world could not fail to arise, and moreover could not fail to arise precisely as we know it. Thus the ‘thinking through’ of history, carried to its conclusion, leads to inevitable determinism: every ray of freedom or creativity dies in the vice of iron logic. Nothing ‘new’ in essence can arise; only the inescapable conclusions from pre-eternal postulates come into being – come into being in and of themselves.

“But this is not all: the ‘rationalization’ of history includes one more thought. The aim of history is the realization of a definite construction, the installation into life of a definite form of existence. This ‘construction’ and ‘existence’ turn out to be the single value, and this will and must be so, since logical completion and moral worth have been equated with each other from the very beginning. The forms of natural existence or the forms of social organization are subject to moral justification, and they are the same; only abstractions have moral meaning. The individual can have an ethical content only indirectly, only insofar as it realizes an ‘idea’, and only because it serves as its shell. In other words, unconditional meaning belongs, not to people, but to ideas. ‘The good’ can be a theocracy, a democratic state or der geschlossene Handelsstaat [closed mercantile state], but not creative personalities.

“And finally, if the gradation of values exactly reproduces the dialectical succession of ideas, then, in essence, this gradation does not exist as such; historical development goes from the imperfect to increasing perfection, from the worse to the better, so that it ends with all-perfection, the highest concentration of the Good. But this highest level, which is in a fatalistic way inevitable, is at the same time absolutely impossible without the lower levels. It possesses its own worth only because behind it lies the unworthy. Good is impossible without Evil, and not only because these concepts are co-relative,
but also because ontologically the power of the Good grows only out of the not-good. Evil is not only undeveloped good, incomplete perfection, but also a necessary constituent part of the Good. Evil had to arise inside the Divinity itself in order that God could become the real God, completely Unconditional. The meaning of the world can be realized only through meaninglessness. And it is clear that in this way that unconditional disparity that characterizes the predicates ‘good’ and ‘bad’ for the ‘naïve’ moral consciousness is removed. ‘Sin’ is turned into the inevitable ‘mistake’ of immature age, and moral tragedy becomes a cunningly devised melodrama...

Historicism, as Berlin writes, “has taken several forms. There are those who believe that moral judgements are groundless because we know too much, and there are those who believe that they are unjustified because we know too little. And again, among the former there are those whose determinism is pessimistic, or else confident of a happy ending yet at the same time indignantly or sardonically malevolent. Some look to history for salvation; others for justice; for vengeance; for annihilation. Among the optimistic are the confident rationalists, in particular the heralds and prophets (from Bacon to modern social theorists) of the natural sciences and of material progress, who maintain that vice and suffering are in the end always the product of ignorance. The foundation of their faith is the conviction that it is possible to find out what all men at all times truly want; and also what they can do and what is for ever beyond their power; and, in the light of this, to invent, discover and adapt means to realisable ends. Weakness and misery, folly and vice, moral and intellectual defects are due to maladjustment. To understand the nature of things is (at the very least) to know what you (and others who, if they are human, will be like you) truly want, and how to get it. All that is bad is due to ignorance of ends or of means; to attain to knowledge of both is the purpose and function of the sciences. The sciences will advance; true ends as well as efficient means will be discovered; knowledge will increase, men will know more, and therefore be wiser and better and happier. Condorcet, whose *Esquisse* is the simplest and most moving statement of this belief, has no doubt that happiness, scientific knowledge, virtue and liberty are bound as ‘by an indissoluble chain’, while stupidity, vice, injustice and unhappiness are forms of a disease which the advance of science will eliminate for ever; for we are made what we are by natural causes; and when we understand them, this alone will suffice to bring us into harmony with ‘Nature’.

“Praise and blame are functions of ignorance; we are what we are, like stones and trees, like bees and beavers, and if it is irrational to blame or demand justice from things or animals, climates or soils or wild beasts, when they cause us pain, it is no less irrational to blame the no less determined characters or acts of men. We can regret – and deplore and expose – the depth

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of human cruelty, injustice and stupidity, and comfort ourselves with the
certainty that with the rapid progress of our new empirical knowledge this
will soon pass away like an evil dream; for progress and education, if not
inevitable, are at any rate highly probable. The belief in the possibility (or
probability) of happiness as the product of rational organisation unites all the
benevolent sages of modern times, from the metaphysicians of the Italian
Renaissance to the evolutionary thinkers of the German Aufklärung, from the
radicals and utilitarians of pre-revolutionary France to the science-
worshipping visionaries of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It is the
heart of all the Utopias from Bacon and Campanella to Lessing and Condorcet,
Saint-Simon and Cabet, Fourier and Owen, culminating in the bureaucratic
fantasies of Auguste Comte, with his fanatically tidy world of human beings
joyfully engaged in fulfilling their functions, each within his own rigorously
defined province, in the rationally ordered, totally unalterable hierarchy of
the perfect society. These are the benevolent humanitarian prophets – our
own age has known not a few of them, from Jules Verne and H.G. Wells and
Anatole France and Bernard Shaw to their unnumbered American disciples –
generously disposed towards all mankind, genuinely seeking to rescue every
living being from its burden of ignorance, sorrow, poverty and humiliating
dependence on others.

“The other variant of this attitude is a good deal less amiable in tone and in
feeling. When Hegel, and after him Marx, describe historical processes, they
too assume that human beings and their societies are part and parcel of a
wider nature, which Hegel regards as spiritual, and Marx as material, in
character. Great social forces are at work of which only the acutest and most
gifted individuals are aware; the ordinary run of men are blind in varying
degrees to that which truly shapes their lives, they worship fetishes and
invent childish mythologies, which they dignify with the title of views or
theories in order to explain the world in which they live. From time to time
the real forces – impersonal and irresistible – which truly govern the world
develop to a point where a new historical advance is ‘due’. Then (as both
Hegel and Marx notoriously believed) the crucial moments of advance are
reached; these take the form of violent, cataclysmic leaps, destructive
revolutions which, often with fire and sword, establish a new order upon the
ruins of the old. Inevitably the foolish, obsolete, purblind, homemade
philosophies of the denizens of the old establishment are knocked over and
swept away together with their possessors.

“For Hegel, and for a good many others, though by no means all, among
the philosophers and poets of the romantic movement, history is a perpetual
struggle of vast spiritual forces embodied now in institutions – Churches,
races, civilisations, empires, national States – now in individuals of more than
human stature – ‘world-historical figures’ – of bold and ruthless genius,
towering over, and contemptuous of, their puny contemporaries. For Marx,
the struggle is a fight between socially conditioned, organised groups –
classes shaped by the struggle for subsistence and survival and consequently for the control of power. There is a sardonic note (inaudible only to their most benevolent and single-hearted followers) in the words of both these thinkers as they contemplate the discomfiture and destruction of the philistines, the ordinary men and women caught in one of the decisive moments of history. Both Hegel and Marx conjure up an image of peaceful and foolish human beings, largely unaware of the part they play in history, building their homes, with touching hope and simplicity, upon the green slopes of what seems to them a peaceful mountainside, trusting in the permanence of their particular way of life, their own economic, social and political order, treating their own values as if they were eternal standards, living, working, fighting without any awareness of the cosmic processes of which their lives are but a passing stage. But the mountain is no ordinary mountain; it is a volcano; and when (as the philosopher always knew that it would) the inevitable eruption comes, their homes and their elaborately tended institutions and their ideals and their ways of life and values will be blown out of existence in the cataclysm which marks the leap from the ‘lower’ to a ‘higher’ stage. When this point is reached, the two great prophets of destruction are in their element; they enter into their inheritance; they survey the conflagration with a defiant, almost Byronic, irony and disdain. To be wise is to understand the direction in which the world is inexorably moving, to identify oneself with the rising power which ushers in the new world. Marx – and it is part of his attraction to those of a similar emotional cast – identifies himself exultantly, in his way no less passionately than Nietzsche or Bakunin, with the great force which in its very destructiveness is creative, and is greeted with bewilderment and horror only by those whose values are hopelessly subjective, who listen to their consciences, their feelings, or to what their nurses or teachers tell them, without realising the glories of life in a world which moves from explosion to explosion to fulfil the great cosmic design. When history takes her revenge – and every enraged prophet in the nineteenth century looks to her to avenge him against those he hates most – the mean, pathetic, ludicrous stifling human anthills will be justly pulverised; justly, because what is just and unjust, good and bad, is determined by the goal towards which all creation is tending. Whatever is on the side of victorious reason is just and wise; whatever is on the other side, on the side of the world that is doomed to destruction by the working of the forces of reason, is rightly called foolish, ignorant, subjective, arbitrary, blind; and, if it goes so far as to try to resist the forces that are destined to supplant it, then it – that is to say, the fools and knaves and mediocrities who constitute it – is rightly called retrograde, wicked, obscurantist, perversely hostile to the deepest interests of mankind.

“Different though the tone of these forms of determinism may be – whether scientific, humanitarian and optimistic or furious, apocalyptic and exultant – they agree in this: that the world has a direction and is governed by laws, and that the direction and the laws can in some degree be discovered by employing the proper techniques of investigation; and moreover that the
working of these laws can only be grasped by those who realise that the lives, characters and acts of individuals, both mental and physical, are governed by the large ‘wholes’ to which they belong, and that it is the independent evolution of these ‘wholes’ that constitutes the so-called ‘forces’ in terms of whose direction truly ‘scientific’ (or ‘philosophic’) history must be formulated. To find the explanation of why given individuals, or groups of them, act or think or feel in one way rather than another, one must first seek to understand the structure, the state of development and the direction of such ‘wholes’, for example, the social, economic, political, religious institutions to which such individuals belong; once that is known, the behaviour of the individuals (or the most characteristic among them) should become almost logically deducible, and does not constitute a separate problem. Ideas about the identity of these large entities or forces, and their functions, differ from theorist to theorist. Race, colour, Church, nation, class; climate, irrigation, technology, geopolitical situation; civilisation, social structure, the Human Spirit, the Collective Unconscious, to take some of these concepts at random, have all played their parts in theologico-historical systems as the protagonists upon the stage of history. They are represented as the real forces of which individuals are ingredients, at once constitutive, and the most articulate expressions, of this or that phase of them. Those who are more clearly and deeply aware than others of the part which they play, whether willingly or not, to that degree play it more boldly and effectively; these are the natural leaders. Others, led by their own petty personal concerns into ignoring or forgetting that they are parts of a continuous or convulsive pattern of change, are deluded into assuming that (or, at any rate, into acting as if) they and their fellows are stabilised at some fixed level for ever.

“What the variants of either of these attitudes entail, like all forms of genuine determinism, is the elimination of the notion of individual responsibility. It is, after all, natural enough for men, whether for practical reasons or because they are given to reflection, to ask who or what is responsible for this or that state of affairs which they view with satisfaction or anxiety, enthusiasm or horror. If the history of the world is due to the operation of identifiable forces other than, and little affected by, free human wills and free choices (whether these occur or not), then the proper explanation of what happens must be given in terms of the evolution of such forces. And there is then a tendency to say that not individuals, but these larger entities, are ultimately ‘responsible’. I live at a particular moment of time in the spiritual and social and economic circumstances into which I have been cast: how then can I help choosing and acting as I do? The values in terms of which I conduct my life are the values of my class, or race, or Church, or civilisation, or are part and parcel of my ‘station’ – my position in the ‘social structure’. Nobody denies that it would be stupid as well as cruel to blame me for not being taller than I am, or to regard the colour of my hair or the qualities of my intellect or heart as being due principally to my own free choice; these attributes are as they are through no decision of mine. If I
extend this category without limit, then whatever it is, is necessary and inevitable. This unlimited extension of necessity, on any of the view described above, becomes intrinsic to the explanation of everything. To blame and praise, consider possible alternative courses of action, accuse or defend historical figures for acting as they do or did, becomes an absurd activity. Admiration and contempt for this or that individual may indeed continue, but it becomes akin to aesthetic judgement. We can eulogise or deplore, feel love or hatred, satisfaction of shame, but we can neither blame nor justify. Alexander, Caesar, Attila, Mohammed, Cromwell, Hitler are like floods and earthquakes, sunsets, oceans, mountains; we may admire or fear them, welcome or curse them, but to denounce or extol their acts is (ultimately) as sensible as addressing sermons to a tree (as Frederick the Great pointed out with his customary pungency in the course of his attack on Holbach’s *System of Nature*)…”

*The Polish Question*

Encouraged by the Tsar’s non-intervention in the French and Belgian revolutions, the Poles rose against Tsarist authority in November, 1830. The rebellion was crushed. Europe was saved again – and was again uncomprehending and ungrateful.

Although it failed, the Polish rebellion brought to birth perhaps the most idiosyncratic, powerful and long-lasting variety of the cult of the nation. The 55,000 Polish troops and 6,000 civilians who made a great exodus to the West and Paris kept this cult alive, not in Polish hearts only, but throughout Europe. Only the Russians were not seduced by its masochistic charm.

Protopriest Lev Lebedev writes: “The revolutions of 1830 in France and Belgium gave an impulse to the Masonic movement in Poland. It had two basic tendencies – an extreme republican one (headed by the historian Lelevel) and a more moderate aristocratic one (headed by A. Chartoysky). At the end of 1830 there began a rebellion in Warsaw. Great Prince Constantine Pavlovich with a detachment of Russian soldiers was forced to abandon Poland. In 1831 there came there the armies of General Dibich, which had no significant success, in particular by reason of a very strong outbreak of cholera, from which both Dibich and Great Prince Constantine died. Meanwhile the revolutionaries in Warsaw created first a ‘Provisional government’ with a ‘dictator’ at its head, and then convened the Sejm. The rebels demanded first the complete independence of Poland with the addition to it of Lithuania and western Rus’, and then declared the ‘deposition’ of the Romanov dynasty from the throne of the Kingdom of Poland. Count Paskevich of Erevan was sent to Poland. He took Warsaw by storm and completely destroyed the Masonic revolutionary armies, forcing their

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remnants abroad [where they played a significant role in the revolutionary movement in Western Europe]. Poland was divided into provinces and completely included into the composition of the Russian Empire. The language of business was declared to be Russian. Russian landowners received land in Poland. A Deputy was now placed at the head of the Kingdom of Poland. He became Paskevich with the new title of Prince of Warsaw. In connection with all this it became clear that the Polish magnates and landowners who had kept their land-holdings in Belorussia and Ukraine had already for some time been persecuting the Orthodox Russians and Little Russians and also the uniates, and had been occupied in polonizing education in general the whole cultural life in these lands. Tsar Nicholas I was forced to take severe measures to restore Russian enlightenment and education in the West Russian and Ukrainian land. In particular, a Russian university was opened in Kiev. The part of the Belorussian and Ukrainian population headed by Bishop Joseph Semashko which had been in a forcible unia with the Catholic Church since the end of the 16th century desired reunion with Orthodoxy. Nicholas I decided to satisfy this desire and in 1839 all the uniates (besides the inhabitants of Kholm diocese) were united to ‘to the ancestral Orthodox All-Russian Church’, as they put it. This was a great feast of Orthodoxy! Masses of uniates were united voluntarily, without any compulsion. All this showed that Russia had subdued and humbled Poland not because she wished to lord it over her, and resist her independence, but only because Poland wanted to lord it (both politically and spiritually) over the ages-old Russian population, depriving it of its own life and ‘ancestral’ faith! With such a Poland as she was then striving to be, there was nothing to be done but completely subdue her and force her to respect the rights of other peoples! But to the Polish Catholics Russia provided, as usual, every opportunity of living in accordance with their faith and customs.”

Unfortunately, the Poles and the West did not see it like that. Thus the composer Frederick Chopin wrote: “The suburbs [of Warsaw] are destroyed, burned... Moscow rules the world! O God, do You exist? You’re there and You don’t avenge it. How many more Russian crimes do You want – or – are You a Russian too!!?“

Another artist who gave expression to the new Polish faith was the poet Mickiewicz. “Poland will arise,” he wrote, “and free nations of Europe from bondage. Ibi patria, ubi male: wherever in Europe liberty is suppressed and is fought for, there is the battle for your country.” Adam Zamoyski writes that Mickiewicz turned “the spiritual fantasies of a handful of soldiers and intellectuals into the articles of faith that built a modern nation.

229 Chopin, in Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 551.
“Mickiewicz had established his reputation as Poland’s foremost lyric poet in the 1820s, and enhanced his political credentials by his exile in Russia, where he met several prominent Decembrists and grew close to Pushkin [who, however, did not sympathize with his views on Poland]. In 1829 Mickiewicz received permission to go to Germany to take the waters. He met Mendelssohn and Hegel in Berlin, Metternich in Marienbad, and August Schlegel in Bonn, and attended Goethe’s eightieth birthday party in Weimar. Goethe kissed him on the forehead, gave him the quill with which he had worked on Faust, and commissioned a portrait of him for his collection. Mickiewicz then went to Italy where, apart from a de rigueur trip to Switzerland (Chillon and Altdorf, with Byron and Schiller’s Wilhelm Tell in his hand), he spent the next year-and-half. It was in Rome that news of the November Rising [in Warsaw] reached him. He set off for Poland, but his attempts to cross the border were foiled by Cossack patrols, and he was obliged to watch the debacle from Dresden.

“In this tranquil Saxon city he was gripped by inspiration and wrote frantically in fits lasting up to three days, without pausing to eat or sleep. The fruit was the third part of a long poetic drama entitled Forefathers’ Eve, which can only be described as a national passion play. Mickiewicz had also seen the significance of the holy night [of November 29, 1830], and he likened all monarchs, and Nicholas in particular, to Herod – their sense of guilty foreboding led them to massacre the youth of nations. The drama describes the transformation through suffering of the young poet and lover, Konrad, into a warrior-poet. He is a parable for Poland as a whole, but he is also something more. ‘My soul has now entered the motherland, and with my body I have taken her soul: I and the motherland are one,’ he declares after having endured torture. ‘My name is Million, because I love and suffer for millions… I feel the sufferings of the whole nation as a mother feels the pain of the fruit within her womb.’

“In Paris in 1832 Mickiewicz published a short work entitled Books of the Polish Nation and of the Pilgrimage of Poland. It was quickly translated into several languages and caused a sensation. It is a bizarre work, couched in biblical prose, giving a moral account of Polish history. After an Edenic period, lovingly described, comes the eighteenth century, a time when ‘nations were spoiled, so much so that among them there was left only one man, both citizen and soldier’ – a reference to Lafayette. The ‘Satanic Trinity’ of Catherine of Russia, Frederick of Prussia and Maria Theresa of Austria decided to murder Poland, because Poland was Liberty. They crucified the innocent nation while degenerate France played the role of Pilate. But that was not to be the end of it. ‘For the Polish nation did not die; its body lies in

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231 Chopin also blamed the French. For “Lafayette moved heaven and earth to make France go to war in support of Poland, but he could not move Louis Philippe. He formed a committee to help the Poles, with the participation of Victor Hugo and a string of artists and heroes” (Zamoyski, op. cit., p. 278). (V.M.)
the tomb, while its soul has left the earth, that is public life, and visited the abyss, that is the private life of peoples suffering slavery at home and in exile, in order to witness their suffering. And on the third day the soul will re-enter the body, and the nation will rise from the dead and will liberate all the peoples of Europe from slavery.’ In a paraphrase of the Christian Creed, Liberty will then ascend the throne in the capital of the world, and judge the nations, ushering in the age of peace.

“So the Polish nation was now in Limbo, and all it had to do in order to bring about its own resurrection and that of all grieving peoples was to cleanse and redeem itself through a process of expiation which Mickiewicz saw as its ‘pilgrimage’. This was to be a kind of forty days in the wilderness. The pilgrims must fast and pray on the anniversaries of the battles of Wawer and Grochow, reciting litanies to the 30,000 dead of the Confederation of Bar and the 20,000 martyrs of Praga; they must observe their ancient customs and wear national dress. One is reminded of Rousseau’s admonitions in his Considérations sur le Gouvernement de Pologne.

“Rousseau would have been proud of this generation. As one freedom fighter writes in his memoirs: ‘Only he loves Poland with his heart and his soul, only he is a true son of his Motherland who has cast aside all lures and desires, all bad habits, prejudice and passions, and been reborn in the pure faith, he who, having recognized the reasons for our defeats and failures through his own judgement and conviction, brings his whole love, his whole – not just partial, but whole – conviction, his courage and his endurance, and lays them on the altar of the purely national future.’ He had taken part in the November Rising and a conspiratorial fiasco in 1833, for which he was rewarded with fifteen years in the Spielberg and Küfstein prisons. Yet decades later he still believed that the November Rising had ‘called Poland to a new life’ and brought her ‘salvation’ closer by a hundred years. Such feelings were shared by tens of thousands, given expression by countless poets and artists, and understood by all the literate classes.

“Most of Mickiewicz’s countrymen read his works and wept over them. They identified with them and learned them by heart. They did not follow the precepts laid down in them, nor did they really believe in this gospel in any literal sense. These works were a let-out, an excuse even, rather than a guiding rule. But they did provide an underlying ethical explanation of a state of affairs that was otherwise intolerable to the defeated patriots. It was an

232 The passage continues: “And three days have already passed; the first ending with the first fall of Warsaw; the second day with the second fall of Warsaw; and the third day cometh but it shall have no end. As at the resurrection of Christ the sacrifice of blood ceased upon the earth, so at the resurrection of the Polish Nation shall war cease in Christendom.” “This,” comments Neal Ascherson, “was the extraordinary doctrine of Messianism, the identification of the Polish nation as the collective reincarnation of Christ. Messianism steadily gained strength over the next century-and-a-half. History saw to that” (Black Sea, London: Vintage, 1995, p. 160). (V. M.)
explanation that made moral sense and was accepted at the subconscious level. It was a spiritual and psychological lifeline that kept them from sinking into a Slough of Despond. It made misfortune not only bearable, but desirable…”

Tsar Alexander II granted a general amnesty to Polish prisoners in Russia, and about 9000 exiles returned to their homes from Siberia between 1857 and 1860. However, they brought back with them the virus of nationalism. Thus on the day after the Tsar’s brother, Grand Duke Constantine, was made viceroy of Poland, he was shot in the shoulder. Nor did a programme of “re-Polonization” – more liberal state administration and local government regulations governing the use of the Polish language, and Polish educational institutions – appease the nationalists. In 1863, the Poles rose again – and were again crushed.

The Source of Political Authority

The French revolution was at first liberal in character, later developing a socialist and totalitarian character; the Polish revolution was nationalist. Both directions were latent in the original revolutionary project, in the logic of the struggle for “freedom”. Which direction triumphed depended largely on the circumstances in which the struggle took place – that of oppressed individuals or classes within a sovereign nation or oppressed nations within a multi-ethnic empire. As yet the potential conflicts between the two – for the fact the liberation of the nation might mean putting off the liberation of the individual for the time being, and vice-versa – were only dimly perceived.

Still less clearly perceived was the fact that the revolution could not be used to make limited reforms, and then stopped in its tracks before it became “dangerous”. The path that the first French revolution took after 1792 should have made that obvious. But many conservative liberals who took part in the revolution of 1830 deluded themselves into thinking that the further development of the revolutionary idea and passions could now be arrested. They thought they could sow the wind without reaping the whirlwind, as if the genie could be let out of the bottle to do some necessary “cleaning”, and then put back again before the cleaning breeze became a hurricane. They failed to see that the revolution was not a rational human desire for limited, reasonable reform but an irrational, elemental, satanic force whose ultimate aim, whether those who purported to lead and manipulate it understood this or not, was simply total destruction.

One of the most typical of these conservative liberals was François Guizot, Prime Minister of France in the 1840s. In 1820, when Louis XVIII’s Charter conceded legal equality, religious toleration and the necessity for parliamentary consent to new laws on taxation, he declared: “I consider the

revolution of 1789 to be over. All its interests and legitimate wishes are guaranteed by the Charter.... What France needs now is to do away with the revolutionary spirit which still torments her."

Guizot wanted to believe that the "freedom" aimed at by the revolutionaries of 1789 and 1830 was quite different from the "freedom" aimed at by the revolutionaries of 1793, and therefore that the revolution could conveniently stop in 1830, when the middle classes were put back in the saddle after the period of reaction under Charles X, and not go on to anything really radical and unpleasant. But is there really such a radical opposition between the "freedom from" of the liberals and the "freedom to" of the sans-culottes? How can one and not the other be called "the spirit of insurrection" when both attained their ends by means of bloody insurrection against the established order?

Guizot’s real ideal was not the French revolution, but the “Glorious” English one of 1688, a relatively bloodless affair which put the men of property firmly in power. He thought that “moderate” revolutions such as 1688 and 1789 could somehow avert “radical” ones such as 1793. That is why he supported the overthrow of Charles X in 1830, hoping that Louis Philippe could play the role of William of Orange to Charles X’s James II: “We did not choose the king but negotiated with a prince [Orléans] we found next to the throne and who alone could by mounting it guarantee our public law and save us from revolutions... Our minds were guided by the English Revolution of 1688, by the fine and free government it founded, and the wonderful prosperity it brought to the British nation.”

And since the English Revolution had put the middle classes into power (although only after the Reform Act of 1832 did they really begin to acquire power at the ballot box), he wanted the same for France. “I want,” he said, “to secure the political preponderance of the middle classes in France, the final and complete organization of the great victory that the middle classes have won over privilege and absolute power from 1789 to 1830.”

But Louis Philippe, though more liberal than his predecessor, was not liberal enough for the Zeitgeist. As one who had been both a royal and a Jacobin, he sought to establish a “golden mean” between absolutism and Jacobinism. As he said in a speech from the throne in January, 1831: “We seek to hold to the juste milieu [golden mean] equally distant from the excesses of popular power and the abuses of royal authority”. But such a “golden mean” was attained only by the English in the nineteenth century for any long period of time. Louis Philippe’s reign was cut off by a more radical revolution, that of 1848, which was succeeded by the still more radical

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235 As Guizot said in December, 1830: “the spirit of revolution, the spirit of insurrection, is a spirit radically opposed to liberty” (in Almond, *op. cit.*, 1996, p. 95).
revolution of the Paris Commune in 1870. For why should the spirit of liberty favour only the men of property and not also the proletariat? Guizot and Louis Philippe are clear examples of the inconsistency and ultimate ineffectiveness of those who oppose revolution, not root and branch, but only in its more obviously unpleasant and radical manifestations.

The vanity of the liberal hope of “limited revolution” was demonstrated by Hieromonk Seraphim (Rose): “In the Christian order, “politics… was founded upon absolute truth… The principal providential form government took in union with Christian Truth was the Orthodox Christian Empire, wherein sovereignty was vested in a Monarch, and authority proceeded from him downwards through a hierarchical social structure… On the other hand… a politics that rejects Christian Truth must acknowledge ‘the people’ as sovereign and understand authority as proceeding from below upwards, in a formally ‘egalitarian’ society. It is clear that one is the perfect inversion of the other; for they are opposed in their conceptions both of the source and of the end of government. Orthodox Christian Monarchy is government divinely established, and directed, ultimately, to the other world, government with the teaching of Christian Truth and the salvation of souls as its profoundest purpose; Nihilist rule - whose most fitting name... is Anarchy – is government established by men, and directed solely to this world, government which has no higher aim than earthly happiness.

“The Liberal view of government, as one might suspect, is an attempt at compromise between these two irreconcilable ideas. In the 19th century this compromise took the form of ‘constitutional monarchies’, an attempt – again – to wed an old form to a new content; today the chief representatives of the Liberal idea are the ‘republics’ and ‘democracies’ of Western Europe and America, most of which preserve a rather precarious balance between the forces of authority and Revolution, while professing to believe in both.

“It is of course impossible to believe in both with equal sincerity and fervor, and in fact no one has ever done so. Constitutional monarchs like Louis Philippe thought to do so by professing to rule ‘by the Grace of God and the will of the people’ – a formula whose two terms annul each other, a fact as evident to the Anarchist [Bakunin] as to the Monarchist.

“Now a government is secure insofar as it has God for its foundation and His Will for its guide; but this, surely, is not a description of Liberal government. It is, in the Liberal view, the people who rule, and not God; God Himself is a ‘constitutional monarch’ Whose authority has been totally delegated to the people, and Whose function is entirely ceremonial. The Liberal believes in God with the same rhetorical fervor with which he believes in Heaven. The government erected upon such a faith is very little different, in principle, from a government erected upon total disbelief; and whatever its present residue of stability, it is clearly pointed in the direction of Anarchy.
“A government must rule by the Grace of God or by the will of the people, it must believe in authority or in the Revolution; on these issues compromise is possible only in semblance, and only for a time. The Revolution, like the disbelief which has always accompanied it, cannot be stopped halfway; it is a force that, once awakened, will not rest until it ends in a totalitarian Kingdom of this world. The history of the last two centuries has proved nothing if not this. To appease the Revolution and offer it concessions, as Liberals have always done, thereby showing that they have no truth with which to oppose it, is perhaps to postpone, but not to prevent, the attainment of its end. And to oppose the radical Revolution with a Revolution of one’s own, whether it be ‘conservative’, ‘non-violent’, or ‘spiritual’, is not merely to reveal ignorance of the full scope and nature of the Revolution of our time, but to concede as well the first principle of the Revolution: that the old truth is no longer true, and a new truth must take its place.”

**Liberalism and Free Trade**

“Liberalism,” writes Norman Davies, “developed along two parallel tracks, the political and the economic. Political liberalism focused on the essential concept of government by consent. It took its name from the *liberales* of Spain, who drew up their Constitution of 1812 in opposition to the arbitrary powers of the Spanish monarchy; but it had its roots much further back, in the political theories of the Enlightenment and beyond. Indeed, for much of its early history it was indistinguishable from the growth of limited government. Its first lasting success may be seen in the American Revolution, though it drew heavily on the experiences of British parliamentarianism and on the first, constitutional phase of the Revolution in France. In its most thoroughgoing form it embraced republicanism, though most liberals welcomed a popular, limited, and fair-minded monarch as a factor encouraging stability. Its advocates stressed above all the rule of law, individual liberty, constitutional procedures, religious toleration and the universal rights of man. They opposed the inbuilt prerogatives, wherever they survived, of Crown, Church, or aristocracy. Nineteenth-century liberals also gave great weight to property, which they saw as the principal source of responsible judgement and solid citizenship. As a result, whilst taking the lead in clipping the wings of absolutism and in laying the foundations of modern democracy, they were not prepared to envisage radical schemes for universal suffrage or for egalitarianism.

“Economic liberalism focused on the concept of free trade, and on the associated doctrine of *laissez-faire*, which opposed the habit of governments to regular economic life through protectionist tariffs. It stressed the right of men of property to engage in commercial and industrial activities without undue restraint. Its energies were directed on the one hand to dismantling the

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economic barriers which had proliferated both within and between countries and on the other to battling against all forms of collectivist organization, from the ancient guild to the new trade unions.”

Liberalism was an individualist creed in that its aim, in line with the main stream of intellectual development since the Renaissance, was the maximum development and happiness of individual men. It was concerned to protect individual freedoms from the encroachment of all collectives, including the State. However, trends towards individualism have always gone hand in hand historically with trends in the opposite, collectivist direction; and the horrors caused by liberal individualism elicited the growth of socialist collectivism...

Economic liberalism was based on egoism in theory and practice. Thus in Adam Smith’s *Inquiry into the Nature and Cause of the Wealth of Nations* (1776) we read: “It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest. We address ourselves, not to their humanity but to their self-love... [The individual] is in this as in any other cases, led by an invisible hand to promote an end which was no part of his intention... I have never known much good done by those who affected to trade for the public good. It is an affectation, indeed, not very common among merchants, and very few words need to be employed in dissuading them from it.”

It is a paradoxical theory, to say the least: that the public interest is best served by everyone pursuing his self-interest as freely as possible! Nor did the theory find much confirmation in practice, at least before the second half of the nineteenth century. Certainly, there were some who got rich quick – mainly those with initial capital and entrepreneurial skills. But for the great majority of Englishmen economic liberalism meant the horror and squalor of William Blake’s “satanic mills”. If “freedom” in liberal theory means “freedom from”, it certainly did not mean freedom from poverty, disease or death for the workers crowded together in filthy slums in Manchester, where there could be very little “freedom to” do anything at all except work oneself to the bone. It is hardly surprising that not only the poor, but also many of the better-off who pitied them, came to see look upon these liberal “freedoms” with jaundiced eyes... Later, of course, largely under the pressure of humanitarian ideas and the labour movement, capitalism did begin to restrain itself, thereby disproving Marx’s prophecy of its imminent collapse. But the rise of collectivism was not checked by these concessions, but was rather strengthened, as we see throughout Europe as the nineteenth century progresses.

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Free trade, the main principle of economic liberalism, was a very important concept, first in England, and then in other countries that followed the English way. "True," writes J.M. Roberts, "it is almost impossible to find economic theorists and publicists of the early industrial period who advocated absolute non-interference with the economy. Yet there was a broad, sustaining current which favoured the view that much good would result if the market economy was left to operate without the help or hindrance of politicians and civil servants. One force working this way was the teaching often summed up in a phrase made famous by a group of Frenchmen: *laissez-faire*. Broadly speaking, economists after Adam Smith had said with growing consensus that the production of wealth would be accelerated, and therefore the general well-being would increase, if the use of economic resources followed the 'natural' demands of the market. Another reinforcing trend was individualism, embodied in both the assumption that individuals knew their own business best and the increasing organization of society around the rights and interests of the individual.

"These were the sources of the long-enduring association between industrialism and liberalism; they were deplored by conservatives who regretted a hierarchical, agricultural order of mutual obligations and duties, settled ideas, and religious values. Yet liberals who welcomed the new age were by no means taking their stand on a simply negative and selfish base. The creed of ‘Manchester’, as it was called because of the symbolic importance of that city in English industrial and commercial development, was for its leaders much more than a matter of mere self-enrichment. A great political battle which for years preoccupied Englishmen in the early nineteenth century made this clear. Its focus was a campaign for the repeal of what were called the ‘Corn Laws’, a tariff system originally imposed to provide protection for the British farmer from imports of cheaper foreign grain. The ‘repealers’, whose ideological and political leader was a none-too-successful businessman, Richard Cobden, argued that much was at stake. To begin with, retention of the duties on grain demonstrated the grip upon the legislative machinery of the agricultural interest, the traditional ruling class, who ought not to be allowed a monopoly of power. Opposed to it were the dynamic forces of the future which sought to liberate the national economy from such distortions in the interest of particular groups. Back came the reply of the anti-repealers: the manufacturers were themselves a particular interest who only wanted cheap food imports in order to be able to pay lower wages; if they wanted to help the poor, what about some regulation of the conditions under which they employed women and children in factories? There, the inhumanity of the production process showed a callous disregard for the obligations of privilege which would never have been tolerated in rural England. To this, the repealers responded that cheap food would mean cheaper goods for export. And in this, for someone like Cobden, much more than profit was involved. A worldwide expansion of Free Trade untrammelled by the interference of mercantilist governments would lead to
international progress both material and spiritual, he thought; trade brought peoples together, exchanged and multiplied the blessings of civilization and increased the power in each country of its progressive forces. On one occasion he committed himself to the view that Free Trade was the expression of the Divine Will (though even this did not go as far as the British consul at Canton who had proclaimed that ‘Jesus Christ is Free Trade, and Free Trade is Jesus Christ’)…

“Only in England was the issue fought out so explicitly and to so clear-cut a conclusion. In other countries, paradoxically, the protectionists soon turned out to have the best of it. Only in the middle of the century, a period of expansion and prosperity, especially for the British economy, did Free Trade ideals get much support outside the United Kingdom, whose prosperity was regarded by believers as evidence of the correctness of their views and even mollified their opponents; Free Trade became a British political dogma, untouchable until well into the twentieth century. The prestige of British economic leadership helped to give it a brief popularity elsewhere, too. The prosperity of the era in fact owed as much to other influences as to this ideological triumph, but the belief added to the optimism of economic liberals. Their creed was the culmination of the progressive view of Man’s potential as an individual, whose roots lay in Enlightenment ideas.”

The difference between the old patriarchal attitude towards social and economic relations and the new attitude promulgated by the economic liberals is seen in the contrast between Lord Ashley and Richard Cobden:

“Lord Ashley, the Christian Tory philanthropist who did so much to campaign for the improvement of working conditions for the poor, hated the competitive atmosphere of factories. Visiting his ancestral seat, St. Giles in the county of Dorset, he noted in his diary on 29 June 1841, ‘What a picture contrasted with a factory district, a people known and cared for, a people born and trained on the estate, exhibiting towards its hereditary possessors both deference and sympathy, affectionate respect and a species of allegiance demanding protection and repaying it in duty.’ To the Northern factory-owners such patronizing attitudes led only to stultification. There was no movement, no struggle, in Ashley’s view of society. Cobden, the Corn Law reformer par excellence, hated Ashley’s attempts to set limits to an employer’s powers – the length of hours he could make factory hands work, or the limiting of the age of his employees. ‘Mine is that masculine species of charity which would lead me to inculcate in the minds of the labouring classes the love of independence, the privilege of self respect, the disdain of being patronised or petted, the desire to accumulate and the ambition to rise.’

Cobden’s “masculine species of charity” was imitated by other industrial employers and landlords, who felt much less bound by custom and morality.

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to protect their employees than had the feudal landlords of previous ages. Trevelyan writes: “Throughout the ‘forties nothing was done to control the slum landlords and jerrybuilders, who, according to the prevalent *laissez-faire* philosophy, were engaged from motives of self-interest in forwarding the general happiness. These pioneers of ‘progress’ saved space by crowding families into single rooms or thrusting them underground into cellars, and saved money by the use of cheap and insufficient building materials, and by providing no drains – or, worse still, by providing drains that oozed into the water supply. In London, Lord Shaftesbury discovered a room with a family in each of its four corners, and a room with a cesspool immediately below its boarded floor. We may even regard it as fortunate that cholera ensued, first in the years of the Reform Bill and then in 1848, because the sensational character of this novel visitation scared society into the tardy beginnings of sanitary self-defence.”

What legislation there was in this period of what Popper called “unrestrained capitalism” only exacerbated the plight of the poor. This was particularly true of the Poor Law Act of 1834, which prescribed the building of workhouses that were designed to be as unattractive as possible. Thus the Reverend H.H. Milman wrote to Edwin Chadwick: “The workhouses should be a place of hardship, of coarse fare, of degradation and humility; it should be administered with strictness – with severity; it should be as repulsive as is consistent with humanity.”

The Poor Law, as John Gray writes, “set the level of subsistence lower than the lowest wage set by the market. It stigmatised the recipient by attaching the harshest and most demeaning conditions to relief. It weakened the institution of the family. It established a *laissez-faire* regime in which individuals were solely responsible for their own welfare, rather than sharing that responsibility with their communities.

“Eric Hobsbawm captures the background, character and effects of the welfare reforms of the 1830s when he writes: ‘The traditional view, which still survived in a distorted way in all classes of rural society and in the internal relations of working-class groups, was that a man had a right to earn a living, and, if unable to do so, a right to be kept alive by the community. The view of middle-class liberal economists was that men should take such jobs as the market offered, wherever and at whatever rate it offered, and the rational man would, by individual or voluntary collective saving and insurance make provision for accident, illness and old age. The residuum of paupers could not, admittedly, be left actually to starve, but they ought not to be given more than the absolute minimum – provided it was less than the lowest wages offered in the market, and in the most discouraging conditions. The Poor Law was not so much intended to help the unfortunate as to stigmatize the self-confessed

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244 Trevelyan, in Harvey, *op.cit.*, p. 268.
failures of society... There have been few more inhuman statutes than the Poor Law Act of 1834, which made all relief ‘less eligible’ than the lowest wage outside, confined it to the jail-like work-house, forcibly separating husbands, wives and children in order to punish the poor for their destitution.’

“This system applied to at least 10 per cent of the English population in the mid-Victorian period. It remained in force until the outbreak of the First World War.

“The central thrust of the Poor Law reforms was to transfer responsibility for protection against insecurity and misfortune from communities to individuals and to compel people to accept work at whatever rate the market set. The same principle has informed many of the welfare reforms that have underpinned the re-engineering of the free market in the late twentieth century...

“No less important than Poor Law reform in the mid-nineteenth century was legislation designed to remove obstacles to the determination of wages by the market. David Ricardo stated the orthodox view of the classical economists when he wrote, ‘Wages should be left to fair and free competition of the market, and should never be controlled by the interference of the legislature.’

“It was by appeal to such canonical statements of *laissez-faire* that the Statute of Apprentices (enacted after the Black Death in the fourteenth century) was repealed and all other controls on wages ended in the period leading up to the 1830s. Even the Factory Acts of 1833, 1844 and 1847 avoided any head-on collision with *laissez-faire* orthodoxies. ‘The principle that there should be no interference in the freedom of contract between master and man was honoured to the extent that no direct legislative interference was made in the relationship between employers and adult males... it was still possible to argue for a further half-century, though with diminishing plausibility, that the principle of non-interference remained inviolate.’

“The removal of agricultural protection and the establishment of free trade, the reform of the poor laws with the aim of constraining the poor to take work, and the removal of any remaining controls on wages were the three decisive steps in the construction of the free market in mid-nineteenth century Britain. These key measures created out of the market economy of the 1830s the unregulated free market of mid-Victorian times that is the model for all subsequent neo-liberal policies.”246

The industrial bourgeoisie who formed the core of the new “middle class” were, as Eric Hobsbawm writes, “self-made men, or at least men of modest

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origins who owed little to birth, family or formal higher education. (Like Mr. Bounderly in Dickens’ *Hard Times*, they were not reluctant to advertise the fact.) They were rich and getting richer by the year. They were above all imbued with the ferocious and dynamic self-confidence of those whose own careers prove to them that divine providence, science and history have combined to present the earth to them on a platter.

”’Political economy’, translated into a few simple dogmatic propositions by self-made journalist-publishers who hymned the virtues of capitalism… gave them intellectual certainty. Protestant dissent of the hard Independent, Utilitarian, Baptist and Quaker rather than the emotional Methodist type gave them spiritual certainty and a contempt for useless aristocrats. Neither fear, anger, nor even pity moved the employer who told his workers:

”’The God of Nature has established a just and equitable law which man has no right to disturb; when he ventures to do so it is always certain that he, sooner or later, meets with corresponding punishment… Thus when masters audaciously combine that by an union of power they may more effectually oppress their servants; by such an act, they insult the majesty of Heaven, and bring down the curse of God upon themselves, while on the other hand, when servants unite to extort from their employers that share of the profit which of right belongs to the master, they equally violate the laws of equity.’

“There was an order in the universe, but it was no longer the order of the past. There was only one God, whose name was steam and spoke in the voice of Malthus, McCulloch, and anyone who employed machinery…

“A pietistic Protestantism, rigid, self-righteous, unintellectual, obsessed with puritan morality to the point where hypocrisy was its automatic companion, dominated this desolate epoch. ‘Virtue’, as G.M. Young said, ‘advanced on a broad invincible front’; and it trod the unvirtuous, the weak, the sinful (i.e. those who neither made money nor controlled their emotional or financial expenditures) into the mud where they so plainly belonged, deserving at best only of their betters’ charity. There was some capitalist economic sense in this. Small entrepreneurs had to plough back much of their profits into the business if they were to become big entrepreneurs. The masses of new proletarians had to be broken into the industrial rhythm of labour by the most draconian labour discipline, or left to rot if they would not accept it. And yet even today the heart contracts at the sight of the landscape constructed by that generation.

”’You saw nothing in Coketown but what was severely workful. If the members of a religious persuasion built a chapel there – as the members of eighteen religious persuasions had done – they made it a pious warehouse of red brick, with sometimes (but this only in highly ornamented examples) a bell in a bird-cage on the top of it… All the public inscriptions in the town
were pained alike, in severe characters of black and white. The jail might have been the infirmary, the town-hall might have been either, or both, or anything else, for anything that appeared to the contrary in the graces of their construction. Fact, fact, fact, everywhere in the material aspect of the town; fact, fact, fact, everywhere in the immaterial… Everything was fact between the lying-in hospital and the cemetery, and what you couldn’t state in figures, or show to be purchaseable in the cheapest market and saleable in the dearest, was not and never should be, world without end, Amen.’

“This gaunt devotion to bourgeois utilitarianism, which the evangelicals and puritans shared with the agnostic eighteenth-century ‘philosophic radicals’ who put it into logical words for them, produced its own functional beauty in railway lines, bridges and warehouses, and its romantic horror in the smoke-drenched endless grey-black or reddish files of small houses overlooked by the fortresses of the mills. Outside it the new bourgeoisie lived (if it had accumulated enough money to move), dispensing command, moral education and assistance to missionary endeavour among the black heathen abroad. Its men personified the money which proved their right to rule the world; its women, deprived by their husbands’ money even of the satisfaction of actually doing household work, personified the virtue of their class: stupid (‘be good, sweet maid, and let who will be clever’), uneducated, impractical, theoretically unisexual, propertyless and protected. They were the only luxury which the age of thrift and self-help allowed itself.

“The British manufacturing bourgeoisie was the most extreme example of its class, but all over the continent there were smaller groups of the same kind: Catholic in the textile districts of the French North or Catalonia, Calvinist in Alsace, Lutheran pietist in the Rhineland, Jewish all over central and eastern Europe. They were rarely quite as hard as in Britain, for they were rarely quite as divorced from the older traditions of urban life and paternalism. Leon Faucher was painfully struck, in spite of his doctrinaire liberalism, by the sight of Manchester in the 1840s, as which continental observer was not? But they shared with the English the confidence which came from steady enrichment…”

The doctrine of economic liberalism, or Free Trade, gained its decisive victory in 1846, when the Tory Prime Minister, Lord Peel, made a dramatic volte-face and voted for the repeal of the Corn Laws, thereby creating civil war in his party and condemning it to the political wilderness for a generation. But before he left office, the terrible fruits of the doctrine he had just espoused were making themselves felt in one of the greatest tragedies of modern history: the Irish famine.

True, the immediate cause of the famine was not Free Trade, but a blight of the potato crop on which the eight million Irish depended for their survival.

However, it was the callousness of the English governing class – caused in no small part by the political and economic doctrines it espoused – that made the eventual death-toll (1.1 million between 1845 and 1850) as large as it was. As Niall Ferguson writes: “It may have been phytophthora infestans that ruined the potatoes; but it was the dogmatic laissez-faire policies of Ireland’s British rulers that turned harvest failure into outright famine.”

_The British Empire_

The tragedy of the Irish famine, and the callousness of the English ruling class’s response to it, brings us to the question: how could a country whose ideology was liberalism, and which had fought, and would continue to fight, under the banner of freedom from tyranny for all peoples, then set about creating the largest empire the world had ever seen, enslaving hundreds of millions of peoples to itself?

Of course, there are many very different kinds and qualities of empire. The principal argument of this series of books is that one kind in particular – the Orthodox Christian Empire, based on the symphony of powers between the Orthodox Autocrat and the Orthodox Church – is in fact the best form of government yet devised for the attainment of the supreme end of man: the salvation of his immortal soul. The British Empire was not of this type, although it also claimed to be bringing salvation in Christ to heathen peoples.

But could it be argued that the British Empire, as the first exemplar of what Simon Schama calls “the empire of good intentions”, did more good than evil?

Ferguson summarizes his case for the British Empire as follows: “For much (though certainly, as we shall see, not all) of its history, the British Empire acted as an agency for imposing free markets, the rule of law, investor protection and relatively incorrupt government on roughly a quarter of the world. The Empire also did a good deal to encourage those things in countries which were outside its formal imperial domain but under its economic influence through the ‘imperialism of free trade’. _Prima facie_, there therefore seems a plausible case that empire enhanced global welfare – in other words, was a Good Thing.

“Many charges can of course be leveled against the British Empire; they will not be dropped in what follows. I do not claim, as John Stuart Mill did, that British rule in India was ‘not only the purest in intention but one of the most beneficent in act ever known to mankind’; nor, as Lord Curzon did, that ‘the British Empire is under Providence the greatest instrument for good that the world has seen’; nor, as General Smuts claimed, that it was ‘the widest system of organized human freedom which has ever existed in human history’. The Empire was never so altruistic. In the eighteenth century the

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British were indeed as zealous in the acquisition and exploitation of slaves as they were subsequently zealous in trying to stamp slavery out; and for much longer they practiced forms of racial discrimination and segregation that we today consider abhorrent. When imperial authority was challenged – in India in 1857, in Jamaica in 1831 or 1865, in South Africa in 1899 – the British response was brutal. When famine struck (in Ireland in the 1840s, in India in the 1870s) their response was negligent, in some measure positively culpable. Even when they took a scholarly interest in oriental cultures, perhaps they did subtly denigrate them in the process.

“Yet the fact remains that no organization in history has done more to promote the free movement of goods, capital and labour than the British Empire in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. And no organization has done more to impose Western norms of law, order and governance around the world. To characterize all this as ‘gentlemanly capitalism’ risks underselling the scale – and modernity – of the achievement in the sphere of economics; just as criticism of the ‘ornamental’ (meaning hierarchical) character of British rule overseas tends to overlook the signal virtues of what were remarkable non-venal administrations.”

Of course, this begs the question whether “the free movement of goods, capital and labour” is such an indubitable good. In England for generations it was an indubitable evil, in that it plunged the vast majority of the population – the rural as well as the urban poor – into terrible, soul-destroying poverty, while increasing the pride, cruelty and hypocrisy of the governing class to a proverbial degree (“Victorian hypocrisy” is still a byword). Nor does the fact that liberal England gradually, very gradually corrected these ills – significantly, by abandoning the strict theory of Free Trade and the non-interference of government through the enactment of various social reforms and the beginning of the Welfare State – alter this judgement, unless we are to believe, with the Jesuits, that “the end justifies the means”, and that the cruelty of Victorian England is justified by the relatively more just and humane England of the later twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

If “the free movement of goods, capital and labour” was such a disaster for the British themselves as weighed on the scale of that utilitarian principle of Jeremy Bentham, “the greatest happiness of the greatest number”, it is difficult to see how it could have been a boon for anyone else. Thus the destruction of the indigenous Indian textile industry by competition with the factories of Northern England doomed millions of Indian peasants to even greater poverty. And if the British administration was indeed less venal than the Mughal one that it replaced, this was a relatively small benefit to place in the scale against the five million dead in the Bengal famine of 1873-74 and the famines that periodically recurred thereafter. But if it is argued that such suffering was justified in that it was a necessary stage “on the path to

249 Ferguson, op. cit, pp. xxi-xxii.
modernity” and the modern, democratic India, then we are back with the Jesuit principle again and the idea that the sufferings of one generation, undertaken unwillingly and imposed for less than altruistic motives, can compensate for the relatively greater prosperity of another, much later one.

Ferguson continues: “Even if we allow for the possibility that trade, capital flows and migration could have been ‘naturally occurring’ in the past 300 years, there remain the flows of culture and institutions. And here the fingerprints of empire seem more readily discernible and less easy to expunge.

“When the British governed a country – even when they only influenced its government by flexing their military and financial muscles – there were certain distinctive features of their own society that they tended to disseminate. A list of the most important of these would run:

1. The English language
2. English forms of land tenure
3. Scottish and English banking
4. The Common Law
5. Protestantism
6. Team Sports
7. The limited or ‘night watchman’ state
8. Representative assemblies
9. The idea of liberty

“The last of these is perhaps the most important because it remains the most distinctive feature of the Empire, the thing that sets it apart from its continental rivals. I do not mean to claim that all British imperialists were liberals: some were very far from it. But what is striking about the history of the Empire is that whenever the British were behaving despotically, there was almost always a liberal critique of that behaviour from within British society. Indeed, so powerful and consistent was this tendency to judge Britain’s imperial conduct by the yardstick of liberty that it gave the British Empire something of a self-liquidating character. Once a colonized society had sufficiently adopted the other institutions the British brought with them, it became very hard for the British to prohibit that political liberty to which they attached so much significance for themselves.”

This is a fair point, but a highly paradoxical one. For it presupposes that the “liberal Empire” of Britain could only introduce the benefits of liberalism by illiberal means - coercion, and that these benefits were perceived not immediately, but only after several generations had passed, when the formerly uncivilised tribes had matured to the extent of being capable of parliamentary self-government. This was because, as Ferguson admits, the spreading of liberalism was not the real motivation for the creation of the

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250 Ferguson, op. cit., pp. xxiii-xxiv.
Empire, but rather commercial gain from the import of sugar, spices, cotton, etc., and the export of manufactures, financial services, etc. When that commercial gain was threatened for one reason or another, the British response was to send in the gunboats or the redcoats, and annex the territory in question before introducing those western institutions – property rights, contractual law – that would guarantee a stable, long-term trading relationship. And so “the rise of the British Empire, it might be said, had less to do with the Protestant work ethic or English individualism than with the British sweet tooth.”

And when the end of the Empire came, after 1945, it came not so much as result of the British at length deciding that the natives were now mature enough to govern themselves, nor even because the natives’ demand for self-government acquired an unstoppable momentum, but simply because the Empire was now broke and could no longer afford its colonies.

The relationship of the Britain to its maritime provinces is most clearly seen in its relationship with China. As the Ming empire retreated into itself, the Western powers, and especially Britain, stepped into the vacuum this created. Thus “William Jardine and James Matheson,” writes Ferguson, “were buccaneering Scotsmen who had set up a trading company in the southern Chinese port of Guangzhou (then known as Canton) in 1832. One of their best lines of business was importing government-produced opium from India. Jardine was a former East India Company surgeon, but the opium he was bringing into China was for distinctly non-medicinal purposes. This was a practice that the Emperor Yongzheng had prohibited over a century before, in 1729, because of the high social costs of opium addiction. One 10 March 1839 an imperial official named Lin Zexu arrived in Canton under orders from the Daoguang Emperor to stamp out the trade once and for all. Lin blockaded the Guangzhou opium godowns (warehouses) until the British merchants acceded to his demands. In all, around 20,000 chests of opium valued at £2 million were surrendered. The contents were adulterated to render it unusable and literally thrown into the sea. The Chinese also insisted that henceforth British subjects in Chinese territory should submit to Chinese law. This was not to Jardine’s taste at all. Known to the Chinese as ‘Iron-Headed Old Rat’, he was in Europe during the crisis and hastened to London to lobby the British government. After three meetings with the Foreign Secretary, Viscount Palmerston, Jardine seems to have persuaded him that a show of strength was required, and that ‘the want of power of their war junks’ would ensure an easy victory for a ‘sufficient’ British force. On 20 February 1840 Palmerston gave the order. By June 1840 all the naval preparations were complete. The Qing Empire was about the feel the full force of history’s most successful narco-state: the British Empire.

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251 Ferguson, op. cit., p. 13.
252 Ferguson, op. cit., chapter 6.
“Just as Jardine had predicted, the Chinese authorities were no match for British naval power. Guangzhou was blockaded, Chusan (Zhoushan) Island was captured. After a ten-month stand off, British marines seized the forts that guarded the mouth of the Pearl River, the waterway between Hong Kong and Guangzhou. Under the Convention of Chuenpi, signed in January 1841 (but then repudiated by the Emperor), Hong Kong became a British possession. The Treaty of Nanking, signed a year later after another bout of one sided fighting, confirmed this cession and also gave free reign to the opium trade in five so-called treaty ports: Canton, Amoy (Xiamen), Foochow (Fuzhou), Ningbo and Shanghai. According to the principle of extraterritoriality, British subjects could operate in these cities with complete immunity from Chinese law.

“For China, the first Opium War ushered in an era of humiliation. Drug addiction exploded. Christian missionaries destabilized traditional Chinese beliefs. And in the chaos of the Taiping Rebellion – a peasant revolt against a discredited dynasty led by the self-proclaimed younger brother of Christ – between 20 and 40 million people lost their lives.”

That the leader of the Taiping Rebellion should call himself the brother of Jesus Christ was a sign of another kind of western influence, this time religious. However, this Christian influence, however perverted, was mixed with other, anti-Christian but no less western ideas in the movement – the abolition of private property and the complete equality of the sexes. Such elements might lead one to think that this rebellion was undertaken under the direct influence of the West, being an eastern offshoot of the European Age of Revolution. But, this would be a mistake, according to Jacques Gernet, insofar as Hung “was only following in the footsteps of other rebel leaders and usurpers who had been regarded as reincarnations of Maitreya, the saviour Buddha... This view fails to recognize the role played by heterodox religions in the big rebellions of Chinese history and the opposition – a basic factor in China – between the official cults, patronized by the legitimate authority, and the religious practices frowned on by the state (yin-ssu). Taoism, Buddhism, and Manicheism all provided popular risings with the messianic hope of a world at peace, harmony, and general prosperity; the Christianity of the T’ai P’ing comes into the same category.”

Be that is may, it is intriguing that this enormous rebellion, together with the later rebellions it gave rise to, resulting in no less than 20 million deaths, should have taken place at just the time when western ideas were beginning to enter into China. Some causal link seems highly probable. Thus we may agree with the judgement of Eric Hobsbawm that “these convulsions were in important respects the direct product of the western impact on China.”

The Justifications of Imperialism

The generation after the Crimean War saw Britain reach the peak of her power and influence. Far outstripping her competitors in industrial production (it was still some time before America and Germany caught up with her), mistress of the seas and of an ever-expanding empire on which, as the saying went, the sun never set, Britain’s boast, paradoxically, was in something quite different: in being the world champion of freedom and liberalism in both political and economic life. But how was it possible to be both liberal and imperialist at the same time?

The clue lay in what has been called the doctrine of benign intervention: the teaching that Britain, alone among the empires of world history, had acquired her empire for the benefit, not of her own, but of her subject peoples, to whom she communicated the fruits of her liberal civilization by her benign interventions in their lives – in other words, by her annexation of their territories and taking over of their government. This teaching was expounded by Britain’s foremost liberal thinker, John Stuart Mill, in his essay, *A Few Words on Non-Intervention*, in which he asserted that England was “incomparably the most conscientious of all nations... the only one whom mere scruples of conscience... would deter” and “the power which of all in existence best understands liberty”.

As Noam Chomsky writes, Mill “urged Britain to undertake the enterprise [of humanitarian intervention] vigorously – specifically, to conquer more of India. Britain must pursue this high-minded mission, Mill explained, even though it will be ‘held up to obloquy’ on the continent. Unmentioned was that by doing so, Britain was striking still further devastating blows at India and extending the near-monopoly of opium production that it needed both to force open Chinese markets by violence and to sustain the imperial system more broadly by means of its immense narco-trafficking enterprises, all well known in England at the time. But such matters could not be the source of the ‘obloquy’. Rather, Europeans are ‘exciting odium against us’, Mill wrote, because they are unable to comprehend that England is truly ‘a novelty in the world.’ A remarkable nation that acts only ‘in the service of others’. It is dedicated to peace, though if ‘the aggressions of barbarians force it to a successful war’, it selflessly bears the cost while ‘the fruits it shares in fraternal equality with the whole human race’, including the barbarians it conquers and destroys for their own benefit. England is not only peerless but near perfect, in Mill’s view, with no ‘aggressive designs’, desiring ‘no benefit to itself at the expense of others’. Its policies are ‘blameless and laudable’. England was the nineteenth-century counterpart of the ‘idealistic new world bent on ending inhumanity’, motivated by pure altruism and uniquely

dedicated to the highest ‘principles and values’, though also sadly misunderstood by the cynical or perhaps paranoid Europeans…”

There are indeed grounds for cynicism here: the main motive of Britain’s imperial expansion was undoubtedly commercial profit, a profit that was unquestionably immoral when gained at the expense of jobless Indian textile workers or Chinese opium addicts. But a balanced picture of British imperialism must nevertheless recognise that there were other, nobler motivations, if not among the businessmen and entrepreneurs, at any rate among the Evangelical missionaries who poured into the new dominions.

For mission remains the only really defensible justification of one people’s dominion over another. It was at the root of the idea of Christian Rome, which brought Orthodoxy to the peoples of the Mediterranean basin and to the Slav nations to the north. The Russian Empire extended it still further into Asia and even America – and with much less damage to indigenous cultures than the Western missionaries. With their heretical ideas and disdain for both Byzantium and Russia, the British could not be expected to follow this example - pagan Rome was their role model. Nevertheless, they did see religious mission as an important part of their duty, “the white man’s burden”, and as at least part of the justification of their colonialism. The French were even more missionary-minded than the British. Thus “when King Charles X came to the Chamber of Deputies formally to announce intervention in Algeria, he justified it as ‘for the benefit of Christianity’.”

“In one sense,” writes Dominic Lieven, “religion was a relatively unimportant factor in Britain’s empire. From the seventh and eighth centuries, for instance, Muslim conquerors converted the Near East and southern Mediterranean to Islam, in the process forever changing identities and geopolitics in a vast region. Religion was also very important in the Spanish conquest of the Americas, great effort being put into subsequent conversion of the indigenous population. Though Elizabethan imperialists sometimes talked the language of religious mission, in reality little effort went into converting indigenous peoples to Christianity in the seventeenth and

258 Chomsky again: “India was a real competitor with England: as late as the 1820s, the British were learning advanced techniques of steel-making there, India was building ships for the British navy at the time of the Napoleonic Wars, they had a developed textiles industry, they were producing more iron than all of Europe combined - so the British just proceeded to de-industrialize the country by force and turn it into an impoverished rural society” (Understanding Power: The Indispensable Chomsky, London: Vintage, 2003, p. 257).
259 “It is a remarkable fact,” writes Niall Ferguson, “that throughout the first half of the nineteenth century the amount the East India Company earned from its monopoly on the export of opium was roughly equal to the amount it had to remit to London to pay the interest on its huge debt. The opium trade was crucial to the Indian balance of payments.” (op. cit, p. 166, note).
eighteenth centuries. Until 1813 the East India Company strictly limited missionary activity in India. Only with the onset of the Evangelical Movement in the late eighteenth century did missionaries begin to play a role of any significance in the British Empire. Even subsequently, however, missionaries never converted large communities and when compared to the activities of the Islamic or Spanish empires, their impact was very small.”

Nevertheless, in his Considerations on Representative Government (1861), Mill had mentioned “the decay of usages or superstitions which interfere with the effective implementation of industry” as one of the main benefits of British imperialism. And after citing this phrase, Niall Ferguson writes: “Nowadays, the modern equivalents of the missionary societies campaign earnestly against ‘usages’ in far-flung countries that they regard as barbaric: child labour or female circumcision. The Victorian non-governmental organizations were not so different. In particular, three traditional Indian customs aroused the ire of British missionaries and modernizers alike. One was female infanticide, which was common in parts of north-western India. Another was thagi (then usually spelt ‘thuggee’), the cult of assassin-priests, who were said to strangle unwary travellers on the Indian roads. The third, the one the Victorians most abhorred, was sati (or ‘suttee’): the act of self-immolation when a Hindu widow was burned alive on her husband’s funeral pyre… Between 1813 and 1825 7,941 women died this way in Bengal alone…”

However, in 1857 the Indian Mutiny deeply impressed upon the British the limitations of their power in the reformation of Hindu “usages or superstitions”. The mutiny was sparked by the fact that the cockade on the new turban issued to Indian troops appeared to be made of cow or pig hide. This offended the troops’ religious sensibilities, and so “at root the Vellore mutiny was about religion”.

“The year 1857 was the Evangelical movement’s annus horribilis. They had offered India Christian civilization, and the offer had been not merely declined but violently spurned. Now the Victorians revealed the other, harsher face of their missionary zeal. In churches all over the country, the theme of the Sunday sermon switched from redemption to revenge. Queen Victoria – whose previous indifference to the Empire was transformed by the Mutiny into a passionate interest – called the nation to a day of repentance and prayer: ‘A Day of Humiliation’, no less. In the Crystal Palace, that monument to Victorian self-confidence, a vast congregation of 25,000 heard the incandescent Baptist preacher Charles Spurgeon issue what amount to a call for holy war:

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262 Ferguson, op. cit., pp. 139, 141.
263 Ferguson, op. cit., p. 145.
“‘My friends, what crimes they have committed… The Indian government never ought to have tolerated the religion of the Hindoos at all. If my religion consisted of bestiality, infanticide and murder, I should have no right to it unless I was prepared to be hanged. The religion of the Hindoos is no more than a mass of the rankest filth that imagination ever conceived. The gods they worship are not entitled to the least atom of respect. Their worship necessitates everything that is evil and morality must put it down. The sword must be taken out of its sheath, to cut off our fellow subjects by their thousands.’

“These words would be taken literally when the sections of the Indian army that remained loyal, the Gurkhas and Sikhs in particular, were deployed. In Cawnpore Brigadier-General Neill forced captured mutineers to lick the blood of their white victims before executing them. At Peshawar forty were strapped to the barrels of cannons and blown apart, the old Mughal punishment for mutiny. In Delhi, where the fighting was especially fierce, British troops gave no quarter. The fall of the city in September was an orgy of slaughter and plunder…”264

In fact, the British response to the Mutiny was anything but liberal. “On 4 October 1857 the novelist Charles Dickens assured his readers in London that were he commander-in-chief in India, he would ‘do my utmost to exterminate the Race on whom the stain of the late cruelties rested… and with all convenient dispatch and merciful swiftness of execution, to blot out of mankind and raze it off the face of the earth.’ He meant Indians, of all ages, and, presumably, men, women and children alike…”265

However, the Mutiny did result in a significant change in British imperial policy with regard to the conversion of the natives. From now on, the emphasis would be less on the saving of souls and more on the political and economic benefits of British rule. Thus “on 1 November 1858 Queen Victoria issued a proclamation that explicitly renounced ‘the right and the desire to impose Our convictions on any of Our subjects’. India was henceforth to be ruled not by the East India Company – it was to be wound up – but by the crown, represented by a Viceroy. And the government of India would never again lend its support to the Evangelical project of Christianization. On the contrary, the aim of British policy in India would henceforth be to govern with, rather than against, the grain of indigenous tradition.”266

“From another angle,” continues Lieven, “Protestantism was vital to the whole English sense of imperial mission. From the sixteenth to the twentieth century, most Englishmen believed that the Protestant conscience was at the core of all progress. They were convinced that the Protestant had a sense of

264 Ferguson, op. cit., pp. 150-151.
265 Wheatcroft, op. cit., p. 259.
266 Ferguson, op. cit., p. 154.
individual responsibility and a strong motivation to better himself and succeed in life. He was self-disciplined, purposeful and based his life on firm moral principles, which he derived for himself by reading the Bible and struggling to define his own path to salvation. Eighteenth-century Enlightenment and nineteenth-century liberalism had no doubt of their descent from the Protestant tradition even if they had sometimes lost faith in a personal god. By contrast, Catholics were seen to be the slaves of sentiment, tradition, ritual and ignorance. Muslims were worse, and Hindus and Buddhists worst of all. Racial stereotypes of Africans in the late nineteenth century were very familiar from sixteenth-century Ireland: the natives were shift, immoral and idle, and needed for their own good to be forced to work. Nor had English attitudes to Catholics in general or the Irish in particular necessarily changed much over the previous 300 years. In 1882 the Regius Professor of History at Oxford University commented that ‘the Celts of Ireland are as yet unfit for parliamentary government… Left to themselves, without what they call English misrule, they would almost certainly be... the willing slaves of some hereditary despot, the representative of their old coshing chiefs, with a priesthood as absolute and as obscurantist as the Druids.’

“Such views explain the English imperialist’s powerful sense of cultural superiority and civilizing mission among indigenous populations. They explain too the doctrine of terra nullius, first proclaimed in sixteenth-century Ireland, which justified the expropriation and exploitation by a more civilized invading people of human and natural resources which a backward native society was wasting. Armed with this doctrine, one could easily justify the expropriation of indigenous peoples’ land and the eradication of indigenous culture in the name of progress. One could even at a pinch justify turning the lazy African into a productive slave or forcing the Chinese government to allow the import of opium, since these were essential to the development of the British-led international economy and the latter was the driving wheel of progress.

“Whether Catholics, Muslims and pagans could actually be converted to English Protestant virtues and, if so, how quickly the task could be accomplished was a moot point. As one might expect, the Enlightenment and its early Victorian heirs were optimistic. Some Enlightened eighteenth-century observers expected the conversion of Irish Catholics to ‘rationality’, on other words to the culture of the Protestant elite but with God largely removed. In the 1830s it was widely believed that consistent government policy, particularly as regards education, would lead to Anglicization first of India’s elites and then of the whole population. In the reformers’ minds there was no doubt that this would be wholly to Indians’ advantage, their belief in mankind’s perfectibility being matched only by their utter contempt for non-European cultural and intellectual traditions. As Charles Trevelyan put matters, ‘trained by us to happiness and independence, and endowed with
our learning and political institutions, India will remain the proudest monument of British benevolence.’ In these first pristine years of Victorian liberal optimism some Englishmen had a faith in rapid progress to rationality along unilinear paths foreordained by history which was subsequently equalled by Lenin’s.

“In the British imperial context this vision always had its doubters. They included pragmatists conscious of the social disruption and political danger liberal policy might create; financial officials aware that Westminster would insist on India living on its own revenues, and that the latter barely sufficed to pay for army, police and administration – let alone ‘luxuries’ like education. More ideological opposition to liberalism also existed. This encompassed an increasing tide of late Victorian racialism, which stressed the innate biological inferiority of non-Whites. It included too romantics and, later, anthropologists, who gloried in native culture and proclaimed the need to preserve its unique traditions.

“But the British Empire could never give up its basic, albeit stuttering commitment to progress and enlightenment, since these were essential to its British élite’s understanding of history, their perception of themselves and of the legitimacy of Britain’s empire. Clearly, British liberal values and ideology did convert growing sections of the indigenous elite, firstly in India and then elsewhere: it was precisely in the name of these values that self-government and independence from Britain were demanded. But in this as in so much else formal empire was only one element in a much broader process of change and Westernization…”267

**Mill on Liberty**

Foreigners were impressed by England’s political system because it seemed to combine freedom with stability, individualism with solidarity, power with prosperity (for the few), gradual extension of rights with traditional deference to title and rank, science and progress with morality and religion. And yet, as we have seen, the objective reasons for a revolution from below were, if anything, stronger in England than anywhere else; the poverty of the majority was worse; the contempt in which they were held by the rich minority greater. So why was England able to avoid the continual upheavals that we see in contemporary France and on the continent?

One reason was undoubtedly that the rich minority were able to use the improved methods of communication, especially the railways, to concentrate the power of a greatly increased police force against troublemakers more quickly than on the continent. A second was the unprecedentedly large emigration to America and the White Dominions (in the case of Australia, of course, this “emigration” was compulsory), which served as a safety-valve to

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expel the desperately poor (or criminal). A third was that the rapidly increasing lower middle classes, though poor, already had more than their chains to lose, and so tended to support the existing system. They needed the patronage of the rich, and looked down on the proletarians below them, whose desperation they feared. The rich took this into account, and so were able to proceed more slowly than they might otherwise have done in the work of helping the poor, introducing just enough reforms to maintain stability. As Barzun writes: “This knack of judging when and how things must change without upsetting the apple cart was painfully acquired by the English over the centuries. They were long reputed the ungovernable people. But fatigue caught up at last and a well-rooted anti-intellectualism helped to keep changes unsystematic and under wraps. Forms, titles, décor remain while different actions occur beneath them; visual stability maintains confidence. It was the knack of rising above principle, the reward of shrewd inconsistency.”

This “knack” paid dividends (literally and metaphorically). The 1850s saw England at her peak from an external, material point of view. Her navies ruled the seas; her trade and industry was far greater than any other country’s (though America and Germany were catching up fast). And while liberalism was checked on the continent after 1848 as monarchy revived and the proletariat raged, in England it remained remarkably stable. It was to give a theoretical underpinning to this English variety of liberalism, that John Stuart Mill wrote his famous essay On Liberty, which remains to this day the most elegant and influential defence of English liberalism.

Mill admired de Tocqueville, and was a passionate opponent of “the tyranny of the majority”. To protect society against this tyranny he proposed a single “very simple” principle which would place a limit on the ability of the state to interfere in the life of the individual: “The object of this essay is to assert one very simple principle, as entitled to govern absolutely the dealings of society with the individual in the way of compulsion and control, whether the means to be used by physical force in the form of legal penalties or the moral coercion of public opinion. That principle is that the sole end for which mankind are warranted, individually or collectively, in interfering with the liberty of action of any of their number is self-protection. That the only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others. His own good, either physical or moral, is not a sufficient warrant. He cannot rightfully be compelled to do or forbear because it will be better for him to do so, because it will make him happier, because, in the opinion of others, to do so would be wise or even right. These are good reasons for remonstrating with him, or reasoning with him, or persuading him, or entreaty him, but not for compelling him or visiting him with any evil in case he do otherwise. To justify that, the conduct from which it is desired to deter him must be

268 Barzun, op. cit., p. 529.
calculated to produce evil to someone else. The only part of the conduct of anyone or which it is amenable to society is that which concerns others. In the part which merely concerns himself, his independence is, of right, absolute. Over himself, over his own body and mind, the individual is sovereign.”

Mill asserted that this “Liberty Principle” or “Harm Principle” applied only to people in “the maturity of their faculties”, not to children or to “those backward states of society in which the race itself may be considered as in its nonage.” For “Liberty, as a principle, has no application to any state of things anterior to the time when mankind have become capable of being improved through free and equal discussion”.

This qualification provided a neat justification for the spread of the British Empire among the pagan nations; and in general, in spite of the fact that Mill was concerned above all to protect the liberty of the individual against the tyranny of the majority and popular morality, his theory fitted in remarkably well with the prejudices of the majority in the England of his time. Thus the English prided themselves on their freedom of speech, and their giving refuge to political exiles of every kind, from Louis XVIII and Louis Napoleon to Herzen and Bakunin, Kossuth and Marx. No tyranny of the majority here!

Mill provided a passionate defence of the widest possible freedom of thought and speech. “First,” he argued, ‘the opinion which it is attempted to suppress by authority may possibly be true. Those who desire to suppress it, of course, deny its truth; but they are not infallible. They have no authority to decide the question for all mankind and exclude every other person from the means of judging. To refuse a hearing to an opinion because they are sure that it is false is to assume that their certainty is the same thing as absolute certainty. All silencing of discussion is an assumption of infallibility.”

No: there is a difference between certainty and the assumption of infallibility. A man may consider himself to be a wretched sinner and prone to all kinds of errors, and yet be completely certain of some things. All true religious belief is of this kind – and much false religious belief also. Faith, according to the definition of the Apostle, is certainty in the existence of invisible realities (Hebrews 11.1); it is incompatible with the least doubt. But even if one is not completely certain about something, one may be sufficiently sure to act to censor what one considers a false opinion. Thus a government may not be completely certain that a certain drug has no serious side effects. But it may still act to ban it, and ban any propaganda in its favour, in the belief that the risks are sufficiently great to warrant such action. Mill may be able to accommodate this example with his “Harm Principle”, but not on the

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grounds that to exclude a certain opinion on the grounds that it is likely to be false amounts to a belief in one’s infallibility.

Mill anticipates this objection: “Men and governments must act to the best of their ability. There is no such thing as absolute certainty, but there is assurance sufficient for the purposes of human life. We may, and must assume our opinions to be true for the guidance of our own conduct; and it is assuming no more when we forbid bad men to pervert society by the propagation of opinions which we regard as false and pernicious.”

But Mill will have none of this; it is only by allowing our opinion to be contested by those who think otherwise, he argues, that we come to know whether it is really deserving of confidence, and hence whether the opposite opinion should be censored. “The most intolerant of churches, the Roman Catholic Church, even at the canonization of a saint admits, and listens patiently to, a ‘devil’s advocate’. The holiest of men, it appears, cannot be admitted to posthumous honours until all that the devil could say against him is known and weighed.”

In practice, this means that no opinion should ever be censored; “the lists have to be kept open” in case someone appears who will expose the flaw in the accepted “truth”. And this applies even if the dissenting opinion goes against one’s most treasured and vital convictions concerning God or morality. For “however positive anyone’s persuasion may be, not only of the falsity but of the pernicious consequences – not only of the pernicious consequences, but (to adopt expressions which I altogether condemn) the immorality and impiety of an opinion – yet if, in pursuance of that private judgement, though backed by the public judgement of his country or his contemporaries, he prevents the opinion from being heard in its defence, he assumes infallibility. And so far from the assumption being less objectionable or less dangerous because the opinion is called immoral or impious, this is the case of all others in which it is most fatal. These are exactly the occasions on which the men of one generation commit those dreadful mistakes which excite the astonishment and horror of posterity.”

And then Mill cites the examples of Socrates and Jesus Christ, who, though the most admirable of men, became the victims of the censoriousness of their generation.

Mill’s most powerful argument in favour of complete liberty of speech – an argument expressed before him in More’s Utopia and Milton’s Areopagitica - is that it is only in an atmosphere of complete intellectual freedom that truth can be truly understood and become well rooted. “Truth gains more even by the
errors of one who, with due study and preparation, thinks for himself than by the true opinions of those who only hold them because they do not suffer themselves to think. Not that it is solely, or chiefly, to form great thinkers that freedom of thinking is required. On the contrary, it is as much and even more indispensable to enable average human beings to attain the mental stature which they are capable of. There have been, and may again be, great individual thinkers in a general atmosphere of mental slavery. But there never has been, nor ever will be, in that atmosphere an intellectually active people.”

Mill goes on to cite the Reformation in Europe, the late eighteenth-century in France and the early nineteenth-century in Germany as admirable periods of intellectual freedom. “In each, an old mental despotism had been thrown off, and no new one had yet taken its place. The impulse given at these three periods has made Europe what it now is. Every single improvement which has taken place either in the human mind or in institutions may be traced distinctly to one or other of them.”

However, the citing of these three periods exposes the false assumptions of Mill’s argument. The Reformation was indeed an intellectually exciting period, when many of the abuses and falsehoods of the medieval period were exposed. But did it lead to a greater understanding of positive truth? By no means. Similarly, the late eighteenth century was the period in which the foundations of Church and State were so effectively undermined as to lead to the bloodiest revolution in history to that date, a revolution which most English liberals quite rightly abhorred. As to the early nineteenth century in Germany, its most dominant thinker was Hegel, who, as we shall see, constructed probably the most pompous and contradictory – indeed, strictly nonsensical - of all philosophical systems, which is considered, with some justice, to be an ancestor of both communism and fascism. Moreover, in the one-and-a-half centuries since Mill’s time, although the Anglo-Saxon world has attained a still greater degree of freedom of thought and speech than prevailed in those three epochs, it has been at the expense of the almost complete decay of traditional Christian belief and morality, that belief which Mill and the present author agree – albeit, probably, with different degrees of conviction - in considering to be the truth.

Evidently, freedom does not necessarily lead to truth. Nor did the Truth incarnate ever claim that it would, declaring rather the reverse relationship, namely, that “ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8.32). And part of the truth consists in the sober recognition that men’s minds are fallen, and for much of the time do not even want the truth, so that if given complete freedom to say what they like, the result will be the falling away of society from truth into the abyss of destruction.

As Timothy Snyder writes, interpreting the lessons of George Orwell’s 1984 for today’s mass democracies: “The core texts of liberal toleration, such as Milton’s Areopagitica and Mill’s On Liberty, take for granted that individuals will wish to know the truth. They contend that in the absence of censorship, truth will eventually emerge and be recognised as such. But even in democracies this may not always be true.”

Mill’s arguments in favour of complete freedom of expression rest on the assumption, as he freely admitted, that the men who are given this freedom are not children or barbarians. And yet the corruption of mind and heart we associate with the word “barbarian” is present in every single man; this is what we mean by the term “original sin”. And if men were not very often children in mind, the Apostle Paul would not have been forced to say: “Brethren, be not children in your thinking; be babes in evil, but in thinking be mature” (I Corinthians 14.20).

James Fitzjames Stephen, in his Liberty, Equality, Fraternity (1873) pointed to further important flaws in Mill’s argument. Liberty was like fire, he said; it could be used for good and ill; to assume otherwise was naïve and dangerous. It was by no means certain that full freedom from interference by others would lead to greater searching for truth; it could just as easily lead to idleness and lack of interest in social affairs.

Moreover, writes Gertrude Himmelfarth, “what disturbed him about Mill’s doctrine was the possibility that its adoption would leave society impotent in those situations where there was a genuine need for social action. Implicit too was the possibility that the withdrawal of social sanctions against any particular belief or act would be interpreted as a sanctioning of that belief or act, a licence to do that which society could not prohibit.”

Stephen’s line of argument has been developed in our time by Lord Devlin in his essay entitled The Enforcement of Morals (1968). “The occasion for Devlin’s essay,” writes Himmelfarth, “was the Report of the Wolfenden Commission recommending the legalization of homosexuality between consenting adults. Against the Commission’s claim that private morality and immorality were ‘not the law’s business’, Devlin argued that ‘the suppression of vice is as much the law’s business as the suppression of subversive activities; it is not more possible to define a sphere of private morality than it is to define private subversive activity.’”

As we know, the Wolfenden Commission’s recommendation with regard to homosexuality was accepted by the English parliament, which

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demonstrates the power – the highly destructive power – that the application of Mill’s Principle has acquired in our times, a power that Mill himself would probably have deplored. Indeed, a completely consistent application of the Principle would probably lead to the sweeping away of prohibitions against such activities as euthanasia, incest and prostitution on the grounds that these are within the sphere of private morality or immorality and so of no concern to the State. But then, asks Devlin, “if prostitution is... not the law’s business, what concern has the law with the ponce or the brothel-keeper...? The Report recommends that the laws which make these activities criminal offences should be maintained... and brings them... under the heading of exploitation.... But in general a ponce exploits a prostitute no more than an impresario exploits an actress.”

Mill justifies the prohibition of certain acts, such as public decency, on the grounds that they “are a violation of good manners, ... coming thus within the category of offences against others”.

And yet, as Jonathan Wolff points out, it is difficult to see how such a prohibition can be justified on the basis of the Harm Principle alone. For “what harm does ‘public indecency’ do? After all, Mill insists that mere offence is no harm. Here Mill, without being explicit, seems to allow customary morality to override his adherence to the Liberty Principle. Few, perhaps, would criticize his choice of policy. But it is hard to see how he can render this consistent with his other views: indeed, he appears to make no serious attempt to do so. “Once we begin to consider examples of this kind we begin to understand that following Mill’s ‘once simple principle’ would lead to a society of a kind never seen before, and, perhaps, one which we would never wish to see...”

And so, while English liberalism of the Mills variety carefully sought to protect society both from the continental-style tyranny of one man, and from the American-style tyranny of the majority, it ended up delivering society into a series of tyrannies of the minorities, which is best exemplified by the European Human Rights Act that is devastating Christian faith and morality in contemporary Britain. This should not surprise us; for liberalism is in essence a pagan doctrine, owing its origin more to fifth-century Athens than to any period of Christian history. Mills extolled the Liberty or Harm Principle not simply because it supposedly guaranteed freedom from tyranny and the triumph of truth, but because it fostered that ideal of the human being, vigorous, independent, unafraid of being different, even eccentric, which he found in Classical Greece.

282 Wolff, op. cit., pp. 140-141. For the difficulties created for Mills’ theory by public indecency, see several articles in Philosophy Now, issue 76, November-December, 2009.
**Utopian Socialism**

In 1844 Engels published *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, the first major exposé of the terrible plight of the English proletariat. Marx built on this work to argue that the workers would not better their lot through helping themselves, and still less through receiving help from governments or employers, but through revolution. At first it seemed that the workers agreed...

Thus the result of increasing poverty for the great majority in the 1840s, writes Hobsbawm, “was social revolution in the form of spontaneous risings of the urban and industrial poor”, which “made the revolution of 1848 on the continent, the vast Chartist movement in Britain. Nor was discontent confined to the labouring poor. Small and inadaptable businessmen, petty-bourgeois, special sections of the economy, were also the victims of the Industrial Revolution and of its ramifications. Simple-minded labourers reacted to the new system by smashing the machines which they thought responsible for their troubles; but a surprisingly large body of local businessmen and farmers sympathized profoundly with these Luddite activities of their labourers, because they too saw themselves as victims of a diabolical minority of selfish innovators. The exploitation of labour which kept its incomes at subsistence level, thus enabling the rich to accumulate the profits which financed industrialization (and their own ample comforts), antagonized the proletarian. However, another aspect of this diversion of national income from the poor to the rich, from consumption to investment, also antagonized the small entrepreneur. The great financiers, the tight community of home and foreign ‘fund-holders’ who received what all paid in taxes... - something like 8 per cent of the entire national income - were perhaps even more unpopular among small businessmen, farmers and the like than among labourers, for these knew enough about money and credit to feel a personal rage at their disadvantage. It was all very well for the rich, who could raise all the credit they needed, to clamp rigid deflation and monetary orthodoxy on the economy after the Napoleonic Wars; it was the little man who suffered, and who, in all countries and at all times in the nineteenth century demanded easy credit and financial unorthodoxy. Labour and the disgruntled petty-bourgeois on the verge of toppling over into the unpropertied abyss, therefore shared common discontents. These in turn united them in the mass movements of ‘radicalism’, ‘democracy’ or ‘republicanism’ of which the British Radicals, the French Republicans and the American Jacksonian Democrats were the most formidable between 1815 and 1848.”

284 Hobsbawm, *op. cit.*, pp. 54-55.

Violent collectivist reaction to the excesses of liberal individualism seemed inevitable. However, there were still some who can be called socialist but who believed in peaceful reform and the importance of individuals. Thus M.S. Anderson writes: “Two main schools of thought can be distinguished within [early nineteenth-century socialism]. On the one hand was that which traced from the Jacobin regime of 1793-94 in France and which was
uncompromisingly activist and power-oriented. Represented from the 1830s onwards most clearly by the fanatical professional revolutionary Auguste Blanqui, it believed that the new age could be ushered in, in any existing society, only by a violent coup d’état which must be the work of an enlightened minority, the agents of an inexorable historical process. Once established in power, this minority would establish a regime based on complete social and political equality, the end towards which history was inescapably moving. After some unavoidable coercion the majority, their eyes opened by education, would embrace the new regime with enthusiasm. It would then become permanent and unalterable, since no man, as a rational being, could wish to change it. Aspirations of this kind were first given practical expression in the Babeuf conspiracy of 1796 in Paris. Through the Conspiration pour l’égalité of Buonarotti, a history of that conspiracy published in 1828 which became ‘the manual of the communist movement in the 1830s and 1840s and the chief source of its ideology’, they were to remain part of the European, later the world, revolutionary vision until our own day.

“Side by side with this harsh and uncompromising scheme there developed another current of thought, represented in Great Britain by Robert Owen and in France by Charles Fourier and to a lesser extent Louis Blanc and that most idiosyncratic of thinkers, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon. These writers, dominated less by ideas of historical inevitability than by a desire for justice and for the lessening of human suffering, disliked the totalitarianism, the violence, the centralization of power which were essential to the Jacobin-Babouvist-Blanquist outlook. They dreamed rather of a new society, achieved peacefully or with a minimum of violence, in which patterns and initiatives would emerge from below. Owen and Fourier, the most extreme representatives of this attitude, envisaged the dissolution of central authority and its transfer to small self-contained communities based on a perfect division of labour.”

These “Utopian” Socialists were particularly influenced by the economic ideas of the so-called Philosophical Radicals such as Jeremy Bentham, Malthus, Ricardo and James Mill, the father of J.S. Mill. Thus Bertrand Russell writes: “[Utopian] Socialism... began in the heyday of Benthamism, and as a direct outcome of orthodox economics. Ricardo, who was intimately associated with Bentham, Malthus, and James Mill, taught that the exchange value of a commodity is entirely due to the labour expended in producing it. He published this theory in 1817, and eight years later Thomas Hodgskin, an ex-naval officer, published the first Socialist rejoinder, Labour Defended Against the Claims of Capital. He argued that if, as Ricardo taught, all value is conferred by labour, then all the reward ought to go to labour; the share at present obtained by the landowner and the capitalist must be mere extortion. Meanwhile Robert Owen, after much practical experience as a manufacturer, had become convinced of the doctrine which soon came to be called

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Socialism. (The first use of the word ‘Socialist’ occurs in 1827, when it is applied to the followers of Owen.) Machinery, he said, was displacing labour, and *laisser-faire* gave the working classes no adequate means of combating mechanical power. The method which he proposed for dealing with the evil was the earliest form of modern Socialism.

“Although Owen was a friend of Bentham, who had invested a considerable amount of money in Owen's business, the Philosophical Radicals did not like his new doctrines; in fact, the advent of Socialism made them less Radical and less philosophical than they had been. Hodgskin secured a certain following in London, and James Mill was horrified. He wrote:

“‘Their notions of property look ugly;... they seem to think that it should not exist, and that the existence of it is an evil to them. Rascals, I have no doubt, are at work among them... The fools, not to see that what they madly desire would be such a calamity to them as no hands but their own could bring upon them.’

“This letter, written, in 1831, may be taken as the beginning of the long war between Capitalism and Socialism. In a later letter, James Mill attributes the doctrine to the ‘made nonsense’ of Hodgskin, and adds: ‘These opinions if they were to spread, would be the subversion of civilized society; worse than the overwhelming deluge of Huns and Tartars.’”

“His creed,” writes Berlin, “was summarised in the sentence inscribed at the head of his journal, *The New Moral World*: ‘Any general character, from the best to the worst, from the most ignorant to the most enlightened, may be given to any community, even the world at large, by the application of proper means, which means are to a great extent at the command and under the control of those who have influence in the affairs of men.’ He had triumphantly demonstrated the truth of his theory by establishing model conditions in his own cotton mills in New Lanark, limiting working hours, and creating provision for health and a savings fund. By this means he increased the productivity of his factory and raised immediately the standard of living of his workers, and, what was even more impressive to the outside world, trebled his own fortune. New Lanark became a centre of pilgrimage for kings and statesmen, and, as the first successful experiment in peaceful co-operation between labour and capital, had a considerable influence on the history both of socialism and of the working class. His later attempts at practical reform were less successful. Owen, who died in deep old age in the middle of the nineteenth century, was the last survivor of the classical period of rationalism, and, his faith unshaken by repeated failures, believed until the

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end of his life in the omnipotence of education and the perfectibility of man.”

However, Owen’s later schemes failed, and kind-hearted entrepreneurs remained few and far between. Therefore only state action could solve the problem, thought John Stuart Mill – a writer more renowned for his development of liberalism. But it was while revising “his Principles of Political Economy,” writes Barzun, “that Mill broke with the liberal school by asserting that the distribution of the national product could be redirected at will and that it should be so ordered for the general welfare. That final phrase, perpetually redefined, was a forecast…. It was [its] underlying idea – essential socialism – that ultimately triumphed, taking the twin form of Communism and the Welfare State, either under the dictatorship of a party and its leader or under the rule of a democratic parliament and democracy.”

However, the English liberal solutions of self-help and education (Owen) and redistribution of wealth (Mill) were rejected by radical thinkers on the continent, especially in France. The most radical was the anarchist Proudhon, who anticipated the nihilists of the following generation by calling for the destruction of all authorities, even God. “The Revolution is not atheistic, in the strict sense of the word… it does not deny the absolute, it eliminates it…” ‘The first duty of man, on becoming intelligent and free, is to continually hunt the idea of God out of his mind and conscience. For God, if he exists, is essentially hostile to our nature… Every step we take in advance is a victory in which we crush Divinity.’ “Humanity must be made to see that ‘God, if there is a God, is its enemy.’”

It was Proudhon who uttered the famous words: “What is property? Property is theft.” Marx disagreed with the latter statement insofar as it presupposed real rights in property. Nevertheless, he admitted the importance of Proudhon’s analysis of private property relations. “The two forces,” writes Berlin, “which Proudhon conceived as fatal to social justice and the brotherhood of man were the tendency towards the accumulation of capital, which led to the continual increase of inequalities of wealth, and the tendency directly connected with it, which openly united political authority with economic control, and so was designed to secure a growth of a despotic plutocracy under the guise of free liberal institutions. The state became, according to him, an instrument designed to dispossess the majority for the benefit of a small minority, a legalised form of robbery…”

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287 Berlin, Karl Marx, London: Fontana, 195, pp. 32-33. Owen also wanted to abolish the family….
288 Barzun, op. cit., pp. 527-528.
290 Berlin, op. cit., pp. 82-83.
Other French thinkers tried to be more constructive. Among them was the Comte de Saint-Simon, who saw the salvation of society in its rationalist reconstruction on the basis of science.

One of Saint-Simon’s disciples was Auguste Comte (1798-1857), who founded the extremely influential doctrine of positivism. “Comte,” writes Norman Stone, “held that all knowledge passed through three successive stages of development, where it is systematized according to (respectively) theological, metaphysical, and ‘positive’ or scientific principles. The theological and metaphysical states had to be discarded in order to arrive at the state of true knowledge, which is science. Comte placed the sciences in a kind of hierarchy with a new “science of society”, or sociology, at the summit. The social scientists’ task was “to know in order to foresee, and to foresee in order to know”.

Comtean positivism is one of the corner-stones of the modern world-view; and his idea of science as the only true knowledge became as accepted in the capitalist West as in the communist East.

Another Utopian Socialist figure was Charles Fourier. He believed in the old chiliastic dream of Paradise on earth, in which men would live to be 144 years old. He had other dreams, too: “he believed that the world would last precisely 80,000 years and that by the end of that time every soul would have traveled 810 times between the earth and certain other planets which he regarded as certainly inhabited, and would have experienced a succession of existences to the precise number of 1626!”

Before leaving the French thinkers, we should briefly take note of the great historian Jules Michelet. In the first half of his book, The People, written shortly before the 1848 revolution, he analysed industrial society in a way that anticipated Marx, but which was broader in scope and more balanced in its vision. “Taking the classes one by one, the author shows how all are tied into the social-economic web – each, exploiting or being exploited, and usually both extortionist and victim, generating by the very activities which are necessary to win its survival irreconcilable antagonisms with its neighbours,

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291 Stone, op. cit., p. 790.
292 Hieromonk Damascene (Christensen), Father Seraphim Rose: His Life and Writings, Platina, Ca.: St. Herman of Alaska Press, 2003, p. 623.
293 Wilson, op. cit., p. 89. These early socialists, in spite of their materialist bent of mind, were peculiarly susceptible to quasi-religious visions. Thus Saint-Simon had visions of Charlemagne, and it was revealed to him “in a vision that it was Newton and not the Pope whom God had elected to sit beside Him and to transmit to humanity His purposes” (Wilson, op. cit., p. 83). As for Owen, “he came in his last days to believe that all the magnanimous souls he had known, Shelley, Thomas Jefferson, Channing, the Duke of Kent… - all those who when living had listened to him with sympathy, of whom he had felt that they had really shared his vision, and who were lost to him now through death - he came to believe that they were returning from the other world, to make appointments with him and keep them, to talk to him and reassure him” (Wilson, op. cit., p. 97).
yet unable by climbing higher in the scale to escape the general degradation. The peasant, eternally in debt to the professional moneylender or the lawyer and in continual fear of being dispossessed, envies the industrial worker. The factory worker, virtually imprisoned and broken in will by submission to his machines, demoralizing himself still further by dissipation during the few moments of freedom he is allowed, envies the worker at a trade. But the apprentice to a trade belongs to his master, is servant as well as workman, and he is troubled by bourgeois aspirations. Among the bourgeoisie, on the other hand, the manufacturer, borrowing from the capitalist and always in danger of being wrecked on the shoal of overproduction, drives his employees as if the devil were driving him. He gets to hate them as the only uncertain element that impairs the perfect functioning of the mechanism; the workers take it out in hating the foreman. The merchant, under pressure of his customers, who are eager to get something for nothing, brings pressure on the manufacturer to supply him with shoddy goods; he leads perhaps the most miserable existence of all, compelled to be servile to his customers, hated by and hating his competitors, making nothing, organizing nothing. The civil servant, underpaid and struggling to keep up his respectability, always being shifted from place to place, has not merely to be polite like the tradesman, but to make sure that his political and religious views do not displease the administration. And, finally, the bourgeoisie of the leisure class have tied up their interests with the capitalists, the least public-spirited members of the nation, and they live in continual terror of communism. They have now wholly lost touch with the people. They have shut themselves up in their class; and inside their doors, locked so tightly, there is nothing but emptiness and chill. . . .

“‘Man has come to form his soul according to his material situation. What an amazing thing! Now there is a poor man’s soul, a rich man’s soul, a tradesman’s soul… Man seems to be only an accessory to his position.’”

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German Historicism

Although English and French socialism contributed to Marx’s thought, he probably owed even more to German atheism and historicism. Marx had no need of teachers in respect of atheism. There is some evidence that in his youth he turned against God and became a Satanist because God did not give him the girl he loved. 295 And he said: “I shall build my throne high overhead”, which is a more or less direct quotation of Satan’s words in Isaiah 14.13. Again, in his doctor’s thesis he wrote: “Philosophy makes no secret of the fact: her creed is the creed of Prometheus – ‘In a word, I detest all the gods.’ This is her device against all deities of heaven or earth who do not recognize as the highest divinity the human self-consciousness itself.” 296 In later life Marx was

296 Wilson, op. cit., p. 122.
known as “Old Nick”, and his little son used to call him “devil”. 297 “In spite of all Marx’s enthusiasm for the ‘human’,“ writes the socialist Edmund Wilson, “he is either inhumanly dark and dead or almost superhumanly brilliant”… 298

Marx’s atheism received an impetus from Feuerbach’s *The Essence of Christianity* (1841), which reduced God to a psychological idea: “The divine essence is nothing else than the essence of man; or, better, it is the essence of man when freed from the limitations of the individual, that is to say, actual corporeal man, objectified and venerated as an independent Being distinct from man himself.” 299 Marx, too, defined religion as a purely human product: “the heart of a heartless world, as it is the spirit of spiritless conditions… the opium of the people.” 300

He praised Feuerbach, according to Berlin, “for showing that in religion men delude themselves by inventing an imaginary world to redress the balance of misery in real life – it is a form of escape, a golden dream, or, in a phrase made celebrated by Marx, the opium of the people; the criticism of religion must therefore be anthropological in character, and take the form of exposing and analysing its secular origins. But Feuerbach is accused of leaving the major task untouched: he sees that religion is an anodyne unconsciously generated by the unhappy to soften the pain caused by the contradictions of the material world, but then fails to see that these contradictions must, in that case, be removed: otherwise they will continue to breed comforting and fatal delusions: the revolution which alone can do so must occur not in the superstructure – the world of thought – but in its material substratum, the real world of men and things. Philosophy has hitherto treated ideas and beliefs as possessing an intrinsic validity of their own; this has never been true; the real content of a belief is the action in which it is expressed. The real convictions and principles of a man or a society are expressed in their acts, not their words. Belief and act are one; if acts do not themselves express avowed beliefs, the beliefs are lies – ‘ideologies’, conscious or not, to cover the opposite of what they profess. Theory and practice are, or should be, one and the same. ‘Philosophers have previously offered various interpretations of the world. Our business is to change it.’” 301

This is an atheist variation on the Catholic-Protestant debate about faith and works – with Marx firmly on the Catholic side. Similarly, in the old philosophical debate about which is more real: time or eternity, Marx came down on the side of time. In this he was a child of his time; for by contrast with the Age of Reason, which had sought to elucidate truths that were valid

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297 Wilson, op. cit., pp. 118-119.
298 Wilson, op. cit., p. 152.
for all cultures and all times, for the Age of Revolution truth was ineluctably *historical*. And this meant not simply that the truth about a person or nation can be understood only in his or its historical context. It meant that truth itself changes with time. Thus God for the romantics was a dynamic, evolving being indistinguishable from nature and history, always overcoming contradictions and rising to ever higher unities.

It followed that there was no perfectly revealed religion, no absolute truth. “Christians must not be ‘vain and foolish’, Friedrich Schleiermacher warned, for their religion is not the only ‘revealed religion’. All religions are revealed from God. Christianity is the center around which all others gather. The disunity of religions is an evil and ‘only in the totality of all such possible forms can there be given the true religion,’ Schleiermacher added.”

This schema was developed by Friedrich Schelling, who distinguished “the three ages of history – the age of the Father, the age of the Son, and the age of the Holy Spirit which correspond to the events of creation, redemption and consummation. Schelling believed that Christianity was now passing through ‘the second age’ which Christ ‘incarnated’ almost two millennia ago. “In the vocabulary of the Romantics, Christ brought ‘the Idea of Christianity’ with Him. An ‘Idea’ is the invisible, unchangeable, and eternal aspect of each thing. (Plato was probably the first to teach ‘Idealism’.) Phenomena are visible, changeable, and temporary. Put another way, the Idea of Christianity (‘one Church’) is what the historical institution will become when it finishes growing, or, as Schelling would say, when God becomes fully God. One may compare its Idea to wheat and historical Christianity (the Idea) to what Protestantism, Roman Catholicism and Eastern Christianity will become. When the multiplicity of churches grows into the ecumenical Church, then, the Idea of Christianity, of ‘one church’, will have been actualised in space and time. It will be actualised in the coming of ‘the third age’, ‘the age of the Spirit’, ‘the age of consummation’.”

But it was a third Friedrich, Friedrich Hegel, who really initiated Marx into the doctrine of historicism. Hegel had always shown an extreme readiness always to keep “in step with the times”. Thus in 1806 he had hailed Napoleon’s victory at Jena as “the end of history” and the most perfect revelation of the “World Spirit”, and the democratic revolution that Napoleon embodied - as the manifestation of the perfect form of statehood. But after the fall of Napoleon and the restoration of the Prussian monarchy Hegel began to magnify Prussian monarchism as a still more perfect historical revelation of

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303 Azkoul, *op cit.*, pp. 77-78. Schleiermacher saw the essence of religion in the supposed fact that “it resigns at once all claims on anything that belongs either to science or morality... In essence it is neither thought nor action but intuitive contemplation and sentiment” (*Speeches on Religion to its Cultured Despisers*, 1799, Second Speech; in Comby, *op cit.*, p. 126).
the World Spirit. At the same time, he called for representative institutions in 1821, and in 1831 wrote in praise of the pending Reform Bill in England.

Such “flexibility”, while desirable for those wishing to keep up with the Zeitgeist, nevertheless required some justifying if it was to pass muster among intellectuals – and Hegel was a university professor. Hence the origin of his philosophy of history. This theory is important not only for an understanding of future movements, especially Marxism and Fascism, which borrowed much from Hegel, but also in that it constitutes a kind of synthesis of the two major movements of western thought that we have just examined: rationalism, with its political child, liberal democracy, and romanticism, with its offspring, the more collectivist and authoritarian forms of political life.

Hume had demonstrated the irrationality of rationalism, of “pure” empiricism, but without proposing a way out of the dilemma it posed for believers in God, the immortal soul, morality and spirituality in general. Kant had demonstrated that the application of reason presupposes a spirit transcending the empirical world, but could not explain how this free realm of spirit related to the causally determined world of matter. Hegel expanded the realm of spirit to engulf everything, making it into a kind of pantheistic god called the Absolute Idea or the World Spirit. To this Spirit, which is the All and can only be understood, like an organism, from the point of view of the All, he gave all the attributes that romanticism had rescued from the maw of devouring rationalism: emotion, mystery, dynamism, history, even nationalism. Thus to the bright empiricist-rationalist thesis, and its dark romantic-idealist antithesis, Hegel supplied a cloudy, metaphysical, empiricist-rationalist and romantic-idealist synthesis.304

“For Hegel as for Kant,” writes Niall Ferguson, “‘human arbitrariness and even external necessity’ had to be subordinated to ‘a higher necessity’. ‘The sole aim of philosophical inquiry,’ as he put it in the second draft of his Philosophical History of the World, was ‘to eliminate the contingent… In history,

304 And a nonsensically self-contradictory one at that. Thus Popper writes: “Hegel... teaches that everything is in flux, even essences. Essences and Ideas and Spirits develop; and their development is, of course, self-moving and dialectical... History, as he sees it, is the thought process of the ‘Absolute Spirit’ or ‘World Spirit’. It is the manifestation of this Spirit. It is a kind of huge dialectical syllogism; reasoned out, as it were, by Providence. The syllogism is the plan which Providence follows; and the logical conclusion arrived at it’s the end which Providence pursues – the perfection of the world. ‘The only thought,’ Hegel writes in his Philosophy of History, ‘with which Philosophy approaches History, is the simple conception of Reason; it is the doctrine that Reason is the Sovereign of the World, and that the History of the World, therefore, presents us with a rational process. This conviction and intuition is... no hypothesis in the domain of Philosophy. It is there proven... that Reason... is Substance; as well as Infinite Power;... Infinite Matter...; Infinite Form...; Infinite Energy... That this “Idea” or “Reason” is the True, the Eternal, the absolutely Powerful Essence; that it reveals itself in the World, and that in that World nothing else is revealed but this and its honour and glory – this is a thesis which, as we have said, has been proved in Philosophy, and is here regarded as demonstrated.’ This gush does not carry us far...” (op. cit., pp. 46, 47)
we must look for a general design, the ultimate end of the world. We must bring into history the belief and conviction that the realm of the will is not at the mercy of contingency.’ However, Hegel’s ‘higher necessity’ was not material but supernatural – indeed, in many ways it closely resembled the traditional Christian God, most obviously when he spoke of ‘an eternal justice and love, the absolute and ultimate end [of] which is truth in and for itself’. Hegel just happened to call his God ‘Reason’. Thus his basic ‘presupposition’ was ‘the idea that a reason governs the world and that history therefore is a rational process’: ‘That world history is governed by an ultimate design… whose rationality is… a divine and absolute reason – this is the proposition whose truth we must assume; its proof lies in the study of world history itself, which is the image and enactment of reason… Whoever looks at the world rationally will find that it assumes a rational aspect… The overall content of world history is rational and indeed has to be rational; a divine will rules supreme and is strong enough to determine the overall content. Our aim must be to discern this substance, and to do so, we must bring with us a rational consciousness.’ This somewhat circular argumentation was the second possible way [the first was Kant’s theory of phenomenal and noumenal realities] of dealing with the Cartesian claim that determinism did not apply to the non-material world. Hegel had no desire to give precedence to materialism: ‘The spirit and the course of its development are the true substance of history,’ he maintained; and the role of ‘physical nature’ was emphatically subordinate to the role of ‘the spirit’. But ‘the spirit’, he argued, was just as subject to deterministic forces as physical nature.

“What were these forces? Hegel equated what he called ‘the spirit’ with ‘the idea of human freedom’, suggesting that the historical process could be understood as the attainment of self-knowledge by this idea of freedom through a succession of ‘world spirits’. Adapting the Socratic form of philosophical dialogue, he posited the existence of a dichotomy within (to take the example which most concerned him) the national spirit, between the essential and the real, or the universal and the particular. It was the dialectical relationship between these which propelled history onwards and upwards in what has been likened to a dialectical waltz – thesis, antithesis, synthesis. But this was a waltz, Fred Astaire style, up a stairway. ‘The development, progress and ascent of the spirit towards a higher concept of itself… is accomplished by the debasement, fragmentation and destruction of the preceding mode of reality… The universal arises out of the particular and determinate and its negation… All this takes place automatically.’

“The implications of Hegel’s model were in many ways more radical than those of any contemporary materialist theory of history. In his contradiction-driven scheme of things, the individual’s aspirations and fate counted for nothing: they were ‘a matter of indifference to world history, which uses individuals only as instruments to further its own progress’. No matter what injustice might befall individuals, ‘philosophy should help us to understand
that the actual world is as it ought to be’. For ‘the actions of human beings in the history of the world produce an effect altogether different from what they themselves intend’ and ‘the worth of individuals is measured by the extent to which they reflect and represent the national spirit’. Hence ‘the great individuals of world history... are those who seize upon [the] higher universal and make it their own end’. Morality was therefore simply beside the point: ‘World history moves on a higher plane than that to which morality properly belongs.’ And, of course, ‘the concrete manifestation’ of ‘the unity of the subjective will and the universal’ – ‘the totality of ethical life and the realisation of freedom’ – was that fetish-object of Hegel’s generation: the (Prussian) state.

“With such arguments, Hegel had, it might be said, secularised predestination, translating Calvin’s theological dogma into the realm of history. The individual now lost control not only of his salvation in the afterlife, but also of his fate on earth... At the same time, there was at least a superficial resemblance between Hegel’s idealist philosophy of history and the materialist theories which had developed elsewhere. Hegel’s ‘cunning of Reason’ was perhaps a harsher master than Kant’s ‘Nature’ and Smith’s ‘Invisible Hand’; but these other quasi-deities performed analogous roles.”

Hegel made rebelliousness and revolution respectable, as being, not optional modes of thought and action, but inherent in the deepest nature of things. Rebelliousness was an aspect of “alienation”, and revolution – of the self-realisation of the World Spirit. For “Hegel’s dialectic,” writes Roger Scruton, “implies that all knowledge, all activity and all emotions exist in a state of tension, and are driven by this tension to enact a primeval drama. Each concept, desire and feeling exists first in a primitive, immediate and unified form – without self-knowledge, and inherently unstable, but nevertheless at home with itself. Its final ‘realisation’ is achieved only in a condition of ‘unity restored’, a homecoming to the primordial point of rest, but in a condition of achieved self-knowledge and fulfilled intention. In order to reach this final point, each aspect of spirit must pass through a long trajectory of separation, sundered from its home, and struggling to affirm itself in a world that it does not control. This state of alienation – the vale of tears – is the realm of becoming, in which consciousness is separated from its object and also from itself. There are as many varieties of alienation as there are forms of spiritual life; but in each form the fundamental drama is the same: spirit can know itself only if it ‘posits’ an object of knowledge – only if it invests its world with the idea of the other. In doing this it becomes other to itself, and lives through conflict and disharmony, until finally uniting with the other – as we unite with the object of science when fully understanding it; with the self when overcoming guilt and religious estrangement; with other people when joined in a lawful body politic.”

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Hegel’s philosophy, according to Arthur Schopenhauer, was “a colossal piece of mystification which will yet provide posterity with an inexhaustible theme for laughter at our times, that it is a pseudo-philosophy paralyzing all mental powers, stifling all real thinking, and, by the most outrageous misuse of language, putting in its place the hollowest, most senseless, thoughtless, and, as is confirmed by its success, most stupefying verbiage.”

And again: “The height of audacity in serving up pure nonsense, in stringing together senseless and extravagant mazes of words, such as had been only previously known in madhouses, was finally reached in Hegel, and became the instrument of the most barefaced, general mystification that has ever taken place, with a result which will appear fabulous to posterity, as a monument to German stupidity.” 307

Hegel’s historicism, writes Golo Mann, is “a fantastic, almost mad, almost successful [!] attempt to give an answer to every question every asked, and to assign to every answer ever given to every question a historical place within his own great, final answer – an attempt to create being dialectically from thought, to reconcile idea and reality and to overcome the cleavage between self and non-self. It was this cleavage – the existence of the self in an alien world – that Hegel made his starting-point. What he found was the identity of everything with everything, of God with the world, of logic with reality, of motion with rest, of necessity with freedom. The world spirit is everywhere, in nature, in man, in the history of man. The spirit, alienated from itself in nature, comes into its own in man. This process takes place on the one hand in the true history of peoples and states, and on the other in art, religion and philosophy. All these spheres correspond to each other; what is accomplished in each individual sector belongs to the whole and fits into it or nothing will be accomplished. ‘As far as the individual is concerned each person cannot in any even help being the child of his time. So too philosophy is the expression of its time in ideas.’ ‘He who expresses and accomplishes what his time wills is the great man of his time.’ Every present is always a single whole, just as the history of mankind is its general lines a whole. It finds expression in peoples, states and civilizations, of which the west European or, as Hegel calls it, the Germanic is the highest so far attained. Will there be higher ones? On this point the philosopher is silent. One can only understand the past, and the present to the extent that it is the final product of all pasts which are preserved in it. The future cannot be explored or understood; it does not exist for the spirit. No other historical thinker was so little concerned with the future as Hegel. What he hinted at, or what followed from his doctrine, was that the future would be something entirely different from the past. For philosophy comes late, at the end of an epoch. It does not come to change or improve, but merely to understand and to express; it constructs in the realm of the spirit what has already been constructed in the realm of reality. ‘When philosophy paints its picture in grey on grey, it means that a form of life has

307 Schopenhauer, *On the Basis of Morality; Criticism of the Kantian Philosophy.*
grown old, and by painting it grey on grey it cannot be restored to its youth, but is only recognised...’ This applies to all true philosophies, and is most valid for the philosophy of all philosophies, namely the Hegelian, which brings to an end the epoch of all epochs: the age of Protestantism, enlightenment and revolution. What was still to come? Hegel shrugged his shoulders sadly at this question. His philosophy gave no answer, and given its nature could not venture to attempt one. ‘The spirit is in its full essence in the present...’ But this philosophy of fulfilment, this song of praise of Man-God contains an element of pessimism: after 1815 nothing further is to be expected.

“Though Hegel’s philosophy as a whole contains rest, fulfilment and finality, it is full of unrest and struggle, both in the realm of the spirit and of reality. The spirit is never content with what has been achieved, it always seeks new conflicts, it must struggle to find and express itself anew. States and peoples are never at rest, they come into conflict and one of them must give way. The world spirit advances by catastrophes, and its path is marked by forms that are used up, emptied, and jettisoned. Quiet is only apparent quiet, lull before a new storm; as mere rest it is of no interest to the historian. ‘Epochs of happiness are empty pages in the history of the world.’ History does not exist for the happiness, the idyllic contentment of the individual. The goal is set high: the reconciliation of all contradictions, absolute justice, complete knowledge, the incarnation of reason on earth, the presence of God. The road to it is one of exertion and ever new confusion. But what has happened is the only thing that could have happened and how it happened was right. Terrible things occurred; the rise of the Roman Empire was terrible and terrible was its fall. But everything had a purpose and was as it should be. Julius Caesar was murdered after he had done what the age wanted from him; the Roman Empire collapsed after it had completed its historical mission. Otherwise how could it have fallen? It is useless to lament the abysses of history, the crimes of power, the sufferings of good men. The world spirit is right in the end, its will will be obeyed, its purpose fulfilled; what does it care about the happiness or unhappiness of individuals?308 ‘The real is rational and the rational is the real.’ When something ceases to be rational, when the spirit has already moved on, it will wither away and die. The individual may not understand his fate because he is liable to over-estimate himself and believes that history revolves around his person at the centre. The philosopher who perceives the kernel in the multi-coloured rind of what occurs will provide the insight too.

308 “The deeds of Great Men, of the Personalities of World History,... must not be brought into collision with irrelevant moral claims. The Litany of private virtues, of modesty, humility, philanthropy, and forbearance, must not be raised against them. The History of the World can, in principle, entirely ignore the circle within which morality... lies.” (Popper, op. cit., pp. 67-68) (V.M.)
“Power, and war, which creates and enhances power, cannot be omitted from all this. Man only realizes himself in the state and the state exists only where there is power to defend and attack. Might gives right. It is unlikely, it is in fact impossible, that the state without right on its side will win. What sort of right? Not a universally valid, pale right invented by stoicist philosophers, but historical right, the superiority of the historical mission. Thus right was on the side of the Spaniards against the Peruvians, in spite of all their cruelty and deceit; right was on Napoleon’s side against the antiquated German Empire. Later, on the other hand, right was on the side of allied Europe against Napoleon only because, the professor concluded after much puzzling over this problem in his study, the arrogant Emperor, himself now outdated, gave the Allies the right to conquer him, and only because he put himself in the wrong could he be conquered. Success, the outcome, provide the justification; in power there lies truth…”

Hegel’s Political Philosophy

Hegel’s philosophy is manifestly false. Nevertheless, in view of its historical importance, we need to study it, and in particular his political philosophy, in a little more detail.

“In the historical development of Spirit,” writes Bertrand Russell, expounding Hegel, “there have been three main phases: The Orientals, the Greeks and Romans, and the Germans. ‘The history of the world is the discipline of the uncontrolled natural will, bringing it into obedience to a universal principle and conferring subjective freedom. The East knew, and to the present day knows, only that One is free; the Greek and Roman world, that some are free; the German world knows that All are free.’ One might have supposed that democracy would be the appropriate form of government where all are free, but not so. Democracy and aristocracy alike belong to the stage where some are free, despotism to that where one is free, and monarchy to that in which all are free. This is connected with the very odd sense in which Hegel uses the word ‘freedom’. For him (and so far we may agree) there is no freedom without law; but he tends to convert this, and to argue that wherever there is law there is freedom. Thus ‘freedom’, for him, means little more than the right to obey the law.

“As might be expected, he assigns the highest role to the Germans in the terrestrial development of Spirit. ‘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 – that freedom which has its own absolute form itself as its purport.’

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310 “And after a eulogy of Prussia, the government of which, Hegel assures us, ‘rests with the official world, whose apex is the personal decision of the Monarch; for a final decision is, as shown above, an absolute necessity’, Hegel reaches the crowning conclusion of his work:
“This is a very superfine brand of freedom. It does not mean that you will be able to keep out of a concentration camp. It does not imply democracy, or a free press, or any of the usual Liberal watchwords, which Hegel rejects with contempt. When Spirit gives laws to itself, it does so freely. To our mundane vision, it may seem that the Spirit that gives laws is embodied in the monarch, and the Spirit to which laws are given is embodied in his subjects. But from the point of view of the Absolute the distinction between monarch and subjects, like all other distinctions, is illusory, and when the monarch imprisons a liberal-minded subject, that is still Spirit freely determining itself. Hegel praises Rousseau for distinguishing between the general will and the will of all. One gathers that the monarch embodies the general will, whereas a parliamentary majority only embodies the will of all...

“So much is Germany glorified that one might expect to find it the final embodiment of the Absolute Idea, beyond which no further development would be possible. But this is not Hegel’s view. On the contrary, he says that America is the land of the future, ‘where, in the ages that lie before us, the burden of the world’s history shall reveal itself – perhaps in a contest between North and South America.’ He seems to think that everything important takes the form of war. If it were suggested to him that the contribution of America to world history might be the development of a society without extreme poverty, he would not be interested. On the contrary, he says that, as yet, there is no real State in America, because a real State requires a division of classes into rich and poor.

“Nations, in Hegel, play the part that classes play in Marx. The principle of historical development, he says, is national genius. In every age, there is some one nation which is charged with the mission of carrying the world through the stage of the dialectic that it has reached. In our age, of course, this nation is Germany. But in addition to nations, we must also take account of world-

‘This is the point,’ he says, ‘which consciousness has attained, and these are the principal phases of that form in which Freedom has realized itself; for the History of the World is nothing but the development of the Idea of Freedom... That the History of the World... is the realization of Spirit, this is the true Theodicy, the justification of God in History... What has happened and is happening... is essentially His Work...’

“I ask whether I was not justified when I said that Hegel presents us with an apology for God and Prussia at the same time, and whether it is not clear that the state which Hegel commands us to worship as the Divine Idea on earth is not simply Frederick William’s Prussia from 1800 to 1830...

“We see that Hegel replaces the liberal elements in nationalism, not only by a Platonic-Prussian worship of the state, but also by a worship of history, of historical success. (Frederick William had been successful against Napoleon.)” (Popper, op. cit., pp. 48-49, 58). (V.M.)

311 “The Nation State is Spirit in its substantive rationality and immediate actuality,’ he writes; ‘it is therefore the absolute power on earth...The State is the Spirit of the People itself. The actual State is animated by this spirit, in all its particular affairs, its Wars, and its Institutions... The self-consciousness of one particular Nation is the vehicle for the...
historical individuals; these are men in whose aims are embodied the
dialectical transitions that are due to take place in their time. These men are
heroes, and may justifiably contravene ordinary moral rules…

“Hegel’s emphasis on nations, together with his peculiar conception of
‘freedom’, explains his glorification of the State – a very important aspect of
his political philosophy….

“We are told in The Philosophy of History that ‘the State is the actually
existing realized moral life’, and that all the spiritual reality possessed by a
human being he possesses only through the State. ‘For his spiritual reality
consists in this, that his own essence – Reason – is objectively present to him,
that it possesses objective immediate existence for him… For truth is the unity
of the universal and subjective Will, and the universal is to be found in the
State, in its laws, its universal and rational arrangements. The State is the
Divine Idea as it exists on earth.’

“… If the State existed only for the interests of individuals (as Liberals
contend), an individual might or might not be a member of the State. It has,
however, a quite different relation to the individual: since it is objective Spirit,
the individual only has objectivity, truth, and morality in so far as he is a
member of the State, whose true content and purpose is union as such. It is
admitted that there may be bad States, but these merely exist, and have no
ture reality, whereas a rational State is infinite in itself.

“It will be seen that Hegel claims for the State much the same position as St.
Augustine and his Catholic successors claimed for the Church. There are,
however, two respects in which the Catholic claim is more reasonable than
Hegel’s. In the first place, the Church is not a chance geographical association,
but a body united by a common creed, believed by its members to be of
supreme importance; it is thus by its very essence the embodiment of what
Hegel calls the ‘Idea’. In the second place, there is only one Catholic Church,
whereas there are many States. When each State, in relation to its subjects, is
made an absolute as Hegel makes it, there is difficulty in finding any
philosophical principle by which to regulate the relations between different

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development of the collective spirit;… in it, the Spirit of the Time invests its Will. Against this
Will, the other national minds have no rights: that Nation dominates the World.’” (Popper,
op. cit., p. 58).

312 Hegel goes on: “We must therefore worship the State as the manifestation of the Divine on
earth, and consider that, if it is difficult to comprehend Nature, it is infinitely harder to grasp
the Essence of the State… The State is the march of God through the world…. The State must
be comprehended as an organism… To the complete State belongs, essentially, consciousness
and thought. The State knows what it wills… The State is real; and… true reality is necessary.
What is real is eternally necessary… The State… exists for its own sake… The State is the
actually existing, realized moral life.” (in Popper, op. cit., p. 31).
States. In fact, at this point Hegel abandons his philosophical talk, falling back on the state of nature and Hobbes’s war of all against all.

“The habit of speaking of ‘the State’, as if there were only one, is misleading so long as there is no world State. Duty being, for Hegel, solely a relation of the individual to his State, no principle is left by which to moralize the relations between States. This Hegel recognizes. In external relations, he says, the State is an individual, and each State is independent as against the others. ‘Since in this independence the being-for-self of real spirit has its existence, it is the first freedom and highest honour of a people.’ He goes on to argue against any sort of League of Nations by which the independence of separate States might be limited. The duty of a citizen is entirely confined (so far as the external relations of his State are concerned) to upholding the substantial individuality and independence and sovereignty of his own State. It follows that war is not wholly an evil, or something that we should seek to abolish. The purpose of the State is not merely to uphold the life and property of the citizens, and this fact provides the moral justification of war, which is not to be regarded as an absolute evil or as accidental, or as having its cause in something that ought not to be.

“Hegel does not mean only that, in some situations, a nation cannot rightly avoid going to war. He means much more than this. He is opposed to the creation of institutions – such as a world government – which would prevent such situations from arising, because he thinks it a good thing that there should be wars from time to time. War, he says, is the condition in which we take seriously the vanity of temporal goods and things. (This view is to be contrasted with the opposite theory, that all wars have economic causes.) War has a positive moral value: ‘War has the higher significance that through it the moral health of peoples is preserved in their indifference towards the stabilizing of finite determinations.’ Peace is ossification; the Holy Alliance, and Kant’s League for Peace, are mistaken, because a family of states needs an enemy. Conflicts of States can only be decided by war; States being towards each other in a state of nature, their relations are not legal or moral. Their rights have their reality in their particular wills, and the interest of each State is its own highest law. There is no contrast of morals and politics, because States are not subject to ordinary moral laws.

“Such is Hegel’s doctrine of the State – a doctrine which, if accepted, justifies every internal tyranny and every external aggression that can possibly be imagined...”313 For “the march of world history stands outside virtue, vice and justice...”314

It is true that, as Barzun says: “What intelligent German who remembered 200 years of helplessness would want a weak [state]? In Hegel’s day, the state created by the Prussian awakening was less than 20 years old and must not be allowed to droop again.” (op.cit., p.
However, as Copleston points out, “it is essential to remember that Hegel is speaking throughout of the concept of the State, its ideal essence. He has no intention of suggesting that historical States are immune from criticism.”\footnote{Copleston, \textit{A History of Philosophy}, \textit{op. cit.}, vol. 7, part I: Fichte to Hegel, pp. 255-256.}

Nevertheless, the similarities between Hegel and the modern totalitarians, especially the Fascists, are clear: “(a) Nationalism, in the form of the historicist idea that the state is the incarnation of the Spirit (or now, of the Blood) of the state-creating nation (or race); one chosen nation (now, the chosen race) is destined for world domination. (b) The state as the natural enemy of all other states must assert its existence in war. (c) The state is exempt from any kind of moral obligation; history, that is, historical success, is the sole judge; collective utility is the sole principle of personal conduct; propagandist lying and distortion of the truth is permissible. (d) The ‘ethical’ idea of war (total and collectivist), particularly of young nations against older ones; war, fate and fame as most desirable goods. (e) The creative rôle of the Great Man, the world-historical personality, the man of deep knowledge and great passion (now, the principle of leadership). (f) The ideal of the heroic life (‘live dangerously’) and of the ‘heroic man’ as opposed to the petty bourgeois and his life of shallow mediocrity.”\footnote{Popper, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 62-63.}

Barzun has sought to lessen Hegel’s guilt somewhat: “Hegel did express himself in favor of a strong state. What intelligent German who remembered 200 years of helplessness would want a weak one?”\footnote{Barzun, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 508.}

True; and yet the desire for a strong state, which is compatible with many creeds and philosophies, need not be translated into the worship of the State as the Divine Idea on earth, which is in effect Hegel’s idea. As he put it: “the State is the basis and centre of all the concrete elements in the life of a people: of Art, Law, Morals, Religion, and Science…”\footnote{Popper, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 63.}

This is idolatry, State-worship, and the purest atheism...

Golo Mann writes penetratingly about Hegel: “If Hegel’s philosophy had been true, then it could not remain true: it must be treated as Hegel had treated all earlier philosophy, ‘set aside’, affirmed and denied at the same time. Hegel had started life as a Protestant and had somehow managed to bring Christianity even into his mature philosophy. His disciples or their disciples broke with Christianity and became atheists – an attitude which

\footnote{508). But while this reflection helps us to understand Hegel’s theory of the state from a psychological point of view, it in no way helps us to justify it from a moral point of view.}
could be derived from Hegel’s philosophy, if it was followed to its logical conclusion. They took it upon themselves to explain Christianity, like all religious belief, historically, as a reflection of social reality, as a self-misunderstanding. Hegel had spoken much of the reconciliation of idea and reality, but he had achieved this reconciliation only in the mind, through his philosophy; it was for philosophy to recognized retrospectively that what happened in reality was reasonable. Hegel’s successors, however, claimed that reality was not reasonable but must be made reasonable, not by dreams but by political action. Politics, rightly understood, was thus in the end the true philosophy. Hegel had spoken of the ‘truth of power’, and had meant the power of the state, of kings, of victorious armies. His followers spoke of the truth of revolutions, of majorities, of mass action. There was no need to fear the masses as Hegel had feared them. The rights of the private individual were not as important as liberals believed. The state could not be too powerful, provided it was a scientifically directed state, free from all superstition. Such a state would do away with the remains of the Middle Ages and make men free…”

So from Hildebrand to Hegel we have come full circle: from the absolute dominion of the Church in all spheres, including the State, to the absolute dominion of the State in all spheres, including the Church. The theories of Hegel and the “Hegelians” found their incarnation in the State-worshipping creeds of Communism and Fascism, the most evil in history.

Such is the fall of western civilisation, its thesis and antithesis, which has not yet found – or, more exactly, has not recovered (since it used to have it in the pre-schism, Orthodox period) - its synthesis. And until it does, only violent, destructive swings between thesis and antithesis can be expected…

**The Rise of America**

for all his admiration of the Prussian State, Hegel believed that “the final embodiment of the Absolute Idea, beyond which no further development would be possible”, was not Prussia, but America. And indeed, America was beginning to spread her wings... Of all the countries that can be called “European” in the cultural sense, America was the most “advanced” from the political point of view (just as Russia was the most “backward”). Its system of government was more democratic than any other; and the “scourges” of monarchy and aristocracy had been more effectively removed from America than from any other country. In spite of this, American democracy had its critics, even among democrats.

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319 Mann, *op. cit.*, p. 78.
320 However, he did say that America was “the final embodiment of the Absolute Idea, beyond which no further development would be possible” (in Stone, *op. cit.*, p. 790).
One of the best of them was Alexis de Tocqueville, whose *Democracy in America* was published in 1835. An important fault of American democracy was what de Tocqueville called “the tyranny of the majority”, whose power, he considered, threatened to become not only predominant, but irresistible.

“The moral authority of the majority is partly based on the notion that there is more enlightenment and wisdom in a numerous assembly than in a single man, and the number of the legislators is more important than how they are chosen. It is the theory of equality applied to brains. This doctrine attacks the last asylum of human pride; for that reason the minority is reluctant in admitting it and takes a long time to get used to it…

“The idea that the majority has a right based on enlightenment to govern society was brought to the United States by its first inhabitants; and this idea, which would of itself be enough to create a free nation, has by now passed into mores and affects even the smallest habits of life…”321

One effect, paradoxically, of this extreme freedom was an extreme intolerance of dissident, minority opinion. “I know of no country in which there is so little independence of mind and real freedom of discussion as in America. The majority raises formidable barriers around the liberty of opinion; within these barriers an author may write what he pleases, but woe to him if he goes beyond them.”322

This contributed to a general “dumbing down” of culture, although this cultivated Frenchman admitted it also prevented complete brutalization. “Few pleasures are either very refined or very coarse, and highly polished manners are as uncommon as great brutality of tastes. Neither men of great learning nor extremely ignorant communities are to be met with; genius becomes more rare, information more diffused. There is less perfection, but more abundance in all the productions of the arts.”323

This state of affairs was facilitated by the fact that there was no native American aristocracy, and few minority interests (except those of the Indians and Negroes) which were directly and permanently antagonistic to the interests of the majority. “Hence the majority in the United States has immense actual power and a power of opinion which is almost as great. When once its mind is made up on any question, there are, so to say, no obstacles which can retard, much less halt, its progress and give it time to hear the wails of those it crushes as it passes.

“The consequences of this state of affairs are fate-laden and dangerous for the future...”

One of the consequences was legislative instability, “an ill inherent in democratic government because it is the nature of democracies to bring new men to power.... Thus American laws have a shorter duration than those of any other country in the world today. Almost all American constitutions have been amended within the last thirty years, and so there is no American state which has not modified the basis of its laws within that period...

“As the majority is the only power whom it is important to please, all its projects are taken up with great ardour; but as soon as its attention is turned elsewhere, all these efforts cease; whereas in free European states, where the administrative authority has an independent existence and an assured position, the legislator’s wishes continue to be executed even when he is occupied by other matters.”

But, continues de Tocqueville, “I regard it as an impious and detestable maxim that in matters of government the majority of a people has the right to do everything, and nevertheless I place the origin of all powers in the will of the majority. Am I in contradiction with myself?

“There is one law which has been made, or at least adopted, not by the majority of this or that people, but by the majority of all men. That law is justice.

“Justice therefore forms the boundary to each people’s right.

“A nation is like a jury entrusted to represent universal society and to apply the justice which is its law. Should the jury representing society have greater power than that very society whose laws it applies?

“Consequently, when I refuse to obey an unjust law, I be no means deny the majority’s right to give orders; I only appeal from the sovereignty of the people to the sovereignty of the human race.”

In a believing age, instead of “the sovereignty of the human race”, the phrase would have been: “the sovereignty of God” or “the authority of the Church as the representative of God”. But after this obeisance to the atheist and democratic temper of his age, de Tocqueville does in fact invoke the sovereignty of God. For the essential fact is that the majority – even the majority of the human race – can be wrong, and that only God is infallible. “Omnipotence in itself seems a bad and dangerous thing. I think that its

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exercise is beyond man’s strength, whoever he be, and that only God can be omnipotent without danger because His wisdom and justice are always equal to His power. So there is no power on earth in itself so worthy of respect or vested with such a sacred right that I would wish to let it act without control and dominate without obstacles. So when I see the right and capacity to do all given to any authority whatsoever, whether it be called people or king, democracy or aristocracy, and whether the scene of action is a monarchy or a republic, I say: the germ of tyranny is there, and I will go look for other laws under which to live.

“My greatest complaint against democratic government as organised in the United States is not, as many Europeans make out, its weakness, but rather its irresistible strength. What I find most repulsive in America is not the extreme freedom reigning there, but the shortage of guarantees against tyranny.

“When a man or a party suffers an injustice in the United States, to whom can he turn? To public opinion? That is what forms the majority. To the legislative body? It represents the majority and obeys it blindly. To the executive power? It is appointed by the majority and serves as its passive instrument. To the police? They are nothing but the majority under arms. A jury? The jury is the majority vested with the right to pronounce judgement; even the judges in certain states are elected by the majority. So, however, iniquitous or unreasonable the measure which hurts you, you must submit.

“But suppose you were to have a legislative body so composed that it represented the majority without being necessarily the slave of its passions, an executive power having a strength of its own, and a judicial power independent of the other two authorities; then you would still have a democratic government, but there would be hardly any remaining risk of tyranny.”

The democratic government de Tocqueville had in mind here as preventing the tyranny of the majority was probably that of England, with its rule by “the king in parliament”, its respect for custom and strong aristocratic element. England’s aristocratic element did indeed protect the English from some of the excesses of democracy for a time, eliciting the comment of Constantine Petrovich Pobedonostsev that parliamentary government was possible only in England. Nevertheless, the process of further democratization was inexorable.

In this context, and in the light of our modern experience of democracy, it will be useful to examine the estimate of de Tocqueville given by his fellow Frenchman, Jean-François Revel: “Tocqueville the visionary depicted with stunning precision the coming ascension of the omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient state that twentieth-century man knows so well; the state as

327 De Tocqueville, op. cit., pp. 311-313.
protector, entrepreneur, educator; the physician-state, helpful and predatory, tyrant and guardian, economist, journalist, moralist, shipper, trader, advertiser, banker, father and jailer all at once. The state ransoms and the state subsidizes. It settles without violence into a wheedling, meticulous despotism that no monarchy, no tyranny, no political authority of the past had the means to achieve. Its power borders on the absolute partly because it is scarcely felt, having increased by imperceptible stage at the wish of its subjects, who turn to it instead of to each other. In these pages by Tocqueville we find the germ both of George Orwell’s 1984 and David Riesman’s The Lonely Crowd.

“In one sense, history has endorsed Tocqueville’s reasoning and, in another, has invalidated it. He has been proved right insofar as the power of public opinion has indeed increased in the democracies through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. But public opinion has not grown more consistent or uniform; it has in fact become increasingly volatile and diversified. And the state, instead of gaining strength in proportion to its gigantism, is increasingly disobeyed and challenged by the very citizens who expect so much from it. Submerged by the demands on it, called on to solve all problems, it is being steadily stripped of the right to regulate things.

“So the omnipotence based on consensus that Tocqueville forecast is only one side of the coin of modern government. The other is an equally general impotence to deal with the conflicting daily claims made on it by constituents eager for aid but less and less willing to assume obligations. By invading every area of life, the democratic state has stuffed itself with more responsibilities than powers. The very contradictions among special interests that are as legitimate as they are incompatible, all expecting to be treated with equal goodwill, show that the state’s duties are expanding faster than its means of performing them. There is no denying how burdensome a tutelary government is on society – provided we add that its expansion makes it vulnerable, often paralysing it in its relations with client groups that are quicker to harry it than obey it.

“This sort of behavior splinters democratic societies into separate groups, each battling for advantage and caring little for the interests of others or society as a whole. Public opinion, instead of being united by uniform thinking, is fragmented into a variety of cultures that can be so different in tastes, ways of living, attitudes and language that they understand each other only dimly, if at all. They coexist but do not mingle. Public opinion in today’s democracies forms an archipelago, not a continent. Each island in the chain ranks its own distinctiveness above membership in a national group and even higher above its association with a group of democratic nations.

“In one sense, we do live in a mass era as residents of a ‘planetary village’ where manners and fashions blend. But, paradoxically, we also live in an age
of the triumph of minorities, of a juxtaposition of widely differing attitudes. While it is obvious that the passion for equality, identified by Tocqueville as the drive wheel of democracy, generates uniformity, let’s not forget that democracy also rests on a passion for liberty, which fosters diversity, fragmentation, unorthodoxy. Plato, democracy’s shrewdest enemy, saw this when he compared it to a motley cloak splashed with many colours. In a democracy, he said, everyone claims the right to lives as he chooses [Republic 8], so that ways of living multiply and jostle each other. To Aristotle, too, liberty was the basic principle of democracy. He broke this down into two tenets: ‘for all to rule and be ruled in turn’ and ‘a man should live as he likes’. In American democracy, the right to do one’s own thing is as much or more cherished than equality.”

Indeed, in the American tradition of democracy freedom for the propertied few was always more important than equality for the many. More important even than the Christianity that they so prided themselves on, which exhorted men to be “free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice” (1 Peter 2.16)...

We see this vice of American democracy also in international relations. Now, having been a colony that had won its independence, the United States has always been officially an anti-imperialist State. So it is something of a surprise to discover that in the very year of the Declaration of Independence, leading American politicians were foreseeing the growth of an empire.

Thus Ferguson writes: “When, in the draft Articles of Confederation of July, 1776, John Dickinson proposed setting western boundaries of the states, the idea was thrown out at the committee stage. To George Washington the United States was a ‘nascent empire’, later an ‘infant empire’. Thomas Jefferson told James Madison he was ‘persuaded no constitution was ever before as well calculated as ours for extending extensive empire and self-government.’ The initial ‘confederacy’ of thirteen would be ‘the nest from which all America, North and South [would] be peopled.’ Indeed, Jefferson used his inaugural address in 1801 to observe that the short history of the United States had already furnished ‘a new proof for the falsehood of Montesquieu’s doctrine, that a republic can be preserved only in a small territory. The reverse is the truth.’ Madison agreed; in the tenth of the Federalist Papers he forcefully argued for ‘extend[ing] the sphere’ to create a larger republic. Alexander Hamilton too referred to the United States – in the opening paragraph of the first of the Federalist Papers as ‘in many respects the most interesting… empire… in the world.’ He looked forward eagerly to the emergence of a ‘great American system, superior to the control of all trans-Atlantic force of influence, and able to dictate the terms of connection between the Old and the New World.’”

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329 Ferguson, op. cit., p. 34.
In 1823 President James Monroe asserted his famous “Monroe doctrine”, which Ferguson calls “the fons et origo of American grand strategy”, asserting “as a principle... that the American continents, by the free and independent condition which they have assumed and maintain, are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European powers”. It was at about this time that America began to interfere in the affairs of Cuba – a stand-off that has continued to the present day. And in the course of the nineteenth century, the United States vigorously extended its empire westwards at the expense of the American Indians and of Mexico. Thus in 1846 the Americans provoked an unjust war against Mexico and annexed Texas. As for “the indigenous population [of North America],” writes Landes, it “was uprooted repeatedly to make way for land-hungry newcomers. The Indians fought back, the more so as settler expansion entailed repeated violations of ostensibly sacred and eternal agreements – as long as the sun would shine and the waters run. The white man broke faith at will, while the natives were slaughtered as ‘Indian givers’. Here... technology made the difference. Repeating weapons, batch- or mass-produced with roughly interchangeable parts, multiplied the firepower of even small numbers and made Indian resistance hopeless.”

Noam Chomsky writes: “Current estimates are that north of the Rio Grande, there were about twelve to fifteen million Native Americans at the time Columbus landed, something like that. By the time Europeans reached the continental borders of the United States, there were about 200,000. Okay: mass genocide. Across the whole Western Hemisphere, the population decline was probably on the order of from a hundred million people to about five million. That’s pretty serious stuff – it was horrifying right from the beginning in the early seventeenth century, then it got worse after the United States was established, and it just continued until finally the native populations were basically stuck away in little enclaves. The history of treaty violations by the United States is just grotesque: treaties with the Indian nations by law have a status the same as that of treaties among sovereign states, but throughout our history nobody ever paid the slightest attention to them – as soon as they wanted more land, you just forgot the treaty and robbed it; it’s a very ugly and vicious history. Hitler in fact used the treatment of the Native Americans as a model, explicitly – he said, that’s what we’re going to do with the Jews...”

The Russian poet Alexander Pushkin had, like Hegel, been attracted at first to the United States. However, after reading a review of a book on the North American Indians, he changed his mind: “My respect for this new people and its constitution, the fruit of the newest enlightenment,” he wrote, “has been severely shaken. With amazement we have seen democracy in its disgusting cynicism, in its cruel prejudices, in its intolerable tyranny...”

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330 Landes, <i>op. cit.</i>, p. 305.
Marx’s Historical Materialism

By the mid-1840s, writes Edmund Wilson, Marx and Engels had taken what they wanted from the socialist utopians. “From Saint-Simon they accepted as valid his [supposed] discovery that modern politics was simply the science of regulating production; from Fourier, his arraignment of the bourgeois, his consciousness of the ironic contrast between ‘the frenzy of speculation, the spirit of all-devouring commercialism’, which were rampant under the reign of the bourgeoisie and ‘the brilliant promises of the Enlightenment’ which had preceded them; from Owen, the realization that the factory system must be the root of the social revolution. But they saw that the mistake of the utopian socialists had been to imagine that socialism was to be imposed upon society from above by disinterested members of the upper classes. The bourgeoisie as a whole, they believed, could not be induced to go against its own interests. The educator, as Marx was to write in his Theses on Feuerbach, must, after all, first have been educated: he is not really confronting disciples with a doctrine that has been supplied him by God; he is merely directing a movement of which he is himself a member and which energizes him and gives him his purpose. Marx and Engels combined the aims of the utopians with Hegel’s process of organic development.” 332

In this way they substituted Hegel’s idea of the historical role of nations with that of the role of class. “The history of all hitherto existing society is a history of class struggle”, wrote Marx and Engels in The Communist Manifesto. Marx claimed that this was his only original contribution to Marxism. Be that as it may (Plato, as Sir Karl Popper points out, had said something similar), it was certainly one of the two fundamental axioms of his theory.

As Robert Service writes, “the founders of Marxism put class struggle at the forefront of their analysis; they said the working class (or the proletariat) would remake the politics, economics and culture of the entire world... Salvation according to Marx and Engels would come not through an individual but through a whole class. The proletariat’s experience of degradation under capitalism would give it the motive to change the nature of society; and its industrial training and organisation would enable it to carry its task through to completion. The collective endeavour of socialist workers would transform the life of well-meaning people – and those who offered resistance would be suppressed...

“[Marx’s] essential argument was that the course of change had been conditioned not by the brilliance of ‘great men’ or by dynamic governments but by the clash of social classes – and Marx insisted that classes pursued their objective economic interests. The French ‘proletariat’ had lost its recurrent conflict with the bourgeoisie since the end of the eighteenth century. But Marx

332 Wilson, op. cit., p. 143.
was undeterred. He had asserted in his *Theses on Feuerbach*, penned in 1845: ‘Philosophers have hitherto only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it.’

“The ultimate objective for Marx and Engels was the creation of a worldwide communist society. They believed that communism had existed in the distant centuries before ‘class society’ came into being. The human species had supposedly known no hierarchy, alienation, exploitation or oppression. Marx and Engels predicted that such perfection could and inevitably would be reproduced after the overthrow of capitalism. ‘Modern communism’, however, would have the benefits of the latest technology rather than flintstone. It would be generated by global proletarian solidarity rather than by disparate groups of illiterate, innumerate cavemen. And it would put an end to all forms of hierarchy. Politics would come to an end. The state would cease to exist. There would be no distinctions of personal rank and power. All would engage in self-administration on an equal basis. Marx and Engels chastised communists and socialists who would settle for anything less. They were maximalists. No compromise with capitalism [although Engels was a factory owner] or parliamentarism was acceptable to them. They did not think of themselves as offering the watchword of ‘all or nothing’ in their politics. They saw communism as the inevitable last stage in human history; they rejected their predecessors and rival contemporaries as ‘utopian’ thinkers who lacked a scientific understanding.”

Later, in *Das Kapital* (1867), Marx explained how communism would come about in terms that sound eerily prophetic today, in 2009: "Owners of capital will stimulate the working class to buy more and more expensive goods, houses and technology, pushing them to take more and more expensive credits, until their debt becomes unbearable. The unpaid debt will lead to bankruptcy of banks, which will have to be nationalised, and the State will have to take the road which will eventually lead to communism."

But we don't have to be Marxists in order to reach this truth. Orthodoxy believes in a symphony of powers, with the spiritual power, the Church, checking and instructing the secular power, the State, so that it, too, will serve God. But if the spiritual power declines, the State will inevitably take its place, swallowing up more and more power to rule all aspects of the people's life. The logical end-result of that process is totalitarianism of one kind or another. So democracy and/or capitalism can never stop communism for long: only the resurrection of true religion can do that.

The other fundamental axiom of Marx's theory was his economic materialism, his teaching that economics is the foundation of all human civilization. Everything is determined, according to Marx, by man's struggle for economic survival, which in turn depends on his relationship to the

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economic conditions of production. The juridical, political, religious, aesthetic and philosophical aspects of man’s existence are all simply “ideological forms of appearance” of the only true reality, his economic position in society – that is, his class membership. As he put it in his famous epigram: “It is not the consciousness of man that determines his existence – rather, it is his social existence that determines his consciousness.”

For “I was led,” he wrote, “to the conclusion that legal relations, as well as forms of state, could neither be understood by themselves, nor explained by the so-called general progress of the human mind, but that they are rooted in the material conditions of life which Hegel calls... civil society. The anatomy of civil society is to be sought in political economy.”

“The single operative cause,” writes Berlin, “which makes one people different from another, one set of institutions and beliefs opposed to another is, so Marx now came to believe, the economic environment in which it is set, the relationship of the ruling class of possessors to those whom they exploit, arising from the specific quality of the tension which persists between them. The fundamental springs of action in the life of men, he believed, all the more powerful for not being recognised by them, are their relationships to the alignment of classes in the economic struggle: the factor, knowledge of which would enable anyone to predict successfully men’s basic line of behaviour, is their actual social position – whether they are outside or inside the ruling class, whether their welfare depends on its success or failure, whether they are placed in a position to which the preservation of the existing order is or is not essential. Once this is known, men’s particular personal motives and emotions become comparatively irrelevant to the investigation: they may be egoistic or altruistic, generous or mean, clever or stupid, ambitious or modest. Their natural qualities will be harnessed by their circumstances to operate in a given direction, whatever their natural tendency. Indeed, it is misleading to speak of a ‘natural tendency’ or an unalterable ‘human nature’. Tendencies may be classified either in accordance with the subjective feeling which they engender (and this is, for purposes of scientific prediction, unimportant), or in accordance with their actual aims, which are socially conditioned. Men behave before they start to reflect on the reasons for, or the justification of, their behaviour; the majority of the members of a community will act in a similar fashion, whatever the subjective motives for which they will appear to themselves to be acting as they do. This is obscured by the fact that in the attempt to convince themselves that their acts are determined by reasons or by moral or religious beliefs, men have tended to construct elaborate rationalisations of their behaviour. Nor are these rationalisations wholly powerless to affect action, for, growing into great institutions like moral codes or religious organisations, they often linger on long after the social pressures, to explain away which they arose, have disappeared. Thus these great organised illusions themselves become part of the objective social situation,

334 Marx, A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy.
part of the external world which modifies the behaviour of individuals, functioning in the same way as the invariant factors, climate, soil, physical organism, function in their interplay with social institutions.

“Marx’s immediate successors tended to minimise Hegel’s influence upon him; but his vision of the world crumbles and yields only isolated insights if, in the effort to represent him as he conceived himself, as the rigorous, severely factual social scientist, the great unifying, necessary pattern in terms of which he thought, is left out or whittled down.

“Like Hegel, Marx treats history as phenomenology. In Hegel the Phenomenology of the human Spirit is an attempt to show... an objective order in the development of human consciousness and in the succession of civilisations that are its concrete embodiment. Influenced by a notion prominent in the Renaissance, but reaching back to an earlier mystical cosmogony, Hegel looked upon the development of mankind as being similar to that of an individual human being. Just as in the case of a man a particular capacity, or outlook, or way of dealing with reality cannot come into being until and unless other capacities have first become developed – that is, indeed, the essence of the notion of growth or education in the case of individuals – so races, nations, churches, cultures, succeed each other in a fixed order, determined by the growth of the collective faculties of mankind expressed in arts, sciences, civilisation as a whole. Pascal had perhaps meant something of this kind when he spoke of humanity as a single, centuries old, being, growing from generation to generation. For Hegel all change is due to the movement of the dialectic, which works by a constant logical criticism, that is, by struggle against, and final self-destruction of, ways of thought and constructions of reason and feeling which, in their day, had embodied the highest point reached by the ceaseless growth (which for Hegel is the logical self-realisation) of the human spirit; but which, embodied in rules or institutions, and erroneously taken as final and absolute by a given society or outlook, thereby become obstacles to progress, dying survivals of a logically ‘transcended’ stage, which by their very one-sidedness breed logical antimonies and contradictions by which they are exposed and destroyed. Marx translated this vision of history as a battlefield of incarnate ideas into social terms, of the struggle between classes. For him alienation (for that is what Hegel, following Rousseau and Luther and an earlier Christian tradition, called the perpetual self-divorce of men from unity with nature, with each other, with God, which the struggle of thesis against antithesis entailed) is intrinsic to the social process, indeed it is the heart of history itself. Alienation occurs when the results of men’s acts contradict their true purposes, when their official values, or the parts they play, misrepresent their real motives and needs and goals. This is the case, for example, when something that men have made to respond to human needs – say, a system of laws, or the rules of musical composition – acquires an independent status of its own, and is seen by men, not as something created by them to satisfy a common social want
(which may have disappeared long ago), but as an objective law or institution, possessing eternal, impersonal authority in its own right, like the unalterable laws of Nature as conceived by scientists and ordinary men, like God and His Commandments for a believer. For Marx the capitalist system is precisely this kind of entity, a vast instrument brought into being by intelligible material demands – a progressive improvement and broadening of life in its own day that generates its own intellectual, moral, religious beliefs, values and forms of life. Whether those who hold them know it or not, such beliefs and values merely uphold the power of the class whose interests the capitalist system embodies; nevertheless, they come to be viewed by all sections of society as being objectively and eternally valid for all mankind. Thus, for example, industry and the capitalist mode of exchange are not timelessly valid institutions, but were generated by the mounting resistance by peasants and artisans to dependence on the blind forces of nature. They had had their moment; and the values these institutions generated will change or vanish with them.³³⁵

Marx differed from Hegel also in his vision of the final outcome of the historical process. Whereas for Hegel the self-realization of the Divine Idea culminated in the Prussian State (although, looking towards America, he was inclined to hedge his bets), for Marx it culminated in the victory of the proletariat, and finally in the withering away of the now unnecessary state… One thing was certain: the bourgeoisie could not stand.

For Marx and Engels understood the characteristic of the industrial, bourgeois age that distinguished it from all previous ages – its dynamism. Whereas previous ages aimed to preserve the social structure in order to preserve their place in it, the bourgeois were in effect constantly changing it, knowing that technological advance was constantly making present relationships obsolete and unprofitable. Not only did it overthrow the old, patriarchal and feudal society that came before it: it was constantly working to overthrow itself.

“The bourgeoisie,” they wrote, “cannot exist without constantly revolutionizing the instruments of production, and thereby the relations of production, and with them the whole relations of society. Conservation of the old modes of production in unaltered form, was, on the contrary, the first condition of existence for all earlier industrial classes. Constant revolutionising of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones. All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their trace of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into the air.”³³⁶

³³⁵ Berlin, Karl Marx, op. cit.
But this constant change, though promoted by the bourgeoisie, at the same time built up the numbers and resources of the proletariat. “Not only has the bourgeoisie forged the weapons that bring death to itself; it has also called into existence the men who are to wield those weapons – the modern working class – the proletarians. In proportion as the bourgeoisie, i.e. capital, is developed, in the same proportion is the proletariat, the modern working class, developed.”

Was Marx’s theory true? As regards his first axiom, the idea that class conflict is the sole determinant of world history, there are countless counter-examples that disprove it. If his second axiom, that man’s thought is determined by his economic status, is true, then there is no reason for believing it to be true insofar as Marx’s thought, too, must be determined by his economic status. And so, since both his fundamental axioms are false, there is no reason for believing the rest of his theory.

It is too kind to describe Marxism, as some have done, as a burning love of justice clothed in a false economic theory. Its motive power is neither the love of justice nor the love of men, but simply hatred – hatred of God and God’s order in the first place, but hatred also of men. Marx despised not only the ruling classes and the bourgeoisie, but even the proletariat whose triumph they falsely predicted, rejecting “the notion that the poor in society were inherently decent and altruistic”. He delighted in the destruction and death that the revolution would bring (he brought only misery to his own relatives), consigning all those who opposed the laws of dialectical materialism (and many of those who did not) to “the dustbin of history”. He loved only the cold goddess History, the Moloch of the twentieth century, whose most zealous and merciless servant he was...

Karl Marx and the Jewish Question

In 1843 Bruno Bauer, the anti-Semitic leader of the Hegelian left, published an essay demanding that the Jews abandon Judaism completely and transform their plea for equal rights into a general campaign for human liberation both from religion and from state tyranny.

“Marx replied to Bauer’s work in two essays published in the Deutsch-Französische Jahrbucher in 1844, the same year Disraeli published Tancred. They are called ‘On the Jewish Question’. Marx accepted completely the savagely anti-Semitic context of Bauer’s argument, which he said was written ‘with boldness, perception, with and thoroughness in language that is precise as it

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338 Popper cites the conflict between the popes and emperors, both of the same class (op. cit., p. 116).
339 Service, op. cit., p. 22.
is vigorous and meaningful’. He quoted with approval Bauer’s maliciously exaggerated assertion that ‘the Jews determines the fate of the whole [Austrian] empire by his money power... [and] decides the destiny of Europe’. Where he differed was in rejecting Bauer’s belief that the anti-social nature of the Jew was religious in origin and could be remedied by tearing the Jew away from his religion. In Marx’s view, the evil was social and economic. ‘Let us,’ he wrote, ‘consider the real Jew. Not the Sabbath Jew... but the everyday Jews.’ What, he asked, was ‘the profane basis of Judaism? Practical need, self-interest. What is the worldly cult of the Jew? Huckstering. What is his worldly god? Money.’ The Jews had gradually conveyed this ‘practical’ religion to all society: ‘Money is the jealous God of Israel, besides which no other god may exist. Money abases all the gods of mankind and changes them into commodities. Money is the self-sufficient value of all things. It has, therefore, deprived the whole world, both the human world and nature, of their own proper value. Money is the alienated essence of man’s work and existence: this essence dominates him and he worships it. The god of the Jews has been secularised and has become the god of this world.’

“The Jews, Marx continued, were turning Christians into replicas of themselves, so that the once staunchly Christian New Englanders, for example, were now the slaves of Mammon. Using his money-power, the Jew had emancipated himself and had gone on to enslave Christianity. The Jew-corrupted Christian ‘is convinced he has no other destiny here below than to become richer than his neighbours’ and ‘the world is a stock exchange’. Marx argued that the contradiction between the Jew’s theoretical lack of political rights and ‘the effective political power of the Jew’ is the contradiction between politics and ‘the power of money in general’. Political power supposedly overrides money; in fact ‘it has become its bondsman’. Hence: ‘It is from its own entrails that civil society ceaselessly engenders the Jew.’

340 Johnson, op. cit, pp. 350-351. Cf. Oleg Platonov’s development of this argument: “Under the influence of Jewish economics the personal worth of a man was turned into an exchange value, into merchandise. Instead of the spiritual freedom given to the people of the New Testament, Jewish-Masonic civilisation brought ‘the shameless freedom of trade’. As the Jewish philosopher Moses Hesse wrote, ‘money is the alienated wealth of a man, attained by him in commercial activity. Money is the quantitative expression of the worth of a man, the brand of our enslavement, the seal of our shame, of our grovelling. Money is the coagulated blood and sweat of those who at market prices trade their inalienable property, their wealth, their vital activity, for the sake of accumulating that which is called capital. And all this is reminiscent of the insatiability of the cannibal.’

“‘Money is the god of our time, while Rothschild is its prophet!’ replied the Jewish poet Heinrich Heine to Hesse. The whole family of the Rothschilds, which had enmeshed in its octopus grip of debt obligations the political and industrial structures of Europe, seemed to the poet to be ‘true revolutionaries’. And he called Baron M. Rothschild ‘the Nero of financiers’, remembering that the Roman Nero ‘annihilated’ the privileges of the patricians for the sake of creating ‘a new democracy’.

“In creating economics on the antichristian foundations of the Talmud, Jewry not only acquired for itself financial power. Through Jewry money became a world power, by means of its control over the Christian peoples. The gold-digging spirit of Jewish economics, crossing the frontiers of Jewry, began to corrupt the Christians themselves; and in the precise
There was much truth in Marx’s analysis; but it was one-sided. Contemporary European and American civilization was based on a complex intertwining of apostate Jewry and heretical Christianity. If the Jews had taught the Christians the worship of money, and gone on to enslave them thereby, the Christians had nevertheless prepared the way for this by betraying their own Christian ideals and introducing to the Jews the semi-Christian, semi-pagan ideas of liberty, equality and fraternity, human rights, etc. The Jews had seized on these ideas to emancipate themselves and then take them to their logical extreme in the proletarian revolution, taking control both of money power in the heights, and of political power in the depths of society.

And so the relationship between the Jews and the Christians was mutually influential and mutually destructive.

The only question that remained was Lenin’s: kto kogo?, who would control whom? The answer to this was: the Jews would control the Christians. Why? Because the Christians, though fallen away from the true faith, nevertheless retained vestiges of Christian values and morality that restrained them from ultimate evil; they lacked that extra insight and ruthlessness that was given to the Jews for their greater ambition, greater hatred, greater proximity to Satan...

And so heretical Christians might cooperate with apostate Jews in the overthrow of Christian civilization, as Engels cooperated with Marx. But in the end the heretical Christians would do the will of the apostate Jews, as Engels did the will of Marx.

The only power that could effectively stand against both – and was therefore hated by both – was the power of the true faith, the Orthodox faith, upheld by the Russian Orthodox Empire. It was logical, therefore, for Marx and Engels to see in Russia the main obstacle to the success of the revolution...

Johnson continues: “Marx’s solution, therefore, is not like Bauer’s, religious, but economic. The money-Jew had become the ‘universal anti-social element of the present time’. To ‘make the Jew impossible’ it was necessary to abolish the ‘preconditions’ and the ‘very possibility’ of the kind of money activities for which he was notorious. Once the economic framework was changed, Jewish ‘religious consciousness would evaporate like some insipid vapour in the real, life-giving air of society’. Abolish the Jewish attitude to money, and both the Jew and his religion, and the corrupt version of expression of K. Marx, ‘with the help of money the Jews liberated themselves to the same extent as the Christians became Jews.’” (Ternoij Venets Rossii (Russia's Crown of Thorns), Moscow, 1998, p. 147 (in Russian)).
Christianity he had imposed on the world, would simply disappear: ‘In the final analysis, the emancipation of the Jews is the emancipation of mankind from Judaism.’ Or again: ‘In emancipating itself from bucksterism and money, and thus from real and practical Judaism, our age would emancipate itself.’

“Marx’s two essays on the Jews thus contain, in embryonic form, the essence of his theory of human regeneration: by economic changes, and especially by abolishing private property and the personal pursuit of money, you could transform not merely the relationship between the Jew and society but all human relationships and the human personality itself. His form of anti-Semitism became a dress-rehearsal for Marxism as such. Later in the century August Bebel, the German Social Democrat, would coin the phrase, much used by Lenin: ‘Anti-Semitism is the socialism of fools.’ Behind this revealing epigram was the crude argument: we all know that Jewish money-men, who never soil their hands with toil, exploit the poor workers and peasants. But only a fool grasps the Jews alone. The mature man, the socialist, has grasped the point that the Jews are only symptoms of the disease, not the disease itself. The disease is the religion of money, and its modern form is capitalism. Workers and peasants are exploited not just by the Jews but by the entire bourgeois-capitalist class – and it is the class as a whole, not just its Jewish element, which must be destroyed.

“Hence the militant socialism Marx adopted in the later 1840s was an extended and transmuted form of his earlier anti-Semitism. His mature theory was a superstition, and the most dangerous kind of superstition, belief in a conspiracy of evil. But whereas originally it was based on the oldest form of conspiracy-theory, anti-Semitism, in the later 1840s and 1850s this was not so much abandoned as extended to embrace a world conspiracy theory of the entire bourgeois class. Marx retained the original superstition that the making of money through trade and finance is essentially a parasitical and anti-social activity, but he now placed it on a basis not of race and religion, but of class. The enlargement does not, of course, improve the validity of the theory. It merely makes it more dangerous, if put into practice, because it expands its scope and multiplies the number of those to be treated as conspirators and so victims. Marx was no longer concerned with specific Jewish witches to be hunted but with generalized human witches. The theory remained irrational but acquired a more sophisticated appearance, making it highly attractive to educated radicals. To reverse Bebel’s saying, if anti-Semitism is the socialism of fools, socialism became the anti-Semitism of intellectuals. An intellectual like Lenin, who clearly perceived the irrationality of the Russian anti-Semitic pogrom, and would have been ashamed to conduct one, nevertheless fully accepted its spirit once the target was expanded into the whole capitalist class – and went on to conduct pogroms on an infinitely greater scale, killing hundreds of thousands on the basis not of individual guilt but merely of membership of a condemned group.”

Johnson’s definition of socialism as the anti-Semitism of intellectuals has considerable psychological plausibility; but it needs to be extended and deepened. The original irrational rebellion against civilised society was the rebellion of the Jews, the former people of God, against their Lord, God and Saviour, Jesus Christ. This was the original anti-Semitism, in that it was directed both against the greatest Semite, Jesus Christ, and his Semitic disciples, and against the original, pure religion of the Semites, which Jesus Christ came to fulfil in the Church founded on Himself, “in whom there is neither Jew nor Greek”.

As Christianity spread among the Gentiles, this original anti-Semitism, full of hatred and “on the basis not of individual guilt but merely of a condemned group”, was transmuted into the anti-Gentilism of the Talmud, being directed against the whole of Gentile Christian society. As Christian society degenerated into heresy, the Jewish virus of anti-Christian hatred infected the Christians themselves, becoming standard anti-Semitism. The sign that this anti-Semitism was simply the reversal of the same Jewish disease of anti-Gentilism is the fact that its object ceased to be the Talmudic religion, the real source of the disease, but the Jews as a race and as a whole.

However, with the gradual assimilation of the Jews into Western Christian society during the nineteenth century, Jewish radicals such as Marx joined with Gentile intellectuals such as Engels to create a new strain of the virus, a strain directed not against Jews alone or Christians alone, but against a whole class, the class of the bourgeois rich.

In this perspective we can see that Marx’s view that the solution of “the Jewish question” lay in economics was wrong. Bauer was right that its solution was religious; but he was wrong in thinking that simply destroying the Talmud would cure the disease. For what was to be put in its place? The heretical, lukewarm Christianity of the West, which hardly believed in itself any more and was in any case, as we have seen, deeply infected by both Jewish and pagan elements?

As the example of Disraeli proves, that could never satisfy the spiritual quest of the more intelligent Jews. It could only prepare the way for a new, more virulent strain of the virus, which is in fact what we see in Marxism. The only solution was a return to the original, untainted faith of the Apostles…

But that was only to be found in the East, and especially in Russia – where, however, the true faith of the Apostles lived in conjunction with both Jewish anti-Gentilism and Gentile anti-Semitism, and where the most virulent form of the virus, Marxism, would find its most fertile breeding-ground…
1848: “The Springtime of the Nations”

As we have seen, Marx declared in his Theses on Feuerbach: “The philosophers have only interpreted the world. Our business is to change it.” His chance to change the world came in 1848, with the simultaneous publication of his most famous work, The Communist Manifesto and the first European-wide revolution.

The 1848 revolution, writes Hobsbawm, “coincided with a social catastrophe: the great depression which swept across the continent from the middle 1840s. Harvests – and especially the potato crop – failed. Entire populations such as those of Ireland, and to a lesser extent Silesia and Flanders, starved. Food-prices rose. Industrial depression multiplied unemployment, and the masses of the labouring poor were deprived of their modest income at the very moment when their cost of living rocketed. The situation varied from one country to another and within each, and – fortunately for the existing regimes – the most miserable populations, such as the Irish and the Flemish, or some of the provincial factory workers were also politically among the most immature: the cotton operatives of the Nord department of France, for instance, took out their desperation on the equally desperate Belgian immigrant who flooded into Northern France, rather than on the government or even the employers. Moreover, in the most industrialized economy, the sharpest edge of discontent had already been taken away by the great industrial and railway-building boom of the middle 1840s. 1846-8 were bad years, but not so bad as 1841-2, and what was more, they were merely a sharp dip in what was now visibly an ascending slope of economic prosperity. But, taking Western and Central Europe as a whole, the catastrophe of 1846-8 was universal and the mood of the masses, always pretty close to subsistence level, tense and impassioned.

“A European economic cataclysm thus coincided with the visible corrosion of the old regimes. A peasant uprising in Galicia in 1846; the election of a ‘liberal’ Pope in the same year; a civil war between radicals and Catholics in Switzerland in later 1847, won by the radicals; one of the perennial Sicilian autonomist insurrections in Palermo in early 1848: they were not merely straws in the wind, they were the first squalls of the gale. Everyone knew it. Rarely has revolution been more universally predicted, though not necessarily for the right countries or the right dates. An entire continent waited, ready by now to pass the news of revolution almost instantly from city to city by means of the electric telegraph. In 1831 Victor Hugo had written that he already heard ‘the dull sound of revolution, still deep down in the earth, pushing out under every kingdom in Europe its subterranean galleries from the central shaft of the mine which is Paris’. In 1847 the sound was loud and close. In 1848 the explosion burst.”

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“Citizen-King” Louis Philippe’s attempt to create a compromise between the principles of monarchy and revolution collapsed. He abdicated and fled to England in February, 1848. However, the Provisional Government of the Second Republic, which included a worker in its ranks, Albert Martin, did not last long: the elections to the Constituent Assembly, now on the basis of universal male suffrage, returned a massive monarchist majority. Many of the liberal bourgeoisie, fearing social revolution, voted for the right\textsuperscript{343}, as did the property-owning peasantry. As the new government arrested revolutionary leaders, clawed back some of the concessions of February and abolished national workshops, the urban poor rose in rebellion against the republic they had helped to create. This rebellion was put down with much bloodshed. France now had an ideal liberal constitution, with Louis Napoleon, nephew of the great Napoleon as elected President. However, in 1851 he staged a coup d’état, and proclaimed the Second Empire.

The pattern of events was remarkably similar to that of the First French Revolution and Empire under the Napoleon the First: as Alfonse Karr wrote, plus ça change, plus c’est la même chose\textsuperscript{344}. However, two things radically distinguished 1848 from 1789. The first was that the monarchical principle was now much weaker. Thus in January, 1848 De Tocqueville, declared: “The old monarchy [of Louis XVI]... was stronger than you, because of its [hereditary] origin; it had better support than you from ancient practices, old customs, ancient beliefs; it was stronger than you, and yet it fell into the dust... Can you not feel – how shall I put it? – the wind of revolution in the air?”\textsuperscript{345} The second was that the spirit of revolution now had a more radical and intellectual support in the form of the theory that took its name from its founder, Marx.

However, this support was still too weak, too little-known and too extreme for the majority even of the leftists. And several other factors contributed to the collapse of the revolution almost as quickly as it spread across Europe. One was the continued support of the armies for the dynastic principle. Another was the distrust of the peasants, still by far the majority part of the population in most countries, for the urban intellectuals. A third was the conflicts created by nationalist movements, which theoretically should have chimed in with the liberals’ aims, but in practice often undermined them.

The most important of these nationalist movements were those for the unification of Italy and Germany. Italy was still little more than “a geographical expression”, in Metternich’s phrase. And when the Italian

\textsuperscript{343} As predicted by Count Cavour, the future architect of a united Italy, in 1846: “If the social order were to be genuinely menaced, if the great principles on which it rests were to be a serious risk, then many of the most determined oppositionists, the most enthusiastic republicans would be, we are convinced, the first to join the ranks of the conservative party” (in Hobsbawm, The Age of Capital, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 28).


\textsuperscript{345} De Tocqueville, in Almond, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 98.
revolution began, as the Tuscan radical, Giuseppe Montanelli, said, “there was no unity of direction; therefore there was no national government. We fought as Piedmontese, as Tuscans, as Neapolitans, as Romans, not as Italians.” Thus when the Austrians counter-attacked against revolutionary Milan and Venice, many of their soldiers were poor Italians who distrusted the urban revolutionaries; and the Bourbon King of the Two Sicilies Ferdinand II found allies amongst the Neapolitan poor.\textsuperscript{346} Mazzini’s slogan, \textit{Italia farà da sé} (Italy will do it alone), had failed. His romantic associate Giuseppe Garibaldi (1807-82) fled to South America.\textsuperscript{347}

German unification was a little further advanced; in 1834 Prussia and the other German states except the Austrian empire had formed a \textit{Zollverein}, or customs union, to promote trade (an early model for the European Economic Union); and in March, 1848 an all-German preparatory parliament (\textit{Vorparlament}) convened in Frankfurt. But there were arguments over what kind of constitution a united Germany should have, and whether it should be a “little Germany” without Austria, or a “great Germany” with it. In any case, the problem of what to do with non-German national minorities remained. The parliament ignored the demands of the Prussian Poles for national self-determination; and the Czechs, among other national minorities, “saw the [Austro-Hungarian] Empire as a less unattractive solution than absorption by some expansionist nationalism such as the Germans’ or the Magyars’. ‘If Austria did not already exist,’ Professor Palacky, the Czech spokesman, is supposed to have said, ‘it would be necessary to invent it.’”\textsuperscript{348}

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

\textsuperscript{346} Almond, \textit{op. cit}, pp. 103, 104.
\textsuperscript{348} Hobsbawm, \textit{The Age of Capital}, \textit{op. cit}, p. 25.
the pioneer of a Yugoslav nationalism, which led the assault on revolutionary Vienna and revolutionary Hungary."\textsuperscript{349}

The Hungarian revolution was finally crushed by 300,000 Russian troops sent by Tsar Nicholas I. Thus did Russia deserve her reputation as ‘The Gendarme of Europe”, the last support of the traditional order.

L.A. Tikhomirov writes: “Revolutionary agitation between the years 1830 and 1848 was carried out mainly by the Carbonari and various ‘Young Germanies’, ‘Young Italies’, etc. In the Masonic world before 1848 something powerful, similar to 1789, was being planned, and preparations for the revolution went ahead strongly in all countries. In 1847 a big Masonic convention was convened in Strasbourg from deputies elected at several small conventions convened earlier... At the convention it was decided to ‘masonize’ the Swiss cantons and then produce a revolutionary explosion at the same time throughout Europe. As we know, movement did in fact follow, with a difference of several months, in a whole series of countries: Paris, Vienna, Berlin, Milan, Parma, Venice, etc. Reformist ‘banquets’ laying the beginning of the revolution in Paris were organized by the directors of the Masonic lodges... When Louis Philippe fled and a republic was proclaimed, the Masonic lodge loudly expressed its joy. On March 10, 1848 the Supreme Council of the Scottish Rite welcomed the Provisional government. On March 24 a delegation of the Grand Orient also welcomed the Provisional government and was received by two ministers, Crémieux and Garnier-Pagès... who came out in their Masonic regalia.”\textsuperscript{350}

But the Masons seemed to have undergone a change of heart in the middle of the revolution, and decided, either out of fear or for some other reason, not to allow it to proceed to its logical conclusion. For during the bloody “June days”, they switched sides, supporting the government General Cavaignac against the workers in the streets. Thus “on June 27, the day after the revolutionaries had been defeated, the Grand Orient issued a statement supporting Cavaignac.”\textsuperscript{351}

Perhaps it was the spectre of communism that inhibited the Masons in 1848. Perhaps \textit{The Communist Manifesto} of Marx and Engels, published just before the revolution, had set them thinking. In any case, the consequences were profound.

“Hencefore,” writes Hobsbawm, “there was to be no general social revolution of the kind envisaged before 1848 in the ‘advanced’ countries of the world. The centre of gravity of such social revolutionary movements, and

\textsuperscript{349} Hobsbawm, \textit{The Age of Capital}, op. cit., pp. 31-32.
therefore of twentieth-century socialist and communist regimes, was to be in
the marginal and backward regions... The sudden, vast and apparently
boundless expansion of the world capitalist economy provided political
alternatives in the ‘advanced’ countries. The (British) industrial revolution
had swallowed the (French) political revolution.”

The main “political alternative” was the liberalisation of the western
European regimes in the following decades that blunted the hunger of the
more moderate revolutionaries, persuading them to think of working with
rather than against the system to attain their aims. For then they would have
more than their chains to lose... “In 1848-9 moderate liberals therefore made
two important discoveries in western Europe: that revolution was dangerous
and that some of their substantial demands (especially in economic matters)
could be met without it. The bourgeoisie ceased to be a revolutionary
force.”

What of the Church, that bastion of counter-revolution? There will still
some Catholics who spoke the truth in public. Thus Montalembert said in a
speech to the Chamber of Deputies in September, 1848: “The church has said
to the poor: you shall not steal the goods of others, and not only shall you not
steal them, you shall not covet them. In other words, you shall not listen to
this treacherous teaching which ceaselessly fans in your soul the fire of
covetousness and envy. Resign yourself to poverty and you will be eternally
rewarded and compensated. That is what the church has been saying to the
poor for a thousand years, and the poor have believed it – until the day when
faith was snatched from their hearts.”

However, the leaders of the Church were moving to come to terms with
the prevailing Zeitgeist. Thus Cardinal de Bonald told his priests: “Show the
faithful the example of obedience and submission to the Republic. Frequently
make a vow to yourselves to enjoy this freedom which makes our brothers in
the United States so happy; you will have this freedom. If the authorities wish
to deck religious buildings with the national flag, attentively heed the desires
of the magistrates. The flag of the Republic will always be a flag which
protects religion... Agree to all measures which may improve the lot of the
workers... Citizens, Jesus Christ was the first, from up on his cross, to make
the magnificent words ‘Freedom, equality, brotherhood’ resound throughout
the world. The Christ who died for you on the tree of liberty is the holy, the
sublime Republican of all times and all countries.”

M.S. Anderson writes: “The governments which reasserted themselves
after the revolutions were much stronger than their pre-revolutionary

354 Montalembert, in Comby, op. cit., p. 133.
predecessors. To some extent this was merely a matter of physical factors. The new railways were making it easier than ever before to move soldiers quickly to crush rebellion before it could offer a serious threat. They also made it possible to transport food rapidly to areas of dearth and thus stave off the famine which alone could produce mass disorder. The new telegraph was allowing a central government to be informed almost instantaneously of events in the most distant parts of its territory, and thus to control these events and still more the day-to-day activity of its own officials. More fundamentally, however, the new regimes of the 1850s embodied attitudes different from those of the age of Metternich, and reflected a changing intellectual climate. Positivism and materialism were now helping to give to the actions of governments a cutting edge of ruthlessness, as well as an energy which they had generally lacked before 1848. In France Louis Napoleon had dreams, and capacities for good and evil, which were quite beyond the scope of Louis-Philippe, as well as an apparatus of political control much more efficient than any possessed by his predecessor. In the Habsburg Empire, Bach and Kübeck, the dominant ministers of the 1850s, were men of a very different stamp from Metternich. In Prussia, now beginning a period of spectacular economic growth, the medievalist dreams of Frederick William IV had lost all significance before he himself collapsed into insanity in 1858. Tempered by the fires of successfully resisted revolution, fortified by new technical aids and helped by a favourable economic climate, the governments of Europe were entering a new era…”

Of course, this positivist stamp on post-1848 governments guaranteed a further decay in the foundations of Christian society and therefore a bringing closer of the revolution. But that was not how things were seen by the disillusioned revolutionaries themselves – that is, those who had not changed sides, who had not been bought, who refused to work from within the system. They all believed that a proletarian revolution was not on the cards for at least another generation. Marx and Engels now thought that society had to go through all the stages of bourgeois development before the proletariat could rise up and take power. That meant that the revolution would not come first in peasant societies such as Russia (the European peasantry had proved frustratingly conservative in 1848), but in highly industrialised ones, such as Britain or Germany, as the proletariat there became poorer.

But these predictions turned out to be wrong. In the West no revolution took place as the workers’ lot was improved by trade-union agitation from below and prudent concessions from above. The revolution finally took place in the predominantly peasant country of Russia...

Another consequence of the failure of 1848 was that Marx and Engels saw no role in the revolution for the smaller nations who, like the Croats in 1848, had fought on the side of counter-revolution. Mark Almond writes that Mark

and Engels damned the Croats “as the arch-collaborators with tottering reaction: ‘An Austria shaken to its very foundations was kept in being and secured by the enthusiasm of the Slavs for the black and yellow;... it was precisely the Croats, Slovenes, Dalmatians.’” But the two prophets of Marxism tinged their savage political condemnation of the Croats with a genocidal, albeit ‘progressive’, racism.

“Along with the Czechs and the Russians, whose troops had dealt the death-blow to the revolutionary dreams of 1848, it was the Croats who were excommunicated from the future communist society by Marx and Engels. An anonymous poet in Marx’s paper, the Neue Rheinische Zeitung could not find abuse enough for them: the Croats were ‘That horde of miscreants, rogues and vagabonds... riff-raff, abject peasant hirelings, vomit...’ But it was left to Engels to issue the terrible formal sentence of annihilation on the Croats like other inherently ‘counter-revolutionary peoples’. Convinced that he knew where history was going and that it belonged to the great homogeneous peoples like the Germans and had no room for little nations who got in the way, like the Gaels or Basques as well as Croats, Engels proclaimed that the ‘South Slavs are nothing more than the national refuse of a thousand years of immensely confused development’.... Engels noted that ‘this national refuse... sees its salvation solely in a reversal of the entire development of Europe...’ His conclusion was that a ‘war of annihilation and ruthless terrorism’ was necessary against ‘reactionary’ and ‘unhistoric’ peoples as well as reactionary classes.

“Engels remained decidedly unsympathetic to the aspirations of the South Slavs for independence or unity until the end of his days. Even in the 1880s, after all the public outrage in Britain about the Bosnian and Bulgarian atrocities, he could still write to Bernstein that the Hercegovinians’ ‘right to cattle-rustling must be sacrificed without mercy to the interests of the European proletariat’, which lay in peace at that time. Both Marx and Engels bequeathed to the left in the twentieth century a powerful tendency to sympathise with large-scale ‘progressive’ states at the expense of the poor and small.”

“Another for whom the years 1849-51 was a kind of watershed was [Thomas] Carlyle (the coup d’état of Louis Napoleon in the latter year was in a sense the conclusion of the revolutionary episode and had its own impact). The diatribe on the state of Europe and England which he published in 1851 as Latter-Day Pamphlets is, perhaps not altogether coincidentally, the last of his works to exhibit, intermittently, the immense imaginative vitality of his earlier ones. Carlyle was not a revolutionary or even, in any directly political sense, a democrat, but he had lived his earlier life in an atmosphere tense with the expectation of revolution and he had made prophesying it and preparing to meet it a kind of vocation; it fitted his conception of history, founded on

notions, Biblical, Saint-Simonian and German metaphysical, of retribution and reward. The prospect of a sort of baulked apocalypse threw him into a, for him, new kind of gloom and frenzy. The fiery reign of revolution, exhilarating though fearful, seemed quenched in a morass of mud, and worse than mud, which was how he saw the contemporary world. The imagery of *Latter-Day Pamphlets*, is excremental; the contemporary English preoccupation with sanitation provided Carlyle’s impatience with pictures of almost Dantesque force, of clogged immobility and dismal, squalid repetition, like the dead dog rolled up and down the filthy Thames with the tide…”358

Thus did 1848’s “springtime of the nations” turn into a “winter of discontent”. Although the monarchists had triumphed, there were few who believed that the tide of history was returning their way. As for the revolutionaries like Marx and Herzen, and even moderate liberals, they felt that the “miasma of the fifties”, as Nietzsche put it, compared badly with the idealism of the forties. Thus the historian Johann Gustav Droysen wrote: “Our spiritual life is deteriorating rapidly; its dignity, its idealism, its intellectual integrity are vanishing… Meanwhile the exact sciences grow in popularity; establishments flourish where pupils will one day form the independent upper middle class as farmers, industrialists, merchants, technicians and so one; their education and outlook will concentrate wholly on material issues. At the same time the universities are declining… At present all is instability, chaos, ferment and disorder. The old values are finished, debased, rotten, beyond salvation and the new ones are as yet unformed, aimless, confused, merely destructive… we live in one of the great crises that lead from one epoch of history to the next…”359

**Emperor Napoleon III**

As we have seen, one of the reasons for the failure of the 1848 revolution was that the Masons, most of whom were wealthy, drew back from taking the revolution to its logical extreme. This is understandable. However, it is still surprising, and worthy of investigation, why they should have blessed (eventually) the formation of a dictatorship in France under Louis Napoleon.

Ridley writes: “On 10 December 1848 the election was held for the new President of the Republic. The Freemasons’ journal, *Le Franc-Maçon*, called on its readers to vote for Lamartine [though he was not a Mason], because he believed in ‘the sacred words, Liberty, Equality, Fraternity’; but Louis Napoleon Bonaparte (who would soon become the Emperor Napoleon III) was elected by a very large majority; he defeated Cavaignac, Ledru-Rollin, the Socialist François Raspail, and Lamartine, receiving 75 per cent of the votes cast, and coming top of the poll in all except four of the eighty-five departments of France. He was the son of Louis Bonaparte, King of Holland.

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358 Burrow, *op. cit.*, p. 27.
359 Droysen, in Mann, *op. cit.*, p. 124.
and in his youth had been involved in the revolutionary movement in Italy in 1831. It has been suggested that he joined the Carbonari and the Freemasons in Italy, but this cannot be proved. He afterwards tried twice to make a revolution against Louis Philippe, and on the second occasion was sentenced to life imprisonment in the fortress at Ham near St Quentin in north-eastern France; but he made a sensational escape, took refuge in England, and returned to Paris to his electoral triumph in 1848.

“Although he had been suspected at one time of being a Communist, as soon as he was elected President of the Republic he relied on the support of the Right wing and the Catholic Church. Young Radicals who flaunted red cravats, and shouted ‘Long live the Social Republic!’ were sentenced to several years’ imprisonment. From time to time a Freemasons’ lodge was raided by the police, and warnings were sent by local officials to the government that ‘members of the anarchist party’ were planning to gain control of the Masonic lodges in Paris and the provinces.

“The Grand Orient thought it would be wise to revise their constitution. In 1839, when they were living happily under Louis Philippe, they had stated that ‘Masonry is a universal philanthropic association’ and that one of their objectives was ‘the examination and discussion of all social and economic questions which concern the happiness of humanity’. In August 1848, after the June Days and the legislation suppressing secret political societies, they changed this article in their constitution by deleting the words ‘social and economic’; and a year later, on 10 August 1849, Grand Orient stated that all Freemasons must believe in God and in the immortality of the soul.”

When, in addition to this, Napoleon sent his troops to crush the Roman republic under Mazzini, it must have seemed that the Masons would now, at last, turn against him. And indeed, when he established his dictatorship on December 2, 1851, “there was an attempt at resistance in Paris next day, led by the deputy Baudin, a Freemason.”

However, Baudin was shot on the barricade; and when Napoleon held a plebiscite on whether he should continue as President of the Republic for ten years, the Grand Orient called on all Freemasons to vote for him. Some light is cast on this mystery by Tikhomirov: “According to the very weighty tome of Deschampes, the empire of Louis Napoleon was considered desirable. This became known to Deschampes through Michelet, who played an important role in revolutionary circles, but was a personal friend of Deschampes.

“Soon after the coup of 1851 (more precisely: on February 7, 1852), Michelet wrote to Deschampes: ‘By this time a great convention of the heads of the European societies had taken place in Paris, where they discussed

360 Ridley, op. cit., pp. 207-208.
361 Ridley, op. cit., p. 209.
France. Only three members (whose leader was Mazzini) demanded a democratic republic. A huge majority thought that a dictatorship would better serve the work of the revolution – and the empire was decreed ‘sur les promesses formelles’ (on the basis of the formal promises) of Louis Napoleon to give all the forces of France to the services of Masonry. All the people of the revolution applied themselves to the success of the state coup. Narvaets, who was in obedience to Palmerston [British Prime Minister in 1855-1858 and from 1859], even loaned Louis Napoleon 500,000 francs not long before December 2.’

“If Napoleon III really gave ‘formal promises’, then this could refer only to the unification of Italy, and consequently, to the fate of the Pope’s secular dominion. Deschampes has no evidence concerning Louis Napoleon’s membership of Masonry, otherwise than in the form of Carbonarism. He had long belonged to the Carbonari in its Italian form, and as such was obliged to work for the unification of Italy. For breaking this oath he was pursued by attempts on his life, until, after Orsini’s attempt, he renewed his promise and began to fulfil it, risking that the Pope would lose his dominions. But in general Masonry protected Napoleon III. At any rate Palmerston, who had, as they affirm, been the highest leader of European Masonry (the Orient of Orients), supported Napoleon with all his strength, and, perhaps, would not have allowed his fall, if he had not died five years before the Franco-Prussian War.”

So here we see why Napoleon was able to retain the support of the Masons, while supporting their mortal enemy, the Catholic Church: he had a very powerful friend, Lord Palmerston, the British Prime Minister, a former supreme head of Masonry. Nor, as we have seen, were the Catholics as irreconcilably opposed to the liberal revolution as before... And so Britain under Palmerston, France under Napoleon, the Pope and the Sultan all worked together to humble the real enemy of Masonry, Russia, in the Crimean War of 1854-1856...

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362 According to Alexander Selyanin, on October 15, 1852, the Masons addressed Napoleon and said: “Guarantee the happiness of us all and put the emperor’s crown on your noble head” (Tainaia sila masonstva (The Secret Power of Masonry), St. Petersburg, 1911, p. 82 (in Russian)).
363 However, in spite of the Masons’ support for Napoleon III, the Freemason Benito Juarez, president of Mexico from 1861 to 1872, succeeded in driving out the French occupation under the Emperor Maximilian. This shows yet again that Freemasonry was not a united force – Masons were on opposite sides in many conflicts from the American revolution onwards. (V.M.)
364 Tikhomirov, op. cit., p. 465.
VIII. THE RUSSIAN AUTOCRACY: PAUL I, ALEXANDER I AND NICHOLAS I

Fear God, honour the king.
I Peter 2.17.

Tsar Paul I of Russia

Tsar Paul I has in general had a bad press from historians. Nevertheless, it was he who began the slow process whereby the absolutist Russian empire of the eighteenth century was transformed into the less absolutist, more truly autocratic empire of the nineteenth, by restoring the links of the monarchy with the people’s faith, Orthodoxy.

St. John Maximovich writes that the Tsarevich Paul, “was very different in his character and convictions from the Empress Catherine. Catherine II preferred to remove her son from the inheritance and make her eldest grandson, Alexander Pavlovich, her heir… At the end of 1796 Catherine II finally decided to appoint Alexander as her heir, passing Paul by, but she suddenly and unexpectedly died. The heir, Tsarevich Paul Petrovich, ascended the throne…”

Tsar Paul, who had been educated by Metropolitan Platon of Moscow, and shared his teacher’s devotion to pre-Petrine Russia, witnessed to the terrible condition to which his predecessors had brought Russia: “On ascending the throne of All-Russia, and entering in accordance with duty into various parts of the state administration, at the very beginning of the inspection We saw that the state economy, in spite of the changes in income made at various times, had been subjected to extreme discomforts from the continuation over many years of unceasing warfare and other circumstances. Expenses exceeded income. The deficit was increasing from year to year, multiplying the internal and external debts; in order to make up a part of this deficit, large sums were borrowed, which brought great harm and disorder with them.”

Tsar Paul’s coronation took place in the Dormition Cathedral in Moscow on April 5, 1797, the first day of Holy Pascha. The rite moved a significant step away from the symbolism of the First Rome, which had been the model of the eighteenth-century Tsars, and back to the symbolism of the New Rome of Constantinople, the Mother-State of Holy Rus’. For before putting on the

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366 Tsar Paul, in V.F. Ivanov, Russkaia Intelligentsia i Masonstvo: ot Petra I do nashikh dnei (The Russian Intelligentsia and Masonry from Peter I to our days), Harbin, 1934, Moscow, 1997, p. 211 (in Russian).
purple, Paul ordered that he be vested in the dalmatic, one of the royal vestments of the Byzantine emperors...367

Then, writes Archpriest Lev Lebedev, “he himself read out a new law [Uchrezhdenie] on the Imperial Family which he had composed together with [the Tsaritsa] Maria Fyodorovna. By this law he abolished Peter I’s decree of 1722 on the right of the Russian Autocrat to appoint the Heir to the Throne according to his will and revived the Basic Act of 1613. From now on and forever (!) a strict order of succession was established according to which the eldest son became his father’s heir, and in the case of childlessness – his elder brother. The law also foresaw various other cases, determining the principles of the succession to the Throne in accordance with the ancient, pre-Petrine (!) Russian customs and certain important new rules (for example, a Member of the Imperial Family wanting to preserve his rights to the succession must enter only into an equal by blood marriage with a member of a royal or ruling house, that is, who is not lower than himself by blood). Paul I’s new law once and for all cut off the danger in Russia of those ‘revolution’-coup which had taken place in the eighteenth century. And it meant that the power of the nobility over the Russian Tsars was ending; now they could be independent of the nobility’s desires and sympathies. The autocracy was restored in Russia! Deeply wounded and ‘offended’, the nobility immediately, from the moment of the proclamation of the law ‘On the Imperial Family’, entered into opposition to Paul I. The Tsar had to suffer the first and most powerful blow of the opposition. This battle between the Autocrat and the nobility was decisive, it determined the future destiny of the whole state. It also revealed who was who in Great Russia. All the historians who hate Paul I are not able to diminish the significance of the Law of 1797, they recognise that it was exceptionally important and correct, but they remark that it was the only outstanding act of this Emperor (there were no others supposedly). But such an act would have been more than sufficient for the whole reign! For this act signified a radical counter-coup – or, following the expression of the time, counter-revolution - to that which Catherine II had accomplished.

“However, the haters lie here, as in everything else! The law was not the only important act of his Majesty. On the same day of 1797 Paul I proclaimed a manifesto in which for the first time the serf -peasants were obliged to make an oath of allegiance to the Tsars and were called, not ‘slaves’, but ‘beloved subjects’, that is, they were recognised as citizens of the State! There is more! Paul I issued a decree forbidding landowners to force serfs to work corvée for more than three days in the week: the other three days the peasants were to work for themselves, and on Sundays – rest and celebrate ‘the day of the Lord’, like all

367 And yet Alexis Troubetskoy (Imperial Legend, Staplehurst: Spellmount, 2003, p. 34) thinks that “it contained none of the rich tradition of the Orthodox Church, none of the glorious beauty of its music or the symbolism of its ceremonial”!
Christians. Under the threat of severe penalties it was confirmed that masters were forbidden to sell families of peasants one by one. It was forbidden to subject serfs older than seventy to physical punishments. (And at the same time it was permitted to apply physical punishments to noblemen who had been condemned for criminal acts.) All this was nothing other than the beginning of the liberation of the Russian peasants from serfdom! In noble circles of the time it was called a 'revolution from above', and for the first time they said of about their Emperor: 'He is mad!' Let us recall that this word was used in relation to the ‘peasant’ politics of Paul I. He even received a special ‘Note’ from one assembly of nobles, in which it was said that ‘the Russian people has not matured sufficiently for the removal of physical punishments’.

“We know of a case when the Tsar came to the defence of some peasants whose landowner was about to sell them severally, without their families and land, so as to make use of the peasants’ property. The peasants refused to obey, and the landowner informed the governor of the rebellion. But the governor did not fail to carry out his duty and quickly worked out what was happening. On receiving news about what was happening, Tsar Paul declared the deal invalid, ordered that the peasants be left in their places, and that the landowner be severely censured in his name. The landowner’s conscience began to speak to him: he gathered the village commune and asked the peasants for forgiveness. Later he set off for St. Petersburg and asked for an audience with his Majesty. ‘Well, what did you sort out with your peasants, my lord? What did they say?’ inquired the Emperor of the guilty man. ‘They said to me, your Majesty: God will forgive…’ ‘Well, since God and they have forgiven you, I also forgive you. But remember from now on that they are not your slaves, but my subjects just as you are. You have just been entrusted with looking after them, and you are responsible for them before me, as I am for Russia before God…’ concluded the Sovereign.”

The Tsar also acted to humble the pride of the Guards regiments which, together with the nobility, had acted in the role of king-makers in the eighteenth century. “He forbade the assigning of noblemen’s children, babies, into the guards (which had been done before him to increase ‘the number of years served’). The officers of the guards were forbidden to drive in four- or six-horse carriages, to hide their hands in winter in fur muffes, or to wear civilian clothing in public. No exception was made for them by comparison with other army officers. At lectures and inspections the Guards were asked

368 The decree said: “The Law of God given to us in the ten commandments teaches us to devote the seventh day to God; which is why on this day, which is glorified by the triumph of the Faith, and on which we have been counted worthy to receive the sacred anointing and royal crowning on our Forefathers’ Throne, we consider it our duty before the Creator and Giver of all good things to confirm the exact and constant fulfilment of this law throughout our Empire, commanding each and every one to observe it, so that no one should have any excuse to dare to force his peasants to work on Sundays....”
369 Lebedev, Velikorossia (Great Russia), St. Petersburg, 1999, pp. 239-240 (in Russian).
about rules and codes with all strictness. How much, then and later, did they speak (and they still write now!) about the ‘cane discipline’ and the amazing cruelties in the army under Paul I, the nightmarish punishments which were simply means of mocking the military.... Even among the historians who hate Paul I we find the admission that the strictnesses of the Emperor related only to the officers (from the nobility), while with regard to the soldiers he was most concerned about their food and upkeep, manifesting a truly paternal attentiveness. By that time the ordinary members of the Guards had long been not nobles, but peasants. And the soldierly mass of the Guards of Paul I very much loved him and were devoted to him. Officers were severely punished for excessive cruelty to soldiers... On the fateful night of the murder of Paul I the Guards soldiers rushed to support him. The Preobrazhensky regiment refused to shout ‘hurrah!’ to Alexander Pavlovich as to the new Emperor, since they were not sure whether his Majesty Paul I was truly dead. Two soldiers of the regiment demanded that their commanders give them exact proof of the death of the former Emperor. These soldiers were not only not punished, but were sent as an ‘embassy’ of the Preobrazhensky to the grave of Paul I. On their return the regiment gave the oath of allegiance to Alexander I. That was the real situation of the Russian soldier of Paul’s times, and not their fictitious ‘rightlessness’!"371

“The Emperor Paul’s love for justice and care for the simple people was expressed also in the accessibility with which he made his subjects happy, establishing the famous box in the Winter palace whose key was possessed by him personally and into which the first courtier and the last member of the simple people could cast their letters with petitions for the Tsar’s immediate defence or mercy. The Tsar himself emptied the box every day and read the petitions, leaving not a single one of them unanswered.

“There was probably no sphere in the State which did not feel the influence of the industrious Monarch. Thus he ordered the minting of silver rubles to struggle against the deflation in the value of money. The Sovereign himself sacrificed a part of the court’s silver on this important work. He said that he himself would eat on tin ‘until the ruble recovers its rate’. And the regulation on medical institutions worked out by the Emperor Paul could be used in Russia even in our day.”372

“Paul I gave hierarchs in the Synod the right themselves to choose a candidate for the post of over-procurator, took great care for the material situation of the clergy, and the widows and orphans of priests, and forbade physical punishments for priests before they had been defrocked."373

372 “Svyatoj Tsar-Muchenik Pavel”, op. cit.
373 Lebedev, Velikorossia, op. cit., p. 242. A.P. Dobroklonsky writes: “At the beginning of the [19th] century the over-procurator Yakovlev planned to place [the consistories] in a position more independent of the bishops and presented to the sovereign a report about establishing
He also increased the lands of hierarchical houses and the pay of the parish clergy, and freed the clergy from being pressed into army service. The power of bishops was extended to all Church institutions and to all diocesan servers. He opened many seminaries, increased the income of the theological academies by five times, and greatly broadened the curriculum.

In general, as K.A. Papmehl writes, “Paul proved to be much more generous and responsive to the Church’s financial needs than his mother. Although this may to some – perhaps considerable – extent be attributed to his general tendency to reverse her policies, it was probably due, in at least equal measure, to his different attitude toward the Church based, as it undoubtedly was, on sincere Christian belief…. One symptom of this different attitude was that, unlike his predecessor – or, indeed, successor, Paul dealt with the Synod not through the Ober-Prokurator, but through the senior ecclesiastical member: first Gavriil and later Amvrosii.”

“One of the Tsar’s contemporaries, N.A. Sablukov, who had the good fortune, thanks to his service at the Royal Court, to know the Emperor personally, remembered the Emperor Paul in his memoirs as ‘a deeply religious man, filled with a true piety and the fear of God…. He was a magnanimous man, ready to forgive offences and recognise his mistakes. He highly prized righteousness, hated lies and deceit, cared for justice and was merciless in his persecution of all kinds of abuses, in particular usury and bribery.’

“The well-known researcher of Paul, Shabelsky-Bork, writes: ‘While he was Tsarevich and Heir, Paul would often spend the whole night in prayer. A little carpet is preserved in Gatchina; on it he used to pray, and it is worn through by his knees.’ The above-mentioned N.A. Sablukov recounts, in agreement with this: ‘Right to the present day they show the places on which Paul was accustomed to kneel, immersed in prayer and often drenched in tears. The parquet is worn through in these places. The room of the officer sentry in which I used to sit during my service in Gatchina was next to Paul’s

in them a special post of procurator subject only to the over-procurator; but the realisation of this report was hindered by Metropolitan Ambrose Podobedov of St. Petersburg, who presented a report on his part that in such a case the canonical authority of the bishops would be shaken and they would become dependent on secular officials” (Rukovodstvo po istorii russkoi tserkvi (Handbook on the History of the Russian Church), Moscow, 2001, p. 534 (in Russian)).

374 Fr. Alexis Nikolin, Tserkov’ i Gosudarstvo (The Church and the State), Moscow, 1997, p. 106 (in Russian).
private study, and I often heard the Emperor’s sighs when he was standing at prayer.’

“The historical records of those years have preserved a description of the following event: ‘A watchman had a strange and wonderful vision when he was standing outside the summer palace… The Archangel Michael stood before the watchman suddenly, in the light of heavenly glory, and the watchman was stupefied and in trembling from this vision… And the Archangel ordered that a cathedral should be raised in his honour there and that this command should be passed on to the Emperor Paul immediately. The special event went up the chain of command, of course, and Paul Petrovich was told about everything. But Paul Petrovich replied: “I already know”: he had seen everything beforehand, and the appearance to the watchman was a kind of repetition…’ From this story we can draw the conclusion that Tsar Paul was counted worthy also of revelations from the heavenly world…”377

We should also not forget here the salutary influence of Tsar Paul’s wife, Empress Maria Fyodorovna, who was very popular among the people. A.V. Buganov writes: “While it was the inveterate desire of the enserfed peasants throughout Russia to be liberated, in the villages of Maria Fyodorovna the complete opposite was observed: tradesmen and free men generally were assigned to the number of her peasants. The empress took care that they had enough, and founded village charitable-educational institutions. She often put on feasts for her peasants in her park, where in her presence the young people sang songs and had round dances. The summit of Maria Fyodorovna’s activity and the crown of her charitable work was her educational system, which was known as ‘the institutions of Empress Maria’. These included shelters and children’s homes and educational institutions, especially for women.”378

The Annexion of Georgia

Tsar Paul’s love for the Church found expression in two important events in the year 1800: the annexation of Georgia and the reunion of some of the Old Ritualists with the Orthodox Church on a “One Faith” (Yedinoverie) basis. The former strengthened the security of the Orthodox world against the external foe, and the latter - its internal unity.

The Georgians had first appealed for Russian protection in 1587. Since then, they had suffered almost continual invasions from the Persians and the Turks,

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leading to many martyrdoms, of which the most famous was that of Queen Ketevan in 1624. One king, Rostom, even adopted Islam and persecuted Orthodoxy. In fact, from 1634 until the crowning of King Wakhtang in 1701, all the sovereigns of Georgia were Mohammedan. The eighteenth century saw only a small improvement, and in 1762 King Teimuraz II travelled to Russian for help. In 1783, in the treaty of Georgievsk, protection was formally offered to King Heraclius II of Kartli-Kakhетia by Catherine II.

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

“King George XIII, who ascended the throne of Georgia (A.D. 1797-1800) only to see his subjects overwhelmed and rendered powerless by their incessant and hopeless struggles with unavoidable dangers from enemies of the faith and of the people, found the resources of the kingdom exhausted by the constant armaments necessary for its own protection; before his eyes lay the ruins of the city, villages plundered and laid waste, churches, monasteries, and hermitages demolished, troubles within the family, and without it the sword, fire, and inevitable ruin, not only of the Church, but also of the people, yea, even of the very name of the people. In the fear of God, and trusting to His providence, he made over Orthodox Georgia in a decided manner to the Tzar of Russia, his co-religionist; and thus obtained for her peace and quiet. It pleased God, through this king, to heal the deep wounds of an Orthodox kingdom.
“Feeling that his end was drawing near, he, with the consent of all ranks and of the people, requested the Emperor Paul I to take Georgia into his subjection for ever (A.D. 1800). The Emperor Alexander I, when he mounted the throne, promised to protect the Georgian people of the same faith with himself, which had thus given itself over unreservedly and frankly to the protection of Russia. In his manifesto to the people of Georgia (A.D. 1801) he proclaimed the following: ‘One and the same dignity, one and the same honour, and humanity laid upon us the sacred duty, after hearing the prayers of sufferers, to grant them justice and equity in exchange for their affliction, security for their persons and for their property, and to give to all alike the protection of the law.’” 379

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

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

“Not able to believe that others could be so base, treacherous and ignoble, the king fell into the trap set by Tormasov and Prince Zurab. Fr. Ise [the future Hieroschemamonk Hilarion] had initially warned the king of Prince

Zurab’s disloyalty. However, upon learning of his wife’s reposed he returned to Kutaisi and was unable to further counsel the king.

“King Solomon II and his entire retinue were eventually coaxed all the way to Tbilisi. There they were put under house arrest; the plan being to send the king to live out his days in a palace in St. Petersburg. Preferring exile to imprisonment, the king and his noblemen conceived a plan of escape and fled across the border to Turkey. There, with Fr. Ise and his retinue, he lived out the remainder of his life. After great deprivations and aborted attempts to reclaim the Imeretian Kingdom from Russia, King Solomon II reposed at Trebizond on February 19, 1815, in his forty-first year...

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

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

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

“There ensued a period of great difficulty in the life of the Georgian Church. The Church was subordinated to the Russian Synod through an exarch, or representative, of the synod. From 1811 to 1817 the Georgian nobleman Varlaam served as exarch, but after his term all the subsequent exarchs were Russian by descent. The foreign exarchs’ ignorance of the Georgian language, traditions, local saints, and feast gave rise to many conflicts between the foreign clergy and the Georgian Orthodox believers. The most contemptible exarchs stole valuable pieces of jewelry and masterpieces

of the Georgian enamel arts and sent them to Russia. Many cathedrals were left to fall into ruin, and the number of diocese in Georgia dropped dramatically from twenty-four to five. Divine services in the Georgian language and ancient polyphonic chants were replaced by services in Slavonic and the music of the post-Petrine Russian Church.

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

In spite of these deviations, the annexation of Georgia marked an important step forward in Russia’s progress to becoming the Third Rome. In the eighteenth century “the gathering of the Russian lands” was on its way to completion, and the more or less continuous wars with Turkey demonstrated Russia’s determination to liberate the Orthodox of the Balkans and the Middle East. Georgia was the first non-Russian Orthodox nation to enter the empire of the Third Rome on a voluntary basis…

In 1901 Fr. John Vostorgov meditated on this union of two peoples: “In voluntarily uniting herself voluntarily with Russia, Georgia gained much. But we must not forget that she also lost: she lost her independent existence as a separate state, that which served and serves as the object of ardent desires and bloody struggles up to now in many peoples, and which Georgia herself defended for a long series of centuries as an inestimable treasure with as lofty heroism as can be attributed to any people in history.

“Whether we recognize or not the providential significance of peoples in history, we must in any case agree that historical and geographical conditions at least place before this or that people this or that world task. Only from this point of view do the ardent enthusiasms of patriotism, and the fervent desire and care to bring greatness and power to one’s homeland, acquire a meaning and higher justification: her greatness and power are not an end, but the means to serve the universal, pan-human good. But what was the destiny of Russia on the universal-historical plane? It would not be an exaggeration, nor an artificial invention to point to the fact that she, as standing on the borders of the East and the West, is destined to mediate between them, and to work out in her own history a higher synthesis of the principles of life of the East and the West, which are often contradictory and hostile to one another,

pushing them onto the path of bitter struggle, reconciling them in the unity of a higher, unifying cultural type. This task – a great, colossal, unique task – was bequeathed to Russia by deceased Byzantium, which in her turn inherited it from ancient Greece with her eastern-Persian armies, her powerful Hellenism, which was victoriously borne even in the time of Alexander the Great into the very heart of the East.

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

“In the days of the ancient struggle between Greece and Persia, the West was characterized, spiritually speaking, by the religions of anthropomorphism, and the East – by Parsism. Georgia, like Armenia, stood at that time completely on the side of the latter. The Persians placed a seal on the clothing, morals and customs of the Georgians, and on their royal dynasties, language and religion, that is perceptible to this day, because in deep antiquity the native paganism of the Georgians was supplanted by the worship of Armazd, in whose name we can undoubtedly hear the name of the Persian Ormuzd. A new, powerful influence entered into the world when the West accepted Christianity and placed it on the banner of her historical existence. And before the appearance of Christianity, under Caesar and Pompey, we see in Georgia the beginnings of an attraction towards the West. But she finally understood her own mission in the world only in the light of Christianity: under the emperor Hadrian, this was still expressed in an indecisive manner and bore the character of a certain compulsion, but under Constantine the Great this was finally and irreversibly recognized.

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

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

“But this is not all: the situation of the struggle between Islam and Christianity, between the East and the West, immediately changed. Russia, having established herself in Transcaucasia, immediately became a threat to Persia and Turkey; with unprecedented rapidity and might she cast the banner of Islam far from the bounds of tormented Georgia. Only one century has passed since the time of the union of Russia and Georgia, and in the meantime what a huge, hitherto unseen growth has taken place in Christian Russia, and, by contrast, fall in Muslim Turkey and Persia! This demonstrates to all how much good the executed decision of the two peoples to merge into one on the basis of the communality of their world tasks brought to the history of the world one hundred years ago.

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

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

*The Murder of Tsar Paul*

When the Empress Catherine saw the effect that the ideas of the Enlightenment had in generating the French revolution, she backed away from her former support of them. “Yesterday I remembered,” she wrote to Grimm in 1794, “that you told me more than once: this century is the century of preparations. I will add that these preparations consisted in preparing dirt and dirty people of various kinds, who produce, have produced and will produce endless misfortunes and an infinite number of unfortunate people.”

“The next year,” writes Ivanov, “she categorically declared that the Encyclopédie had only two aims: the one – to annihilate the Christian religion, and the other – royal power. ‘I will calmly wait for the right moment when you will see how right is my opinion concerning the philosophers and their hangers-on that they participated in the revolution…, for Helvétius and D’Alambert both admitted to the deceased Prussian king that this book had only two aims: the first – to annihilate the Christian religion, and the second – to annihilate royal power. They spoke about this already in 1777.’”

In his estimate of Masonry and French influence, if in little else, Tsar Paul was in agreement with his mother. Well-known Masons were required to sign that they would not open lodges (the rumour that Paul himself became a Mason is false384), and the great General Suvorov was sent to Vienna to join Austria and Britain in fighting the French.385 But the French continued to

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383 Ivanov, *op. cit.*, p. 211.
384 Sorokin, *op. cit.* The Maltese Order that he headed was a Roman Catholic, not a Masonic institution.
385 Suvorov’s extraordinarily successful career was based, according to Lebedev, “on Orthodox spirituality. He taught the soldiers prayer and life according to the commandments of God better than any preacher, so that at times it was difficult to say what Suvorov taught his
advance through Europe, and when, in 1797, Napoleon threatened the island of Malta, the knights of the Order of the Maltese Cross, who had ruled the island since the 16th century, appealed to the protection of Tsar Paul. Paul accepted the responsibility, and in gratitude the Maltese offered that he become their Grand Master. Paul accepted because it was anti-French and anti-revolutionary.  

In 1798 Napoleon seized Malta. Paul then entered into an alliance union with Prussia, Austria and England against France. A Russian fleet entered the Mediterranean, and in 1799 a Russian army under Suvorov entered Northern Italy, liberating the territory from the French.

However, in 1800, writes Lebedev, “England seized the island of Malta, taking it away from the French and not returning it to the Maltese Order. Paul I sent Suvorov with his armies back to Russia and demanded that Prussia take decisive measures against England (the seizure of Hanover), threatening to break relations and take Hanover, the homeland of the English monarchs, with Russian forces. But at the same time there began direct relations between Paul and Napoleon. They began in an unusual manner. Paul challenged Napoleon to a duel so as to decide State quarrels by means of a personal contest, without shedding the innocent blood of soldiers. Bonaparte declined from the duel, but had a high opinion of Paul I’s suggestion, and as a sign of respect released his Russian prisoners without any conditions, providing them with all that they needed at France’s expense. Paul I saw that with the establishment of Napoleon in power, an end had been put to the revolution in France. Therefore he concluded a union with Napoleon against England (with the aim of taking Malta away from her and punishing her for her cunning), and united Russia to the ‘continental blockade’ that Napoleon had,

soldiers more – to be a warrior or to be a real Orthodox Christian!” (Velikorossia, op. cit., p. 234).

Sorokin, op. cit., pp. 33-34. Not too much should be of the fact that the Tsar was sympathetic, or at least not antipathetic, towards Catholicism, which, as Nikolin points out, “was to a large extent linked with fear of the French revolution, which had been cruel to believing Catholics, monks and clergy. This relationship is attested by such facts as his offering the Pope of Rome to settle in Russia, his cooperation with the establishment of the Jesuit order in Russia, and his support for the establishment of a Roman Catholic chapel in St. Petersburg. At the same time attention should be drawn to Paul I’s ukaz of March 18, 1797, which protected the consciences of peasants whom landowners were trying to detach forcibly from Orthodoxy into the unia or convert to Catholicism.” (Nikolin, op. cit., p. 106). “On October 12, 1799 the holy things of the Order were triumphantly brought to Gatchina: the right hand of St. John the Baptist, a particle of the Cross of the Lord and the icon of the Filerma Oditritia icon of the Mother of God. Only a spiritually blind man, on learning this fact, would not see the Providence of God in the fact that the Tsar became Master of the Maltese Order. October 12 was introduced into the number of festal days by the Church, and a special service to this feast was composed…” (“Svyatoj Tsar-Muchenik Pavel”, op. cit.).

This was, of course, a great mistake. Napoleon was a child of the revolution and the instrument of the spread of its ideas throughout Europe. (V.M.)
constructed against England, undermining her mercantile-financial might. Moreover, in counsel with Napoleon, Paul I decided [on January 12, 1801] to send a big Cossack corps to India—the most valuable colony of the English. To this day his Majesty’s order has been deemed ‘mad’ and ‘irrational’. But those who say this conceal the fact that the plan for this Russian expedition against India did not at all belong to Paul I: it arose under Catherine II and was seriously considered by her (Paul I only put it into action).

“Russia’s break with England and the allies signified for them a catastrophe and in any case an irreparable blow to the British pocket, and also to the pocket of the major Russian land-owners and traders (English trade in Russia had been very strong for a long time!). From the secret masonic centres of England and Germany an order was delivered to the Russian Masons to remove the Emperor and as quickly as possible!

“Long disturbed by Paul I’s attitude, the Russian nobles were quick to respond to the Masonic summons. Even before this,... in 1798 the Russian Masons had succeeded in sowing dissension in the Royal Family. They slandered the Tsaritsa Maria Fyodorovna of supposedly trying to rule her husband and instead of him. At the same time he was ‘set up with’ the beauty Lopukhina, the daughter of a very powerful Mason, and a faithful plotter. But the affair was foiled through the nobility of the Emperor. Learning that Lopukhina loved Prince Gagarin, Paul I arranged their marriage, since he was just good friends with Lopukhina. The Masons had to save the situation in such a way that Prince Gagarin himself began to help his own wife come closer to Paul I. She settled in the Mikhailov palace and became a very valuable agent of the plotters. From the autumn of 1800 the plot rapidly acquired a systematic character. Count N.P. Panin (the college of foreign affairs) was drawn into it, as was General Count Peter Alexeyevich von der Pahlen, the governor of Petersburg and a very close advisor of the Tsar, General Bennigsen (also a German), Admiral Ribas (a native of the island of Malta), the brothers Plato, Nicholas and Valerian Zubov and their sister, in marriage Princes Zherbtsova, the senators Orlov, Chicherin, Tatarinov, Tolstoy, Torschinsky, Generals Golitsyn, Depreradovich, Obolyaninov, Talysin, Mansurov, Uvarov, Argamakov, the officers Colonel Tolbanov, Skaryatin, a certain Prince Yashvil, Lieutenant Marin and very many others (amongst them even General M.I. Kutuzov, one of the prominent Masons of those years). At the head of the conspiracy stood the English consul in Petersburg, Sir Charles Whitford. According to certain data, England paid the plotters two million rubles in gold through him.

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388 Another mistake, for it did precisely the opposite, weakening the continental economies and allowing England, with her superior navy, to seize the colonies of her rivals around the world. (V.M.)

389 They had crossed the Volga on March 18 when they heard of the death of the Tsar…
“The most important plotters were the Mason-Illuminati, who acted according to the principle of their founder Weishaupt: ‘slander, slander – something will stick!’ Floods of slanderous inventions poured onto the head of the Emperor Paul I. Their aim was to ‘prove’ that he was mad, mentally ill and therefore in the interests of the people (!) and dynasty (!) he could not remain in power. The slander was strengthened by the fact that the Emperor’s orders either were not carried out, or were distorted to an absurd degree, or in his name instructions of a crazy character were given out. Von Pahlen was especially successful in this. He began to insinuate to Paul I that his son Alexander Pavlovich (and also Constantine), with the support of the Empress, wanted to cast him from the throne. And when Paul I was upset by these communications, it was insinuated to his sons and Alexander and Constantine that the Emperor by virtue of a paranoid illness was intending to imprison them together with their mother for good, while he was supposedly intending to place the young Prince Eugene of Wurtemburg, who had then arrived in Russia, on the throne. Noble society was frightened by the fact that Paul I in a fit of madness [supposedly] wanted to execute some, imprison others and still others send to Siberia. Pahlen was the person closest to the Tsar and they could not fail to believe him! While he, as he later confessed, was trying to deceive everyone, including Great Prince Alexander. At first the latter was told that they were talking about removing his father the Emperor from power (because of his ‘illness’), in order that Alexander should become regent-ruler. Count N.P. Panin sincerely believed precisely in this outcome of the affair, as did many other opponents of Paul I who had not lost the last trace of humanity. At first Alexander did not at all agree with the plot, and prepared to suffer everything from his father to the end. But Panin, and then Pahlen convinced him that the coup was necessary for the salvation of the Fatherland! Alexander several times demanded an oath from the plotters that they would not allow any violence to his father and would preserve his life. These oaths were given, but they lied intentionally, as Pahlen later boasted, only in order to ‘calm the conscience’ of Alexander.390 They convinced Constantine Pavlovich in approximately the same way. The coup was marked for the end of March, 1801. Before this Ribas died, and Panin landed up in exile, from which he did not manage to return. The whole leadership of the plot passed to Pahlen, who from the beginning wanted to kill the Emperor. Many people faithful to his Majesty knew about this, and tried to warn him. Napoleon also heard about all this through his own channels, and hastened to inform Paul I in time…. On March 7, 1801 Paul I asked Pahlen directly about the plot. He confirmed its existence and said that he himself was standing at the head of the plotters, since only in this way could he know what was going on and prevent it all at the necessary moment… This time, too, Pahlen succeeded

390 Alan Palmer writes: “One of the older conspirators, more sober than the others, pertinently asked the question which Alexander had always ignored: what would happen if the Tsar offered resistance? ‘Gentlemen,’ Pahlen replied calmly, ‘you cannot make an omelette without breaking eggs’. It was an ominous remark, difficult to reconcile with his assurance to Alexander” (Alexander I, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1974, p. 44). (V.M.)
in deceiving the Tsar, but he felt that it would not do that for long, and that he himself ‘was hanging by a thread’. He had to hurry, the more so in that many officials, generals and especially all the soldiers were devoted to Paul I. Besides, the Jesuits, who were at war with the Illuminati, knew everything about the plot in advance. In the afternoon of March 11, in the Tsar’s reception-room, Pater Gruber appeared with a full and accurate list of the plotters and data on the details. But they managed not to admit the Jesuit to an audience with Paul I. Palen told Alexander that his father had already prepared a decree about his and the whole Royal Family’s incarceration in the Schlisselburg fortress, and that for that reason it was necessary to act without delay. Detachments of units loyal to Paul I were removed from the Mikhailov castle, where he lived. On March 11, 1801 the father invited his sons Alexander and Constantine and personally asked them whether they had any part in the conspiracy, and, having received a negative reply, considered it necessary that they should swear as it were for a second time to their faithfulness to him as to their Tsar. The sons swore, deceptively… On the night of the 11th to 12th of March, 1801, an English ship entered the Neva with the aim of taking the conspirators on board in case they failed. Before that Charles Whitford had been exiled from Russia. Zherebtsova-Zubova was sent to him in England so as to prepare a place for the conspirators there if it proved necessary to flee. On the night of the 12th March up to 60 young officers who had been punished for misdemeanours were assembled at Palen’s house and literally pumped with spirits. One of them drunkenly remarked that it would be good for Russia if all the members of the Royal Family were slaughtered at once! The rest rejected such an idea with horror, but it spoke volumes! After much drinking they all moved by night across Mars field to the Mikhailov castle. There the brave officers were scared to death by some crows which suddenly took wing at night in an enormous flock and raised a mighty cry. As became clear later, some of the young officers did not even know where they were being led and why! But the majority knew. One by one (and frightening each other), they managed to enter in two groups into Paul I’s bedroom, having killed one faithful guard, a chamber-hussar at the doors (the second ran for the sentry). Paul I, hearing the noise of a fight, tried to run through a secret door, but a tapestry, ‘The School in Athens’, a gift from the murdered king and queen of France, fell on top of him. The plotters caught the Tsar. Bennigsen declared to him that they were arresting him and that he had to abdicate from the throne, otherwise they could not vouch for the consequences. The greatly disturbed Paul I did not reply. He rushed to a room where a gun was kept, trying to break out of the ring of his murderers, but they formed a solid wall around him, breathing in the face of the Emperor, reeking of wine and spitefulness. Where had the courtier nobles disappeared! ‘What have I done to you?’ asked Paul I. ‘You have tormented us for four years!’ was the reply. The drunken Nicholas Zubov took hold of the Emperor by the hand, but the latter struck the scoundrel on the hand and repulsed him. Zubov took a swing and hit the Tsar on the left temple with a golden snuff-box given by Catherine II, wounding his temple-bone and eyes. Covered with
blood, Paul I fell to the ground. The brutalized plotters hurled themselves at him, tram­pled on him, beat him, suffocated him. Special zeal was displayed by the Zubovs, Skoriatin, Yashvil, Argamakov and, as people think, Pahlen (although there are reasons for thinking that he took no personal part in the fight). At this point the sentries made up of Semenovtsy soldiers faithful to Alexander appeared (the soldiers had not been initiated into the plot). Bennigsen and Pahlen came out to them and said that the Tsar had died from an attack of apoplexy and now his son Alexander was on the throne. Pahlen rushed into Alexander’s rooms. On hearing of the death of his father, Alexander sobbed. ‘Where is your oath? You promised not to touch my father!’ he cried. ‘Enough of crying! They’re going to lift all of us on their bayonets! Please go out to the people!’ shouted Pahlen. Alexander, still weeping, went out and began to say something to the effect that he would rule the state well… The sentries in perplexity were silent. The soldiers could not act against the Heir-Tsarevich, but they could also not understand what had happened. But the simple Russian people, then and later and even now (!) understood well. To this day (since 1801) believing people who are being oppressed by the powerful of this world in Petersburg (and recently also in Leningrad) order pannikhidas for ‘the murdered Paul’, asking for his intercession. And they receive what they ask for!...

“And so the plot of the Russian nobles against the Emperor they did not like succeeded. Paul I was killed with the clear connivance of his sons. The eldest of them, Alexander, became the Tsar of Russia. In the first hours and days nobody yet suspected how all this would influence the destiny of the country in the future and the personal destiny and consciousness of Alexander I himself. All the plotters had an evil end. Some were removed by Alexander I, others were punished by the Lord Himself. The main regicide Pahlen was quickly removed from all affairs and sent into exile on his estate. There he for a long time went mad, becoming completely irresponsible. Nicholas Zubov and Bennigsen also went mad (Zubov began to eat his own excreta). Having falsely accused Paul I of being mentally ill, they themselves became truly mentally ill! God is not mocked. ‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay’, He said. The joy of the Russian nobility was not especially long-lived. Alexander I and then Nicholas I were nevertheless sons of their father! Both they and the Emperors who followed them no longer allowed the nobility to rule them. Immediately the Russian nobility understood this, that is, that they no longer had any power over the Autocracy, they began to strive for the annihilation of the Autocracy in Russia altogether, which they succeeded in doing, finally, in February, 1917 - true, to their own destruction!.. Such was the zig-zag of Russian history, beginning with Catherine I and ending with Nicholas II.

“The reign of Emperor Paul Petrovich predetermined the following reigns in the most important thing. As we have seen, this Tsar ‘turned his face’ towards the Russian Orthodox Church, strengthened the foundations of the Autocracy and tried to make it truly of the people. Personally this cost him his life. But
thereby the later foundations were laid for the State life of Russia in the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries: ‘Orthodoxy, Autocracy, Nationality!’ Or, in its military expression – ‘For the Faith, the Tsar and the Fatherland!’”

“The prophecy of the clairvoyant monk Abel was completely fulfilled. He personally foretold to the Emperor Paul: ‘Your reign will be short, and I, the sinner, see your savage end. On the feast of St. Sophronius of Jerusalem you will receive a martyrlic death from unfaithful servants. You will be suffocated in your bedchamber by evildoers whom you warm on your royal breast… They will bury you on Holy Saturday… But they, these evildoers, in trying to justify their great sin of regicide, will proclaim that you are mad, and will blacken your good memory…. But the Russian people with their sensitive soul will understand and esteem you, and they will bring their sorrows to your grave, asking for your intercession and the softening of the hearts of the unrighteous and cruel.’ This part of Abel’s prophecy was also fulfilled…”

**The Golden Age of Masonry**

Monk Abel prophesied the following about Paul’s son and successor, Tsar Alexander I: “Under him the French will burn down Moscow, but he will take Paris from them and will be called the Blessed. But his tsar’s crown will be heavy for him, and he will change the exploit of service as tsar for the exploit of fasting and prayer, and he will be righteous in God’s eyes.”

The reign of Tsar Alexander can be divided into three phases: a first phase until 1812, when he was strongly influenced by the ideas of the eighteenth-century French Enlightenment; a second phase from 1812 to about 1822, when the main influence on him was a kind of romantic mysticism; and a third phase until his death, when he returned to True Orthodoxy. Tsar Alexander faced, in a particularly acute form, the problems faced by all the “enlightened despots” of the eighteenth century – that is, how to relieve the burdens of his people without destroying the autocratic system that held the whole country together. Like his fellow despots, Alexander was strongly influenced by the ideals of the French revolution and by the Masonic ferment that had penetrated the nobility of Russia no less than the élites of Western Europe. So it is not surprising that he should have wavered between the strictly autocratic views of his mother the Dowager Empress Maria Fyodorovna, the Holy Synod and the court historian Nicholas Karamzin, on the one hand, and the liberalism of the Masons that surrounded him, on the other.

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391 Lebedev, Velikorossia, op. cit., pp. 245-249.
393 Shabelsky-Bork, in Fomin S., Rossia pered Vtorym Prishestviem (Russia before the Second Coming), Sergiev Posad, 1993, p. 121 (in Russian).
Karamzin was one of the first intelligenty, together with the poet Pushkin and the hierarch Philaret of Moscow, who called for a return to Russian traditions in public life, and in particular to the Russian language, after the century of forced westernization since Peter the Great. Karamzin believed that Russia had nothing to be ashamed of by comparison with the West. Nor did he accept the western vogue for republicanism. “Russia was founded through victories and one-man-rule; she perished [at the end of the Kievan period] because of a variety of rulers; and it was saved by the wise autocracy [of the Muscovite tsars].”

And yet the autocrat of all the Russias had his doubts about autocracy. Only ten days after the death of his father, Alexander returned to the Winter Palace one night to find an anonymous letter on his desk, full of liberal, anti-autocratic sentiments of the kind that Alexander had espoused in his youth. “Is it possible,” it asked, “to set aside the hope of nations in favour of the sheer delight of self-rule?... No! He will at last open the book of fate which Catherine merely perceived. He will give us immutable laws. He will establish them for ever by an oath binding him to all his subjects. To Russia he will say, ‘Here lie the bounds to my autocratic power and to the power of those who will follow me, unalterable and everlasting.”

The author turned out to be a member of the chancery staff, Karazin. “There followed,” writes Alan Palmer, “an episode which anywhere except Russia would have seemed fantastic. When summoned to the Tsar’s presence, Karazin feared a severe rebuke for his presumption. But Alexander was effusively magnanimous. He embraced Karazin warmly and commended his sense of patriotic duty. Karazin, for his part, knelt in tears at Alexander’s feet, pledging his personal loyalty. Then the two men talked at length about the problems facing the Empire, of the need to safeguard the people from acts of arbitrary tyranny and to educate them so that they could assume in time the responsibilities of government...”

Alexander was further hindered in breaking with his liberal past by the guilt he felt at not stopping his father’s murder, and by the fact that he was still surrounded by many of those Masons who had murdered his father. The result was a continual increase in the power of Masonry, which was not without its effect on the conduct of government. Thus within a few weeks of

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394 Karamzin, “Zapiska o novoj i drevnej Rossii i ee politicheskom i grazhdanskom otnosheniakh” (Note on the new and ancient Russia and her political and civil relations), 1811; in N.G. Fyodorovsky, V poiskakh svoego puti: Rossia mezhdu Evropoj i Aziej (In Search of her own path: Russia between Europe and Asia), Moscow, 1997, p. 27 (in Russian).
395 Alexander had once said to his tutor [La Harpe, a Swiss republican]: “Once... my turn comes, then it will be necessary to work, gradually of course, to create a representative assembly of the nation which, thus directed, will establish a free constitution, after which my authority will cease absolutely” (in Geoffrey Hosking, Russia: People and Empire 1552-1917, London: HarperCollins, 1997, p. 123).
ascending the throne Alexander formed a neglassny komitet (secret committee) composed of three or four people of liberal views who with the emperor plotted the transformation of Russia on liberal lines.

“On June 24, 1801,” writes V.F. Ivanov, “the secret committee opened its proceedings. Alexander called it, on the model of the revolution of 1789, ‘the Committee of public safety’, and its opponents from the conservative camp – ‘the Jacobin gang’.

“There began criticism of the existing order and of the whole government system, which was recognised to be ‘ugly’. The firm and definite conclusion was reached that ‘only a constitution can muzzle the despotic government’”.

However, Alexander’s coronation in September, 1801, in Moscow, the heart of Old Russia with its autocratic traditions, pulled him in the opposite direction to the liberal ideas of St. Petersburg. “After being anointed with Holy Oil by the Metropolitan, Alexander swore a solemn oath to preserve the integrity of the Russian lands and the sacred concept of autocracy; and he was then permitted, as one blessed by God, to pass through the Royal Doors into the Sanctuary where the Tsars had, on this one occasion in their lives, the privilege of administering to themselves the Holy Sacrament. But Alexander felt unworthy to exercise the priestly office in this way; and, as [Metropolitan] Platon offered him the chalice, he knelt to receive communion as a member of the laity. Although only the higher clergy and their acolytes witnessed this gesture of humility, it was soon known in the city at large and created a deep impression of the new Tsar’s sense of spiritual discipline.”

“The movement was encouraged,” writes Hartley, “by the rumours, which cannot be substantiated, that Alexander I became a mason (he certainly visited lodges in Russia and Germany); his younger brother Constantine certainly was a mason. Regional lodges continued to flourish and young army officers who accompanied Russian forces through Europe in 1813 and 1814 also attended, and were influenced by, lodges in the territory through which they passed. The constitutions of secret societies which were formed by army officers in the wake of the Napoleonic Wars, like the Order of the Russian Knights and the Union of Salvation and Welfare, copied some of their rules.

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397 Ivanov, Russkaia Intelligentsia i Masonstvo: ot Petra I do nashikh dney (The Russian Intelligentsia and Masonry: from Peter I to our Days), Harbin, 1934, Moscow, 1997, p. 246 (in Russian).


399 The Masonic historian Richard Rhoda writes: “The tradition exists that Alexander became a Mason in 1803 and there is evidence that he was the member of a lodge in Warsaw” (“Russian Freemasonry: A New Dawn”, paper read at Orient Lodge № 15 on June 29, 1996, http://members.aol.com/houltonme/ru.htm). (V.M.) But, as we shall see, he later repented and banned Masonry. (V.M.)
and hierarchical organization from masonic lodges. In 1815, the higher orders of masonry in Russia were subordinated to the Astrea grand lodge.\textsuperscript{400}

In January, 1800 A.F. Labzin opened the “Dying Sphinx” lodge in Petersburg. The members of the order were sworn to sacrifice themselves and all they had to the aims of the lodge, whose existence remained a closely guarded secret. In 1806 Labzin founded \textit{The Messenger of Zion} as the vehicle of his ideas. Suppressed at first by the Church hierarchy, it was allowed to appear by Prince Golitsyn in 1817. “\textit{The Messenger of Zion},” writes Walicki, “preached the notion of ‘inner Christianity’ and the need for a moral awakening. It promised its readers that once they were morally reborn and vitalized by faith, they would gain suprarational powers of cognition and be able to penetrate the mysteries of nature, finding in them a key to a superior revelation beyond the reach of the Church.

“Labzin’s religion was thus a nondenominational and antiecclesiastical Christianity. Men’s hearts, he maintained, had been imbued with belief in Christ on the first day of creation; primitive pagan peoples were therefore closer to true Christianity than nations that had been baptized but were blinded by the false values of civilization. The official Church was only an assembly of lower-category Christians, and the Bible a ‘silent mentor who gives symbolic indications to the living teacher residing in the heart’. All dogmas, according to Labzin, were merely human inventions: Jesus had not desired men to think alike, but only to act justly. His words ‘Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden’ showed that he did not mean to set up any intermediate hierarchy between the believers and God.”\textsuperscript{401}

In 1802 A.A. Zherebtsov opened the “United Friends” lodge in Petersburg. Its aim was “to remove between men the distinctions of races, classes, beliefs and views, and to destroy fanaticism and superstition, and annihilate hatred and war, uniting the whole of humanity through the bonds of love and knowledge.”\textsuperscript{402}

Then there was the society of Count Grabianka, “The People of God”. “The aim of the society was ‘to announce at the command of God the imminent Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and his glorious reign upon earth’ and to prepare the humble and faithful souls for the approaching Kingdom of God. ‘As in the Rosecrucian lodges,’ writes Sokolskaia, ‘in the lodge of Count Grabianka people indulged, besides theosophy, in alchemy and magic. But while asserting that the brothers of the “Golden Rose Cross” had as their object of study ‘white, Divine magic’, the leaders of the Rosecrucians accused

\textsuperscript{400} Hartley, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 233-235. “Astrea” is the goddess of justice (O.F. Soloviev, \textit{Masonstvo v Mirovoj Politike XX Veke} (Masonry in World Politics in the 20\textsuperscript{th} Century), Moscow, 1998, p. 23 (in Russian)

\textsuperscript{401} Andrzej Walicki, \textit{A History of Russian Thought}, Oxford: Clarendon, 1988, p. 73.

\textsuperscript{402} Ivanov, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 247.
the followers of Count Grabianka of indulging in reading books of black magic and consorting with evil spirits. In sorrow at the lack of firmness of these brothers, who had become enmeshed in a new teaching, the leaders wrote: ‘Those who are known to us are wavering on their path and do not know what to join. And – God have mercy on them! – they are falling into the hands of evil magicians or Illuminati…’”

**Alexander, Napoleon and Speransky**

St. Petersburg and Moscow, liberalism and autocracy, the false “inner church” of Masonry and the True Church of Orthodoxy, divided Alexander’s heart between them, making his reign a crossroads in Russian history. Finally he was forced to choose Orthodoxy by the appearance in Russia of that supreme representative of the despotic essence of the revolution – Napoleon.

Tsar Paul had been murdered with the connivance of the British. Knowing this, Alexander “did not trust the British..., and much that Consul Bonaparte was achieving in France appealed to his own political instincts. Provided Napoleon had no territorial ambitions in the Balkans or the eastern Mediterranean, Alexander could see no reason for a clash of interests between France and Russia. The Emperor’s ‘young friends’ on the Secret Committee agreed in general with him rather than with [the Anglophile] Panin, and when Alexander discussed foreign affairs with them during the late summer of 1801, they received the impression that he favoured settling differences with France as a preliminary to a policy of passive isolation. As St. Helens wrote to Hawkesbury shortly before Alexander’s departure for Moscow, ‘The members of the Emperor’s Council, with whom he is particularly connected... been... zealous in promoting the intended peace with France, it being their professed System to endeavour to disengage the Emperor from all foreign Concerns... and induce him to direct his principal attention to the affairs of the Interior.’”

However, the influence of Napoleon on Alexander began to wane after the Russian Emperor’s meeting with the Prussian king Frederick William and his consort Queen Louise in June, 1802. The closeness of the two monarchs threatened to undermine the Tsar’s policy of splendid isolation from the affairs of Europe, and alarmed his foreign minister Kochubey, as well as annoying the French. But isolation was no longer a practical policy as Napoleon continued to encroach on the rights of the German principalities, and so Alexander replaced his foreign minister and, in May, 1803, summoned General Arakcheev to strengthen the Russian army in preparation for possible conflicts in the future...

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403 Ivanov, op. cit., p. 249.
404 Palmer, op. cit., pp. 63-64.
In 1804 the Duc d’Enghien was kidnapped by French agents, tried and executed as a traitor. “Alexander was enraged by the crime. The Duc d’Enghien was a member of the French royal house. By conniving at his kidnapping and execution the First Consul became, in Alexander’s eyes, a regicide. Nor was this the only cause of the Tsar’s indignation. He regarded the abduction of the Duke from Baden as a particular insult to Russia, for Napoleon had been repeatedly reminded that Alexander expected the French authorities to respect the lands of his wife’s family. His response was swift and dramatic. A meeting of the Council of State was convened in mid-April at which it was resolved, with only one dissentient voice, to break off all diplomatic contact with France. The Russian Court went into official mourning and a solemn note of protest was despatched to Paris.

“But the French paid little regard to Russian susceptibilities. Napoleon interpreted Alexander’s complaint as unjustified interference with the domestic affairs and internal security of France. He entrusted the reply to Talleyrand, his Minister of Foreign Affairs, and a bland statement appeared in the official Moniteur: ‘If, when England prepared the assassination of Paul I, the Russian Government had discovered that the organizers of the plot were no more than a league away from the frontier, would it not have seized them at once?’ No allusion could have been better calculated to wound the Tsar than this deliberate reference to the circumstances of his own accession. It was a rhetorical question which he found hard to forgive or forget. A month later news came from Paris that the First Consul had accepted from the French Senate the title of Emperor. Now, to all his other transgressions, Napoleon had added contempt for the dynastic principle. Resolutely the successor of Peter the Great refused to acknowledge the newest of empires.”

Alexander now formed a defensive alliance with Austria and Prussia against France (there were extensive negotiations with Britain, too, but no final agreement was reached). The Tsar and his new foreign minister, the Polish Mason Adam Czartoryski, added an interesting ideological element to the alliance. “No attempt would be made to impose discredited regimes from the past on lands liberated from French military rule. The French themselves were to be told that the Coalition was fighting, not against their natural rights, but against a government which was ‘no less a tyranny for France than the rest of Europe’. The new map of the continent must rest on principles of justice: frontiers would be so drawn that they coincided with natural geographical boundaries, provided outlets for industries, and associated in one political unit ‘homogeneous peoples able to agree among themselves’.”

Appealing to peoples over the heads of their rulers, and declaring that states should be made up of homogeneous ethnic units were, of course, innovative steps, derived from the French revolution, which presented

405 Palmer, op. cit., pp. 81-82.
406 Palmer, op. cit., p. 84.
considerable dangers for multi-ethnic empires such as the Russian and the Austrian. Similarly new and dangerous was the idea that the nation was defined by blood alone. None of these ideological innovations appealed to the other nations, and the Coalition (including Britain) that was eventually patched up in the summer of 1805 was motivated more by Napoleon’s further advances in Italy than by a common ideology.

However, although the British defeated Napoleon at sea at Trafalgar, it was a different story on land. At Austerlitz the Allies lost between 25,000 and 30,000 men killed, wounded or captured. And this was only the beginning. In 1806 Napoleon routed the Prussians at Jena and Auerstadt, and in 1807, after an indecisive conflict at Eylau, he defeated the Russians at Friedstadt. Almost the whole of Europe up to the borders of the Russian empire was in French hands.

Two religious events of the year 1806 gave a deeper and darker hue to the political and military conflict. In France Napoleon re-established the Jewish Sanhedrin, which then proclaimed him the Messiah. Partly in response to this, the Holy Synod of the Russian Church called Napoleon the antichrist, declaring that he was threatening “to shake the Orthodox Greco-Russian Church, and is trying by a diabolic invasion to draw the Orthodox into temptation and destruction”. It said that during the revolution Napoleon had bowed down to idols and to human creatures. Finally, ‘to the greater disgrace of the Church of Christ he has thought up the idea of restoring the Sanhedrin, declaring himself the Messiah, gathering together the Jews and leading them to the final uprooting of all Christian faith”. 407

In view of this unprecedented anathema, and the solemn pledges he had made to the King of Prussia, it would seem to have been unthinkable for Alexander to enter into alliance with Napoleon at this time. And yet this is precisely what he did at the famous treaty of Tilsit, on the river Niemen, in July, 1807. It came as a terrible shock to many that he should invite Napoleon to the meeting, saying: “Alliance between France and Russia has always been a particular wish of mine and I am convinced that this alone can guarantee the welfare and peace of the world”. Queen Louise of Prussia, who was very close to Alexander, wrote to him: “You have cruelly deceived me”. And it is hard not to agree with her since, with Alexander’s acquiescence, Napoleon took most of the Prussian lands and imposed a heavy indemnity on the Prussians, while Alexander took a part of what had been Prussian territory in Poland, the province of Bialystok. The only concession Alexander was able to wring from the Corsican was that King Frederick should be restored to the heart of his greatly reduced kingdom “from consideration of the wishes of His Majesty the Emperor of All the Russias”.

“As the days went by with no clear news from Tilsit,” writes Palmer, “the cities of the Empire were again filled with alarming rumours, as they had been after Austerlitz: was Holy Russia to be sold to the Antichrist? For, whatever the fashion on the Niemen, in St. Petersburg and Moscow the Church still thundered on Sundays against Bonaparte, that ‘worshipper of idols and whores’.”

Metropolitan Platon of Moscow wrote to the Tsar warning him not to trust Napoleon, whose ultimate aim was to subjugate the whole of Europe. In other letters, Platon compared Napoleon to Goliath and to “the Pharaoh, who will founder with all his hosts, just as the other did in the Red Sea.”

Of course, in view of his crushing military defeats, Alexander was in a weak position at Tilsit. Nevertheless, if he could not defeat his enemy, he did not have to enter into alliance with him or legitimise his conquests, especially since Napoleon did not (at that time) plan to invade Russia. To explain Alexander’s behaviour, which went against the Church, his Allies and most of public opinion at home, it is not sufficient to point to the liberal ideas of his youth, although those undoubtedly played a part. It is necessary to point also to a personal factor, the romantically seductive powers of that truly antichristian figure, Napoleon Bonaparte. As we have seen in the last chapter, Napoleon had seduced a whole generation of young people in Europe and America; so it is hardly surprising that the Tsar should also have come under his spell.

As Tsaritsa Elizabeth wrote to her mother: “You know, Mamma, this man seems to me like an irresistible seducer who by temptation or force succeeds in stealing the hearts of his victims. Russia, the most virtuous of them, has defended herself for a long time; but she has ended up no better than the others. And, in the person of her Emperor, she has yielded as much to charm as to force. He feels a secret attraction to his enticer which is apparent in all he does. I should indeed like to know what magic it is that he [Napoleon] employs to change people’s opinions so suddenly and so completely…”

In any case, “the peace of Tilsit,” writes Ivanov, “did not bring pacification. A year after Tilsit a meeting took place at Erfurt between Napoleon and Alexander, to which Alexander brought Speransky. At this last meeting Napoleon made a huge impression and convinced him of the need of reforming Russia on the model of France.

“The historian Professor Shiman in his work, Alexander I, writes:

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408 Palmer, op. cit., p. 138.
410 Papmehl, op. cit., p. 125.
411 Quoted in Palmer, op. cit., p. 148.
And so he (Alexander) took with him to Erfurt the most capable of his officials, the privy councillor Michael Mikhailovich Speransky, and put him in direct contact with Napoleon, who did not miss the opportunity to discuss with him in detailed conversations various questions of administration. The result of these conversations was a whole series of outstanding projects of reform, of which the most important was the project of a constitution for Russia.\textsuperscript{412}

Alexander returned to Petersburg enchanted with Napoleon, while his State-Secretary Speransky was enchanted both with Napoleon and with everything French.

The plan for a transformation of the State was created by Speransky with amazing speed, and in October, 1809 the whole plan was on Alexander’s desk. This plan reflected the dominant ideas of the time, which were close to what is usually called ‘the principles of 1789’.

1) The source of power is the State, the country.

2) Only that phenomenon which expresses the will of the people can be considered lawful.

3) If the government ceases to carry out the conditions on which it was summoned to power, its acts lose legality. The centralised administration of Napoleon’s empire influenced Alexander’s ideas about how he should reform his own administration.

4) So as to protect the country from arbitrariness, and put a bound to absolute power, it is necessary that it and its organs – the government institutions – should be led in their acts by basic laws, unalterable decrees, which exactly define the desires and needs of the people.

5) As a conclusion from what has been said: the basic laws must be the work and creation of the nation itself.

Proceeding from Montesquieu’s proposition that ‘three powers move and rule the state: the legislative power, the executive power and the judicial power’, Speransky constructed the whole of his plan on the principle of the division of powers – the legislative, the executive and the judicial. Another masonic truth was introduced, that the executive power in the hands of the ministers must be subject to the legislative, which was concentrated in the State Duma.

The plot proceeded, led by Speransky, who was supported by Napoleon.

\textsuperscript{412} Professor Theodore Shiman, \textit{Alexander I}, Moscow, 1908.
“After 1809 stubborn rumours circulated in society that Speransky and Count N.P. Rumyantsev were more attached to the interests of France than of Russia.

“Karamzin [the historian] in his notes and conversations tried to convince Alexander to stop the carrying out of Speransky’s reforms, which were useless and would bring only harm to the motherland.413

“Joseph de Maistre saw in the person of Speransky a most harmful revolutionary, who was undermining the foundations of all state principles and was striving by all means to discredit the power of the Tsar.

413 Speransky was a great admirer of Napoleon’s Civil Code. Karamzin noted, however: “Russia really does not need solemnly to acknowledge her ignorance before all of Europe and to bend graying heads over a volume devised by a few perfidious lawyers and Jacobins. Our political principles do not find inspiration in Napoleon’s Code of Laws, nor in an encyclopedia published in Paris, but in another encyclopedia infinitely older, the Bible.” (in Alexis Troubetsky, Imperial Legend: The Disappearance of Tsar Alexander I, Staplehurst: Spellman, 2002, p. 85).

L. A. Tikhomirov writes: “From the beginning of the 19th century, the Petrine institutions finally collapsed. Already the practice of our 19th century has reduced ‘the collegiate principle’ to nothing. Under Alexander I the elegant French system of bureaucratic centralisation created by Napoleon on the basis of the revolutionary ideas captivated the Russian imitative spirit. For Russians this was ‘the last word’ in perfection, and Speransky, an admirer of Napoleon, together with the Emperor, an admirer of the republic, created a new system of administration which continued essentially until Emperor Alexander II.

“Alexander I’s institutions completed the absolutist construction of the government machine. Until that time, the very imperfection of the administrative institutions had not allowed them to escape control. The supreme power retained its directing and controlling character. Under Alexander I the bureaucracy was perfectly organised. A strict separation of powers was created. An independent court was created, and a special organ of legislation – the State Council. Ministries were created as the executive power, with an elegant mechanism of driving mechanisms operating throughout the country. The bureaucratic mechanism’s ability to act was brought to a peak by the strictest system of centralisation. But where in all these institutions was the nation and the supreme power?

“The nation was subjected to the ruling mechanism. The supreme power was placed, from an external point of view, at the intersection of all the administrative powers. In fact, it was surrounded by the highest administrative powers and was cut off by them not only from the nation, but also from the rest of the administrative mechanism. With the transformation of the Senate into the highest judicial organ, the supreme power lost in it an organ of control.

“The idea of the administrative institutions is that they should attain such perfection that the supreme power will have no need to conduct any immediate administrative activity. As an ideal this is correct. But in fact there is hidden here the source of a constant usurpation of administrative powers in relation to the supreme power. The point is that the most perfect administrative institutions act in an orderly fashion only under the watchful control of the supreme power and his constant direction. But where control and direction by the supreme power is undermined, the bureaucracy becomes the more harmful the more perfectly it is constructed. With this it acquires the tendency to become de facto free of the supreme power and even submits it to itself…” (Monarkhicheskaiia Gosudarstvennost’ (Monarchical Statehood), St. Petersburg, 1992, pp. 342-343 (in Russian)). (V.M.)
“For two years his Majesty refused to believe these rumours and warnings. Towards the beginning of 1812 the enemies of Speransky in the persons of Arakcheev, Shishkov, Armfeldt and Great Princess Catherine Pavlovna convinced his Majesty of the correctness of the general conviction of Speransky’s treachery.

“The following accusations were brought against Speransky: the incitement of the masses of the people through taxes, the destruction of the finances and unfavourable comments about the government.

“A whole plot to keep Napoleon informed was also uncovered. Speransky had been entrusted with conducting a correspondence with Nesselrode, in which the main French actors were indicated under pseudonyms. But Speransky did not limit himself to giving this information: on his own, without authorisation from above, he demanded that all secret papers and reports from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs should be handed over to him. Several officials were found who without objections carried out his desire….

“Then from many honourable people there came warnings about the traitrous activities of Speransky.

“At the beginning of 1812 the Swedish hereditary prince Bernadotte, who was in opposition to Napoleon, informed Petersburg that ‘the sacred person of the Emperor is in danger’ and that Napoleon was ready with the help of a big bribe to establish his influence in Russia again.

“A letter was intercepted in which Speransky told a friend about the departure of his Majesty with the aim of inspecting the fortifications that had been raised on the western border, and he used the expression ‘our Boban’. ‘Our Boban’ was a humorous nickname inspired by Voltaire’s story, ‘White Bull’.

“Speransky was completely justly accused of belonging to the most harmful sect of Masonry, the Illuminati. Moreover, it was pointed out that Speransky was not only a member of it, but was ‘the regent of the Illuminati’.414

414 In 1810 an Illuminati lodge, “Polar Star”, was opened by the German Lutheran and pantheist mystic Professor I.A. Fessler, whom Speransky had summoned from Germany. Speransky joined this lodge, and Professor Shiman writes that Speransky “was a Freemason who accepted the strange thought of using the organization of the lodge for the reform of the Russian clergy, which was dear to his heart. His plan consisted in founding a masonic lodge that would have branch-lodges throughout the Russian State and would accept the most capable clergy as brothers. “Speransky openly hated Orthodoxy. With the help of Fessler he wanted to begin a war against the Orthodox Church. The Austrian chargé d’affaires Saint-Julien, wrote in a report to his government on the fall of Speransky that the higher clergy, shocked by the protection he gave to Fessler, whom he had sent for from Germany, and who had the rashness to express
“Speransky’s relations with the Martinists and Illuminati were reported by Count Rastopchin, who in his ‘Note on the Martinists’, presented in 1811 to Great Princess Catherine Pavlovna, said that ‘they (the Martinists) were all more or less devoted to Speransky, who, without belonging in his heart to any sect, or perhaps any religion, was using their services to direct affairs and keep them dependent on himself.’

“Finally, in the note of Colonel Polev, found in Alexander I’s study after his death, the names of Speransky, Fessler, Magnitsky, Zlobin and others were mentioned as being members of the Illuminati lodge…

“On March 11, 1812 Sangley was summoned to his Majesty, who informed him that Speransky ‘had the boldness to describe all Napoleon’s military talents and advised him to convene the State Duma and ask it to conduct the war while he absented himself’. ‘Who am I then? Nothing?’, continued his Majesty. ‘From this I see that he is undermining the autocracy, which I am obliged to transfer whole to my heirs.’

“On March 16 Professor Parrot of Derpt university was summoned to the Winter Palace. ‘The Emperor,’ he wrote in a later letter to Emperor Nicholas I, ‘angrily described to me the ingratitude of Speransky, whom I had never seen, expressing himself with feeling that drew tears from him. Having expounded the proof of his treachery that had been presented to him, he said to me: ‘I have decided to shoot him tomorrow, and have invited you here because I wish to know your opinion on this.’

“Unfortunately, his Majesty did not carry out his decision: Speransky had too many friends and protectors. They saved him, but for his betrayal he was exiled to Nizhni Novgorod, and then – in view of the fact that the Nizhni Novgorod nobility were stirred up against him – to Perm…. At a patriotic banquet in the house of the Provincial Governor Prince Gruzinsky in Nizhni Novgorod, the nobles’ patriotism almost cost Speransky his life. ‘Hang him, execute him, burn Speransky on the pyre’ suggested the Nizhni Novgorod nobles.

“Through the efforts of his friends, Speransky was returned from exile and continued his treachery against his kind Tsar. He took part in the organisation of the uprising of the Decembrists, who after the coup appointed him first candidate for the provisional government.”

Deist, antichristian views, were strongly instrumental in his fall (letter of April 1, 1812). However, our ‘liberators’ were in raptures with Speransky’s activities…” (in Ivanov, op. cit., p. 255) (V.M.)

415 Ivanov, op. cit., pp. 255-258. After the attempted coup, Tsar Nicholas used him, but told one of his officials to keep an eye on him…
Napoleon’s Invasion of Russia

However, it was Napoleon’s invasion rather than any internal factors that swung the scales in favour of the status quo, thereby paradoxically saving Russia from revolution. Napoleon decided on this fatal step after a gradual cooling in relations between the two countries that ended with Alexander’s withdrawal, in 1810, from the economically disastrous Continental System that Napoleon had established against England. By May, 1811, Tsar Alexander was showing a much firmer, more realistic, attitude to the political and military situation: “Should the Emperor Napoleon make war on me, it is possible, even probable, that we shall be defeated. But this will not give him peace... We shall enter into no compromise agreements; we have plenty of open spaces in our rear, and we shall preserve a well-organized army... I shall not be the first to draw my sword, but I shall be the last to sheathe it... I should sooner retire to Kamchatka than yield provinces or put my signature to a treaty in my conquered capital which was no more than a truce...”

The invasion also probably saved Russia from a union with Catholicism, which by now had made its Concordat with Napoleon and was acting, very probably, on Napoleon’s orders. For in 1810 Metropolitan Platon of Moscow, as K.A. Papmehl writes, “became the recipient of ecumenical overtures by the French senator Grégoire (formerly Bishop of Blois), presumably on Napoleon’s initiative. In a letter dated in Paris in May of that year, Grégoire referred to the discussions held in 1717, at the Sorbonne, between Peter I and some French bishops, with a view of exploring the prospects of re-unification. Peter apparently passed the matter on to the synod of Russian bishops who, in their turn, indicated that they could not commit themselves on a matter of such importance without consulting the Eastern Patriarchs. Nothing had been heard from the Russian side since then. Grégoire nevertheless assumed that the consultation must have taken place and asked for copies of the Patriarchs’ written opinions. He concluded his letter by assuring Platon that he was hoping and praying for reunification of the Churches...

“Platon passed the letter to the Synod in St. Petersburg. In 1811 [it] replied to Grégoire, with Emperor Alexander’s approval, to the effect that a search of Russian archives failed to reveal any of the relevant documents. The idea of a union, Platon added, was, in any case ‘contrary to the mood of the Russian people’ who were deeply attached to their faith and concerned with its preservation in a pure and unadulterated form.”

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Palmer, op. cit., p. 203.
Papmehl, op. cit., p. 85. In 1805 Platon remarked to an English visitor that “the English government had done a very wicked thing in tolerating Popery” (op. cit., p. 82).
Only a few years before, at Tilsit in 1807, the Tsar had said to Napoleon: “In Russia I am both Emperor and Pope – it’s much more convenient.” But this was not true: if Napoleon was effectively both Emperor and Pope in France, this could never be said of the tsars in Russia, damaged though the Orthodox symphony of powers had been by a century of semi-absolutism. And the restraint on Alexander’s power constituted by what remained of that symphony of powers evidently led him to think again about imitating the West too closely, whether politically or ecclesiastically.

That the symphony of powers was still intact was witnessed at the consecration of the Kazan cathedral in St. Petersburg on September 27, 1811, the tenth anniversary of Alexander’s coronation. “There was an ‘immense crowd’ of worshippers and onlookers. Not for many years had the people of St. Petersburg witnessed so solemn a ceremony symbolizing the interdependence of Church and State, for this essential bond of Tsardom was customarily emphasized in Moscow rather than in the newer capital. To some it seemed, both at the time and later, that the act of consecration served Alexander as a moment of re-dedication and renewal, linking the pledges he had given at his crowning in Moscow with the mounting challenge from across the frontier. For the rest of the century, the Kazan Cathedral remained associated in people’s minds with the high drama of its early years, so that it became in time a shrine for the heroes of the Napoleonic wars.”

It was from the Kazan Cathedral that Alexander set out at the start of the campaign, on April 21, 1812. As Tsaritsa Elizabeth wrote to her mother in Baden: “The Emperor left yesterday at two o’clock, to the accompaniment of cheers and blessings from an immense crowd of people who were tightly packed from the Kazan Church to the gate of the city. As these folk had not been hustled into position by the police and as the cheering was not led by planted agents, he was – quite rightly – moved deeply by such signs of affection from our splendid people!... ‘For God and their Sovereign’ – that was the cry! They make no distinction between them in their hearts and scarcely at all in their worship. Woe to him who profanes the one or the other. These old-world attitudes are certainly not found more intensively anywhere than at the extremes of Europe. Forgive me, dear Mamma, for regaling you with commonplaces familiar to everyone who has a true knowledge of Russia, but one is carried away when speaking of something you love; and you know my passionate devotion to this country.”

420 Palmer, *op. cit.*, p. 215. A century later, at the beginning of a still greater war against a western enemy, another German-born Tsaritsa would express almost exactly similar sentiments on seeing her husband and Tsar go to war...
And so Napoleon’s invasion of Russia acquired a significance that the other Napoleonic wars in continental Europe did not have: it became a struggle, not simply between two not-so-different political systems, but between two radically opposed faiths: the faith in the Revolution and the faith in Orthodoxy. 1812 produced an explosion of Russian patriotism and religious feeling. God’s evident support for the heroic Russian armies, at the head of which was the “Reigning” icon of the Mother of God, reanimated a fervent pride and belief in Holy Russia. As K.N. Leontiev writes: “It was ecclesiastical feeling and obedience to the authorities (the Byzantine influence) that saved us in 1812. It is well-known that many of our peasants (not all, of course, but those who were taken unawares by the invasion) found little purely national feeling in themselves in the first minute. They robbed the landowners’ estates, rebelled against the nobility, and took money from the French. The clergy, the nobility and the merchants behaved differently. But immediately they saw that the French were stealing the icons and putting horses in our churches, the people became harder and everything took a different turn…”

Of particular significance was the fact that it had been Moscow, the old capital associated with Orthodoxy and the Muscovite tsars, rather than the new and westernized capital of St. Petersburg, which had borne the brunt of the suffering. For it was not so much the indecisive battle of Borodino, a contest in which, according to Napoleon, “the French showed themselves worthy of victory and the Russians of being invincible”, as the burning of Moscow, which destroyed 80% of dwellings in the city, and Alexander’s refusal to surrender even after that, which proved the decisive turning-point, convincing Napoleon that he could not win...

The leadership on both sides made serious mistakes. But it was the French who suffered most from their mistakes. In this, as in many other ways, especially the weather, God was clearly on the side of the Orthodox. Thus early in the campaign terrible rain storms killed thousands of horses that were desperately needed by Napoleon. Then terrible heat killed many soldiers. The late onset of winter tempted Napoleon to stay too long in Moscow. But then, when the winter did come, it was savage...

The terrible sufferings of the French on their return march are well-known. There was even cannibalism, - a sure sign of apocalyptic times, - as the soldiers of the Great Army began to put their fellow-soldiers in the stew pots.

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421 That same icon which was to reappear miraculously on March 2, 1917, at another time of mortal danger for the State.
423 70,000 men fell in one day, the largest death-toll in a single day’s warfare until the first day of the Battle of the Somme in 1916.
Out of the vast army - nearly 600,000 men - that set out for Russia, only 120,000 returned, 35,000 of them French. The Russians lost 400,000, but they had saved their homeland...

However, the Russian victory was almost foiled by the intrigues of the Masons, including the commander-in-chief of the army Kutuzov, who, according to Sokolskaia, was initiated into Masonry at the “Three Keys” lodge in Regensburg, and was later received into lodges in Frankfurt, Berlin, Petersburg and Moscow, penetrating into the secrets of the higher degrees.425

The Tsar was against Kutuzov’s appointment, but said: “The public wanted his appointment, I appointed him: as regards myself personally, I wash my hands of him.” He was soon proved right in his premonition. The Russian position at the battle of Borodino was poorly prepared by Kutuzov, and he himself took little part in it. The previous commander-in-chief, Barclay, took the lead and acted heroically, but gained little credit for it.

In Moscow, the patriotic Count Rastopchin, well aware of the pro-Napoleonic, potentially seditious sentiments of the nobility, had them evacuated from the city with their families while Kutuzov slept. As the Martinist Runich said: “Rastopchin, acting through fear, threw the nobility, the merchants and the non-gentry intellectuals out of Moscow in order that they should not give in to the enticements and influence of Napoleon’s tactics. He stirred up the hatred of the people by the horrors that he ascribed to the foreigners [although he had started it], whom he mocked at the same time. He saved Russia from the yoke of Napoleon.”426

“The fire of Moscow started the people’s war. Napoleon’s situation deteriorated from day to day. His army was demoralised. The hungry French soldiers wandered round the outskirts of Moscow searching for bread and provisions. Lootings and murders began. Discipline in the army declined sharply. Napoleon was faced with a threatening dilemma: either peace, or destruction.

“Peace negotiations began. On September 23 at Tarutino camp Kutuzov met Napoleon’s truce-envoy Lauriston. Kutuzov willingly accepted this suggestion and decided to keep the meeting a complete secret. He told Lauriston to meet him outside the camp, beyond the line of our advance posts, on the road to Moscow. Everything was to be done in private and the project for a truce was to be put forward very quickly. This plan for a secret

425 Ivanov, op. cit., p. 261.
426 Ivanov, op. cit., pp. 264-265. However, Alexander Solzhenitsyn writes that as a result of the fire of Moscow 15,000 Russian soldiers who were recovering from wounds suffered at Borodino in the military hospitals of the city were burned alive (Le ‘problème russe’ à la fin du xxe siècle (The ‘Russian Problem’ at the End of the 20th Century), Paris: Fayard, 1994, pp. 52-53 (in French)).
agreement between Napoleon and the Masonic commander-in-chief fell through. Some Russian generals and especially the English agent attached to the Russian army, [General] Wilson, protested against the unofficial secret negotiations with Napoleon. On September 23 Wilson made a scene in front of Kutuzov; he came to him as the representative of the general staff and army generals and declared that the army would refuse to obey him. Wilson was supported by the Duke of Wurtemburg, the Emperor’s uncle, his son-in-law the Duke of Oldenburg and Prince Volkonsky, general-adjutant, who had arrived not long before with a report from Petersburg. Kutuzov gave way, and the meeting with Lauriston took place in the camp headquarters.

“Kutuzov’s failure in securing peace did not stop him from giving fraternal help to Napoleon in the future.

“After insistent urgings from those close to him and at the insistence of his Majesty, Kutuzov agreed to attack near Tarutino.

“The battle of Tarutino revealed the open betrayal of the commander-in-chief.

“‘When in the end the third and fourth corps came out of the wood and the cavalry of the main army was drawn up for the attack, the French began a general retreat. When the French retreat was already an accomplished fact and the French columns were already beyond Chernishina, Bennigsen moved his armies forward.

“The main forces at the moment of the French retreat had been drawn up for battle. In spite of this, and the persuasions of Yermolov and Miloradovich, Kutuzov decisively refused to move the armies forward, and only a part of the light cavalry was set aside for pursuing the enemy, the rest of the army returned to the Tarutino camp.

“Bennigsen was so enraged by the actions of the field-marshal that after the battle he did not even consider it necessary to display military etiquette in front of him and, on receiving his congratulations on the victory, did not even get off his horse.

“In private conversations he accused Kutuzov not only of not supporting him with the main army for personal reasons, but also of deliberately holding back Osterman’s corps.

“For many this story will seem monstrous; but from the Masonic point of view it was necessary: the Mason Kutuzov was only carrying out his obligations in relation to his brother (Murat), who had been beaten and fallen into misfortune.
“In pursuing the retreating army of Napoleon Kutuzov did not have enough strength or decisiveness to finish once and for all with the disordered French army. During the retreat Kutuzov clearly displayed criminal slowness.

“’The behaviour of the field-marshall drives me mad,’ wrote the English agent General Wilson about this.”

For “the Masonic oath was always held to be higher than the military oath.”

The Children of 1812

Napoleon never conquered two of his enemies: Britain and Russia; and it is tempting to see in these nations two principles that the revolution failed to subordinate to itself in the way that it had (at least temporarily) subordinated Catholicism to itself. These were, first: the love of freedom - not the ecstatic, collectivist, Rousseauist “freedom to” that the revolution represented, but the more sober, individualist, Lockean “freedom from” that was ingrained especially in the stubborn spirit of the island race. The revolution had made considerable inroads into English life, but never completely destroyed the restraining individualism of the English character. The second, and far greater, principle was the love of God in Orthodoxy, which inspired Russia to drive the Grande Armée all the way from burning Moscow to the streets of Paris. Throughout the nineteenth century Russia remained the main bulwark of civilization against the revolution, finally succumbing to it only in the catastrophe of 1917…

Orlando Figes writes: “As readers of War and Peace will know, the war of 1812 was a vital watershed in the culture of the Russian aristocracy. It was a war of national liberation from the intellectual empire of the French - a moment when noblemen like the Rostovs and the Bolkonskys struggled to break free from the foreign conventions of their society and began new lives on Russian principles. This was no straightforward metamorphosis (and it happened much more slowly than in Tolstoy’s novel, where the nobles rediscover their forgotten national ways almost overnight). Though anti-French voices had grown to quite a chorus in the first decade of the nineteenth century, the aristocracy was still immersed in the culture of the country against which they were at war. The salons of St. Petersburg were filled with young admirers of Bonaparte, such as Pierre Bezukhov in War and Peace. The most fashionable set was that of Counts Rumiantsev and Caulaincourt, the French ambassador in Petersburg, the circle in which Tolstoy’s Hélène moved. ‘How can we fight the French?’ asks Count Rostopchin, the Governor of Moscow, in War and Peace. ‘Can we arm ourselves against our teachers and divinities? Look at our youths! Look at our ladies! The French are our Gods. Paris is our Kingdom of Heaven.’ Yet even in

these circles there was horror at Napoleon’s invasion, and their reaction against all things French formed the basis of a Russian renaissance in life and art.”428

This Russian renaissance took many forms. At its simplest it meant that the noble army officers evinced a greater appreciation of the Russian peasants with whom they had marched all the way from Moscow to Paris. In the eighteenth century the only contact the nobility had had with the Russian peasants, their speech and their values, was through their peasant nannies. As Figes shows, this was a vital influence on many nobles, preserving a kind of stream of Russian subconsciousness under their European consciousness. As a result of 1812, this subconscious stream came more to the fore.

One of the consequences of this was the birth of a specifically Russian-language literature in the works of such “children of 1812” as the great poet Pushkin. It was Pushkin who started the trend of looking back to childhood, when the influence of his peasant nanny had been dominant. Thus “compared with their parents, the Russian nobles who grew up after 1812 put a higher valuation on childhood. It took a long time for such attitudes to change, but already by the middle decades of the nineteenth century one can discern a new veneration of childhood on the part of those memoirists and writers who recalled their upbringing after 1812. This nostalgia for the age of childhood merged with a new reverence for the Russian customs which they had known as children through their father’s household serfs.”429

Again, the new focus on the Russian language, customs and childhood influences merged with a new focus on history – beginning with the events of 1812 itself, but going much further back into the childhood of the nation. “Oh please, Nurse, tell me again how the French came to Moscow.’ Thus Herzen starts his sublime memoir My Past and Thoughts, one of the greatest works of Russian literature. Born in 1812, Herzen had a special fondness for his nanny’s stories of that year. His family had been forced to flee the flames that engulfed Moscow, the young Herzen carried out in his mother’s arms, and it was only through a safe conduct from Napoleon himself that they managed to escape to their Yaroslav estate. Herzen felt great ‘pride and pleasure at [having] taken part in the Great War’. The story of his childhood merged with the national drama he so loved to hear: ‘Tales of the fire of Moscow, of the battle of Borodino, of the Berezina, of the taking of Paris were my cradle songs, my nursery stories, my Iliad and my Odyssey.’ For Herzen’s generation, the myths of 1812 were intimately linked with their childhood memories. Even in the 1850s children were still brought up on the legends of that year. History, myth and memory were intertwined.

429 Figes, op. cit., p. 119.
“For the historian Nikolai Karamzin, 1812 was a tragic year. While his Moscow neighbours moved to their estates, he refused to ‘believe that the ancient holy city could be lost’ and, as he wrote on 20 August, he chose to ‘die on Moscow’s walls’. Karamzin’s house burned down in the fires and, since he had not thought to evacuate his library, he lost his precious books to the flames as well. But Karamzin saved one book – a bulging notebook that contained the draft of his celebrated *History of the Russian State* (1818-1826). Karamzin’s masterpiece was the first truly national history – not just in the sense that it was the first by a Russian, but also in the sense that it rendered Russia’s past as a national narrative. Previous histories of Russia had been arcane chronicles of monasteries and saints, patriotic propaganda, or heavy tomes of documents compiled by German scholars, unread and unreadable. But Karamzin’s *History* had a literary quality that made its twelve large volumes a nationwide success. It combined careful scholarship with the narrative techniques of a novelist. Karamzin stressed the psychological motivations of his historical protagonists – even to the point of inventing them – so that his account became more compelling to a readership brought up on the literary conventions of Romantic texts. Medieval tsars like Ivan the Terrible or Boris Godunov became tragic figures in Karamzin’s *History* – subjects for a modern psychological drama; and from its pages they walked on to the stage in operas by Mussorgsky and Rimsky Korsakov.

“The first eight volumes of Karamzin’s *History* were published in 1818. ‘Three thousand copies were sold within a month – something unprecedented in our country. Everyone, even high-born ladies, began to read the history of their country,’ wrote Pushkin. ‘It was a revelation. You could say that Karamzin discovered ancient Russia as Columbus discovered America.’ The victory of 1812 had encouraged a new interest and pride in Russia’s past. People who had been raised on the old conviction that there was no history before the reign of Peter the Great began to look back to the distant past for the sources of their country’s unexpected strengths. After 1812 history books appeared at a furious pace. Chairs were established in the universities (Gogol held one for a term at St. Petersburg). Historical associations were set up, many in the provinces, and huge efforts were suddenly devoted to the rescuing of Russia’s past. History became the arena for all those troubling questions about Russia’s nature and its destiny. As Belinsky wrote in 1846, ‘we interrogate our past for an explanation of our present and a hint of our future’.”

Both of the major intellectual movements of the mid-century – the Slavophiles and the Westerners – may be said to have originated in this passion for Russian history, which began after 1812. The Slavophiles believed that the real Russia was to be found in the Orthodox medieval state that existed before Peter the Great, while the Westerners believed that Russian history only really began with Peter and his westernizing reforms. However,

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both movements represented a turning away from the “pure” westernism of the eighteenth century. For both were speaking in Russian about Russia – and not merely about the upper classes, but about the whole people.

1812 elicited more than patriotic feelings. The victory over Napoleon also elicited an explosion of specifically religious feeling, not least in the Tsar himself, who said: “The burning of Moscow enlightened my soul, and the judgement of God on the icy fields filled my heart with a warmth of faith such as I had not felt before. Then I came to know God as He is depicted in the Holy Scriptures. I am obliged to the redemption of Europe from destruction for my own redemption”. All the crosses and medallions minted in memory of 1812, he said, were to bear the inscription: “Not to us, not to us, but to Thy name give the glory”.431

God was teaching the Russians a most important lesson: that those western influences which had so inundated Russia in the century up to 1812, were evil and threatened to destroy Russia. As Bishop Theophan the Recluse wrote some generations later: “We are attracted by enlightened Europe… Yes, there for the first time the pagan abominations that had been driven out of the world were restored; then they passed and are passing to us, too. Inhaling into ourselves these poisonous fumes, we whirl around like madmen, not remembering who we are. But let us recall 1812: Why did the French come to us? God sent them to exterminate that evil which we had taken over from them. Russia repented at that time, and God had mercy on her.”432

Tragically, however, that lesson was only superficially learned. Although the Masonic plans to overthrow both Church and State had been foiled, both Masonry and other unhealthy religious influences continued to flourish. And discontent with the existing order was evident in both the upper and the lower classes. Thus the question arose of the emancipation of the peasants, who had played such a great part in the victory, voluntarily destroying their own homes and crops in order to deny them to the French. They hoped for more in return than they actually received.

“There was great bitterness,” writes Hosking, “among peasants who returned from their militia service to find that there was no emancipation. Alexander, in his manifesto of 30 August 1814, thanking and rewarding all his subjects for their heroic deeds, said of the peasants simply that they would ‘receive their reward from God’…. Some nobles tried to persuade the authorities not to allow them back, but to leave them in the regular army as ordinary soldiers. The poet Gavriil Derzhavin was informed by his returnees that they had been ‘temporarily released’ and were now state peasants and not obliged to serve him. Rumours circulated that Alexander had intended to

431 Dobroklonsky, op. cit., p. 666. For more on Alexander’s religious feelings in this period, see Troubetskoy, op. cit., pp. 105-106.
432 Bishop Theophan, Mysli na kazhdij den’ (Thoughts for every day), p. 461 (in Russian).
free them all, but had been invited to a special meeting of indignant nobles at night in the Senate, from which he had allegedly been rescued, pleading for his life, by his brother Grand Duke Konstantin Pavlovich…”

Here we have the familiar theme of the people laying the blame for their woes, not on the tsar, but on the nobles. Some peasants may have wanted emancipation and a share in the nobles’ wealth. But they wanted it with the Tsar and through the Tsar, not as the expression of some egalitarian and anti-monarchist ideology. The French revolution in this, its imperialist, expansionist phase, overthrew many kingdoms and laid the seeds for the overthrow of still more. But it broke against the rock of the Russian people’s faith in their God and their Tsar…

However, if the masses of the people were still Orthodox and loyal to the Tsar, this could not be said of the nobility. We have seen the extent to which Masonry penetrated the bureaucracy in the early part of Alexander’s reign. Unfortunately, the triumphant progress of the Russian army into the heart of Masonry, Paris, did not destroy this influence, but only served to strengthen it.

For, as Zamoyski writes, “if nobles at home wanted to keep their serfs, the nobles who served as officers in the armies that occupied Paris were exposed to other, liberal influences. They had been brought up speaking French and reading the same literature as educated people in other countries. They could converse effortlessly with German and English allies as well as with French prisoners and civilians. Ostensibly, they were just like any of the Frenchmen, Britons and Germans they met, yet at every step they were made aware of profound differences. The experience left them with a sense of being somehow outside, almost unfit for participation in European civilisation. And that feeling would have dire consequences…”

All kinds of pseudo-religious mysticism flooded into Russia from the West. There was, writes N. Elagin, “a veritable inundation of ‘mystical’ and pseudo-Christian ideas… together with the ‘enlightened’ philosophy that had produced the French Revolution. Masonic lodges and other secret societies abounded; books containing the Gnostic and millenarian fantasies of Jacob Boehme, Jung-Stilling, Eckhartshausen and other Western ‘mystics’ were freely translated into Russian and printed for distribution in all the major cities of the realm; ‘ecumenical’ salons spread a vague teaching of an ‘inner Christianity’ to the highest levels of Russian society; the press censorship was under the direction of the powerful Minister of Spiritual Affairs, Count Golitsyn, who patronized every ‘mystical’ current and stifled the voice of traditional Orthodoxy by his dominance of the Holy Synod as Procurator; the Tsar Alexander himself, fresh from his victory over Napoleon and the

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433 Hosking, op. cit, p. 137.
formation of a vaguely religious ‘Holy Alliance’ of Western powers, favored the new religious currents and consulted with ‘prophetesses’ and other religious enthusiasts; and the bishops and other clergy who saw what was going on were reduced to helpless silence in the face of the prevailing current of the times and the Government’s support of it, which promised exile and disgrace for anyone who opposed it. Many even of those who regarded themselves as sincere Orthodox Christians were swept up in the spiritual ‘enthusiasm’ of the times, and, trusting their religious feelings more than the Church’s authority and tradition, were developing a new spirituality, foreign to Orthodoxy, in the midst of the Church itself. Thus, one lady of high birth, Ekaterina P. Tatarinova, claimed to have received the gift of ‘prophecy’ on the very day she was received into the Orthodox Church (from Protestantism), and subsequently she occupied the position of a ‘charismatic’ leader of religious meetings which included the singing of Masonic and sectarian hymns (while holding hands in a circle), a peculiar kind of dancing and spinning when the ‘Holy Spirit’ would come upon them, and actual ‘prophecy’ – sometimes for hours at a time. The members of such groups fancied that they drew closer to the traditions of Orthodoxy by such meetings, which they regarded as a kind of restoration of the New Testament Church for ‘inward’ believers, the ‘Brotherhood in Christ’, as opposed to the ‘outward’ Christians who were satisfied with the Divine services of the Orthodox Church… The revival of the perennial ‘charismatic’ temptation in the Church, together with a vague ‘revolutionary’ spirit imported from the West, presented a danger not merely to the preservation of true Christianity in Russia, but to the very survival of the whole order of Church and State…”

V.N. Zhmakin writes: “From 1812 there began with us in Russia a time of the domination of extreme mysticism and pietism… The Emperor Alexander became a devotee of many people simultaneously, from whatever quarter they declared their religious enthusiasm… He protected the preachers of western mysticism, the Catholic paters… Among the first of his friends and counsellors was Prince A.N. Golitsyn, who was ober-procurator of the Synod from 1803… Prince Golitsyn was the complete master of the Russian Orthodox Church in the reign of Alexander I… Having received no serious religious education, like the majority of aristocrats of that time, he was a complete babe in religious matters and almost an ignoramus in Orthodoxy… Golitsyn, who understood Orthodoxy poorly, took his understanding of it only from its external manifestations… His mystical imagination inclined in favour of secrecy, fancifulness, originality… He became simultaneously the devotee of all the representatives of contemporary mysticism, such as Mrs. Krunder, the society of Quakers, Jung Schtilling, the pastors… etc. Moreover, he became the pitiful plaything of all the contemporary sectarians, all the religious utopians, the representatives of all the religious theories, beginning

with the Masons and ending with the … eunuch Selivanov and the half-mad Tatarinova. In truth, Prince Golitsyn at the same time protected the mystics and the pietists, and gave access into Russia to the English missionaries, and presented a broad field of activity to the Jesuits, who, thanks to the protection of the Minister of Religious Affairs, sowed a large part of Russia with their missions... He himself personally took part in the prayer-meetings of the Quakers and waited, together with them, for the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit, he himself took part in the religious gatherings of Tatarinova, which were orgies reminiscent of the Shamans and khlysts.... Thanks to Prince Golitsyn, mystical literature received all rights of citizenship in Russia – works shot through with mystical ravings were distributed en masse... By the direct order of Prince Golitsyn all the more significant mystical works and translations were distributed to all the dioceses to the diocesan bishops. In some dioceses two thousand copies of one and the same work were sent to some dioceses... Prince Golitsyn... acted... in the name of the Holy Synod... and in this way contradicted himself;... the Synod as it were in its own name distributed works which actually went right against Orthodoxy.... He strictly persecuted the appearance of such works as were negatively oriented towards mysticism... Many of the simple people, on reading the mystical works that came into their hands, ... were confused and perplexed.”

Something of the atmosphere of St. Petersburg at that time can be gathered from the recollections of the future Metropolitan Philaret (Drozdov), when he went there for service in the newly reformed ecclesiastical schools in 1809. “The Synod greeted him with the advice to read ‘Swedenborg’s Miracles’ and learn French. He was taken to court to view the fireworks and attend a masquerade party in order to meet Prince Golitsyn..., quite literally ‘amidst the noise of a ball’... This was Philaret’s first masquerade ball, and he had never before seen a domino. ‘At the time I was an object of amusement in the Synod,’ Philaret recalled, ‘and I have remained a fool’.”

As Alexander pursued the remnants of Napoleon’s Great Army into Poland in the bitterly cold winter of 1812-13, he was “in a state bordering on religious ecstasy. More and more he turned to the eleventh chapter of the Book of Daniel with the apocalyptic vision of how the all-conquering King of the South is cast down by the King of the North. It seemed to him as if the prophecies, which had sustained him during the dark days of autumn and early winter, were now to be fulfilled: Easter this year would come with a new spiritual significance of hope for all Europe. ‘Placing myself firmly in the hands of God I submit blindly to His will,’ he informed his friend Golitsyn from Radzonow, on the Wrkra. ‘My faith is sincere and warm with passion. Every day it grows firmer and I experience joys I had never known before... It is difficult to express in words the benefits I gain from reading the Scriptures,

which previously I knew only superficially… All my glory I dedicate to the advancement of the reign of the Lord Jesus Christ’… At Kalisch (Kalisz) on the border of the Grand-Duchy of Warsaw and Prussia the Tsar concluded a convention with Frederick William: the agreement provided for a close military alliance between Russia and Prussia, stipulating the size of their respective contingents and promising Prussia territory as extensive as in 1806; but the final clauses went beyond the normal language of diplomacy to echo Alexander’s religious inspiration. ‘Let all Germany join us in our mission of liberation,’ the Kalisch Treaty said. ‘The hour has come for obligations to be observed with that religious faith, that sacred inviolability which holds together the power and permanence of nations.’”\(^{438}\)

**The Peace of Europe**

But should Russia go further west into Germany and liberate the whole of Western Europe? Kutuzov and most of the senior officers were against it. “Even the most ardent Russian patriots, such as his Minister of the Interior Admiral Shishkov and the Archimandrite Filaret, were against Alexander’s proposed liberation of Europe. The consensus was that Russia should help herself to East Prussia and much of Poland, providing herself with some territorial gain and a defensible western border, and leave it at that. But Alexander ignored them.”\(^{439}\)

Many have criticized Alexander’s subsequent behaviour in the years 1813-1815. And there was indeed much to criticize. He was an indifferent general and diplomat, and at the Congress of Vienna in 1814-1815 the lack of congruence between his proclaimed principles and his actual behaviour squandered for him much of the goodwill that the great sufferings of the Russian people in 1812 had won.

Nevertheless, on the critical question whether he should have stopped at the Vistula or continued all the way to Paris, in hindsight we must conclude that Alexander was right and his critics were wrong. Napoleon’s power was by no means broken in 1813; and if Alexander’s troops had not taken part in the great battle that did finally break it, at Leipzig in October, 1813, it is likely that the ogre would have retaken the whole of Germany and Poland up to the Vistula. True, the ever-chivalrous Alexander was unwise in giving him the island of Elba, very close to the mainland, from which he escaped in 1815, only to be finally defeated with great difficulty at Waterloo in June. However, the Tsar showed great tenacity of purpose, in contrast to his weakness at Tilsit, in pushing all the way to Paris and the complete overthrow of the antichrist-emperor, and must take the main credit for finally seeing the restoration of legitimate monarchy in France and throughout Continental Europe.


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

A few days later Alexander presented his fellow sovereigns with a treaty designed to bind them in a union in faith and virtue, requiring them “to take as their sole guide the precepts of the Christian religion”. The Tsar insisted on proclaiming the treaty dedicated “to the Holy and Indivisible Trinity” in Paris because it was the most irreligious of all Europe’s capital cities. Only the King of Prussia welcomed the idea. The Emperor of Austria was embarrassed; and in private agreed with his chancellor, Metternich, that Alexander was mad. On the British side, the Duke of Wellington confessed that he could hardly keep a straight face; he and Castlereagh mocked it in private.

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

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440 Palmer, op. cit., p. 333.
441 Palmer, op. cit., p. 335.
442 Zamoyski, Rites of Peace, pp. 520-522.
443 Another ecumenist act performed at the command of the Tsar was the pannikhida at the tomb of King Louis XVI.
445 Quoted in Metropolitan Ioann (Snychev), Zhizn’ i deiatel’nost’ mitropolita Filareta (The Life and Activity of Metropolitan Philaret), Tula, 1994, p. 121 (in Russian). Philaret appears to have been influenced by the ecumenism of his sovereign at this time. For in 1815 he wrote in his Conversations between one testing and one convinced of the Orthodoxy of the Greco-Russian Church: “Insofar as the one [the Eastern Church] and the other [the Western Church] confess Jesus Christ as having come in the flesh, in this respect they have a common Spirit, which ‘is of God’… Know that, holding to the above-quoted words of Holy Scripture, I do not dare to call any Church which believes ‘that Jesus is the Christ’ false” (Snychev, op. cit., pp. 402, 408 (in Russian).
The more cynical attitude of the foreign statesmen was not unexpected. After all, religion had long ceased to be seen as the basis of political life in the West. True, the monarchs protected religion as a foundation of their own monarchical power; but in the post-1815 settlement the Catholic Church received few of its lands back, which showed their true attitude to it. Nevertheless, Tsar Alexander was now the most powerful man in Europe, and the others could not afford to reject his religio-political project out of hand. So, led by Metternich, they set about discreetly editing the treaty of its more mystical elements until it was signed by the monarchs of Russia, Austria and Prussia (the British and the Turks opted out, as did the Pope of Rome) on September 26.

"Conformably to the word of the Holy Scriptures," declared the signatories, "the three contracting Monarchs will remain united by the bonds of a true and indissoluble fraternity, and considering each other as fellow countrymen, they will on all occasions, and in all places led each other aid and assistance; and regarding themselves towards their subjects and armies as fathers of families, they will lead them, in the same fraternity with which they are animated to protect religion, peace and justice." This was not only the beginning of a new, multilateral approach to politics: it was also the beginning of a kind of United Nations, with the great monarchical powers as the security council who pledged themselves not to take major decisions on the international stage without consulting each other. Moreover, it was a consciously Christian United Nations; for the powers declared themselves to be "members of a single Christian nation" – a remarkable idea in view of the fact that of the three members of the Alliance,

Russian). However, in defence of the holy metropolitan, it should be pointed out that in the above-quoted work he rejected the heresies of papism, and that he never served with heterodox hierarchs or sought union with the heterodox churches. And he revered his mentor, Metropolitan Platon of Moscow, who during his journey to Kiev and other Russian cities in 1804 reproached the Russian authorities for following ‘that new-fangled mode of thinking which is called tolerance’ in their relations with the Jesuits, and blamed the Jews for the impoverishment of the Christian population in the areas in which they are numerous” (Papmehl, op. cit., p. 81).

Palmer, op. cit., pp. 333-334. The mocking attitude of the British to the Holy Alliance is revealed by the fact that, as Norman Davies writes, “in each of the subsequent Congresses held at Troppau (1820), Laibach (1821), and Verona (1822), the British held strong reservations about the successive expeditions for crushing revolution in Naples, Greece, and Spain. On the critical issue of the revolt of Spain’s South American colonies, the British Foreign Secretary, George Canning, joined the US President, James Monroe, in forbidding any sort of European intervention in the Americas. ‘I called the New World into existence,’ he told the House of Commons in 1826, ‘to redress the Balance of the Old.’ In effect, he killed the Congress System stone dead. ‘Things are getting back to a wholesome state,’ he remarked shortly before his death. ‘Every nation for itself, and God for us all’” (Europe: A History, London: Pimlico, 1997, p. 763).

one, Russia, was Orthodox, another, Austria, was Catholic, and the third, Prussia, was Protestant.

The most important achievement of the Holy Alliance was the re-establishment of the monarchical principle, and in particular of hereditary monarchism. We have seen that even Napoleon’s regime had acquired monarchical trappings; but he had failed to make it truly hereditary. Thus when an obscure general called Malet had announced Napoleon’s death in Russia in October, 1812, the Emperor had been startled by how close the mutiny came to success.

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

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

However, while the Congress of Vienna and the Quadruple Alliance succeeded in re-establishing the principle of hereditary monarchism as the only true principle of political legitimacy, in practice hereditary monarchs by no means always recovered their thrones and territories. The great powers, as was to be expected, did not restore the map of Europe to what it had been before 1792. They increased their own power, and many hundreds of smaller rulers were partially or wholly dispossessed in the complex negotiations and horse-trading that took place between them in Vienna and Paris. Moreover, millions of ordinary people, especially in Germany and Italy, now found themselves under new rulers. This created almost as much disruption and discontent as had the Napoleonic invasions, which in turn created a kind of nostalgia for the Napoleonic times in some.

448 Zamoyski, Rites of Peace, p. 5.
In addition to this, in spite of the defeat of the French revolution, there was a continuing increase in the influence of the idea of nationalism that the revolution had spawned. This was the idea that not only the rulers, but also the nations over which they ruled, had rights and privileges, and that a nation represented an organic and even moral unity that could not be simply cut up and parcelled out as, for example, Poland was. The settlement of 1815, and the congresses of the great powers that took place thereafter, have been much criticized for not taking sufficient account of these new developments, and of vainly trying to resist an unstoppable development by crude police methods and repression.

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

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

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

Indeed, the opposite course of giving in to the propaganda of the French revolution might well have brought the cataclysm of 1914-45 forward by several decades. The kernel of truth in Zamoyski’s argument is that the great powers did not cure the disease of Europe, but only arrested or repressed it by crude measures that were often counter-productive. But the only real cure for the disease was for the peoples of Europe to accept the true faith from their liberator, Russia – a near-impossible task, since the attitude of the

449 Zamoyski, Rites of Peace, p. 569.
450 Zamoyski, Rites of Peace, p. 566.
Europeans to Russia was one of supercilious condescension and non-comprehension, while Russia was herself struggling to contain the disease within herself. In this context, the attempt of Tsar Alexander to save Europe by preaching the faith to his fellow monarchs acquires an extra poignancy. He failed, not only because his fellow monarchs were not interested in the faith, but also because his own faith was mixed with Masonic and heterodox elements. But his failure was less his loss than that of Europe as a whole. For the only hope for a real resurrection of Christian and monarchical Europe lay in accepting the lead of Russia in both the spiritual and the political spheres...

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

The Polish Question

One of the most important issues faced by the Great Powers in 1815 was the settlement of Poland. As was to be expected, the Poles welcomed Napoleon after he defeated the Prussians at Jena in 1806, although they knew that he was no true champion of liberty, equality and fraternity - Polish soldiers had helped the French tyrant’s attempts to crush Dominican independence. But Napoleon was the instrument, they felt, for the attainment of their own independence. They were doomed to disappointment, however. In 1807 Napoleon created the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, and by 1812 controlled almost all the lands of the former Republic – but did not restore it to full independence. And then the Russian armies came back... Nevertheless, Polish soldiers faithfully followed Napoleon both to Elba and to St. Helena, and the cult of Napoleon remained alive in Polish hearts for a long time. Thus the poet Mickiewicz signed himself "Adam Napoleon Mickiewicz”.

But in 1818 Tsar Alexander offered the Poles more than Napoleon had ever given them – one of the most liberal constitutions in Europe, and more rights than even the Russians possessed! As Lebedev writes: “Great was the joy of

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451 Madame de Staël claimed that “the Poles are the only Europeans who can serve under the banners of Napoleon without blushing” (Zamoyski, Holy Madness, p. 199).
452 Zamoyski, op. cit., p. 201.
453 As Palmer writes, the Constitutional Charter drawn up by his Polish minister Czartoryski “was a liberal instrument of government. The Polish nation was promised ‘for all time to come’ a bi-cameral Diet (Sejm), which would share legislative power with the Tsar-King, and a separate executive State Council of five ministers and a number of royal nominees. The Charter guaranteed to the Poles freedom of worship for the ‘Christian faiths’, freedom of the
Emperor Alexander I in connection with the fact that in 1815 he succeeded in creating a Polish Kingdom that was free both from Prussia and from Austria and almost completely – from Russia! For he gave this Kingdom a Constitution! An unparalleled situation was created. While remaining a part of the Russian Empire, Poland was at the same time a state within a state, and distinct from Russia precisely because it had rights and freedoms which did not exist in Russia! But this seemed little to the proud (and therefore the *blind*) Poles! They were dreaming of recreating, then and there, the [Polish State] in that ‘greatness’ which, as they thought, it had had before the ‘division of Poland. A revolutionary ‘patriotic’ movement began in which even the friend of Alexander I’s youth, A. Chartoryskij, took part. Like other Polish ‘pans’ [nobles], he looked with haughty coldness on the actions of the Emperor in relation to Poland. The Polish gentry did not value them…”

A complicating factor in the Polish question was Freemasonry. The Masonic historian Jasper Ridley writes: “Alexander I’s attitude to Freemasonry in Russia was affected by the position in Poland. The first Freemasons’ lodge in Poland was formed in 1735; but the Freemasons were immediately attacked by the Jesuits and the Roman Catholic Church, which was influential in Poland, and in 1738 King Augustus II issued a decree suppressing them. His successor, King Stanislaus Augustus Poniatovsky, was sympathetic to the Freemasons. He allowed the first Polish Grand Lodge to be formed in 1767, and ten years later he himself became a Freemason.

“The partition of Poland between Catherine the Great, Frederick the Great and Maria Theresa in 1772, was followed by the further partitions of 1793 and 1796, which eliminated Poland as a country. It was a black day for the Polish Freemasons. Only Frederick the Great and his successors in Prussia tolerated them; they were suppressed in Austrian Poland in 1795 and in Russian Poland in 1797. Some of the leaders of the Polish resistance... were Freemasons; but the most famous of all the heroes of Polish independence,
Tadeusz Kosciuszko, was not a Freemason, though he was a personal friend of La Fayette.\footnote{He was also respected by Alexander. When the Tsar visited Kosciuszko near Paris, “Kosciuszko appealed to Alexander to create a free kingdom of Poland with an English-style constitution and himself as King, and offered his services. ‘Your most cherished hopes will be realised,’ Alexander replied” (Zamoyski, Rites of Peace, p. 196). (V.M.)}

“When Napoleon defeated the Russians at Eylau and Friedland, and established the Grand Duchy of Warsaw under French protection in 1807, he permitted and encouraged the Freemasons, and in March 1810 the Grand Orient of Poland was established. After the defeat of Napoleon, Alexander I did not ban the Freemasons in that part of Poland which again came under Russia. When he visited Warsaw in November 1815 he was entertained at a banquet by the Polish Freemasons, and was made a member of the Polish Grand Orient. In 1816 General Alexander Rojnezky became Deputy Grand Master of the Polish Grand Orient, and he drafted a new constitution for the Freemasons which brought the organization to a considerable extent under the control of the Russian government. This aroused the resentment of patriotic Poles who did not like the Russians. In 1819 Major Victor Lukacinsky formed a rival masonic organization. It was free from Russian control and only Poles were admitted.

“The development in Poland was probably one of the factors which persuaded Tsar Alexander to change his attitude towards Freemasonry [and the Polish Kingdom]; though another was his general shift towards a reactionary \[sic\] policy which followed the formation of the Holy Alliance against revolution between Russia, Austria and Prussia. He asked Lieutenant General Egor Alexandrovich Kushelev, who was a senator and himself a prominent Freemason, to report to him on the masonic lodges in Russia.

“Kushelev’s report, in June 1821, stated that although true Freemasons were loyal subjects and their ideals and activities were praiseworthy, masonic lodges could be used as a cover for revolutionary activities, as they had been in the Kingdom of Naples; and the same was happening in Russia, especially in three of the St. Petersburg lodges.

“‘This is the state, Most Gracious Sovereign, in which Masonic lodges now exist in Petersburg. Instead of the Spirit of Christian mildness and of true Masonic rules and meekness, the spirit of self-will, turbulence and real anarchy acts through them.’

“Within a month of receiving Kushelev’s report, Alexander I banned the publication of Masonic songs and all other Masonic documents. On 1 August 1822 he issued a decree suppressing the Freemasons throughout Russia. In November he issued a similar decree banning the Freemasons and all other
secret societies in Russian Poland. These decrees were re-enacted by his more reactionary brother, Tsar Nicholas I, when Nicholas succeeded Alexander.  

Alexander’s attempt to combine the Russian autocracy with a Polish liberal constitution failed, as it had to fail. For monarchism and masonry do not mix. The Golden Age of Masonry was over – or so it seemed…

**The Jewish Question**

If the Polish problem was difficult to solve, the Jewish problem was even more intractable. The two nations had much in common: both were nations without states, distrustful of each other but united in their craving for national autonomy, both fiercely anti-Orthodox and both subjects of the same people, the Russians, whom they had both exploited in the not-so-distant past. The future of Europe, and Christian civilization in general, would to a large extent depend on how well Orthodox Russia would succeed in assimilating and neutralising this breeding-ground of the Revolution…

The Jews had always been forbidden to settle in Russia. From the beginning of the Muscovite kingdom, however, Jews had begun to infiltrate into Russia from Poland-Lithuania, where, as we have seen, the Polish landowners had given them considerable privileges, employing them to collect very heavy taxes, fees, tolls and produce from the Russian serfs. In some cases the Poles even handed over churches and monasteries to the Jews, who would extort fees for the celebration of sacraments.  

“In the 16th century,” writes Solzhenitsyn, quoting Yury Hessen, “the spiritual leadership of the Jewish world came to be concentrated in German-Polish Jewry… So as to prevent the possibility of the Jewish people being dissolved amidst the surrounding population, the spiritual leaders had from ages past introduced stipulations whose purpose was to isolate the people from close contact with their neighbours. Using the authority of the Talmud,… the Rabbis wrapped round the public and private life of the Jew with a complex web of prescriptions of a religio-social nature, which… prevented them getting close to people of other faiths.’ Real and spiritual needs ‘were brought in sacrifice to outdated forms of popular life’, ‘blind fulfilment of ritual was transformed for the people into the goal, as it were, of the existence of Jewry… Rabbinism, ossified in lifeless forms, continued to keep both the mind and the will of the people in fetters.’”

In 1648, the Ukrainian Cossacks and peasants rose up against their Polish and Jewish oppressors and appealed to the Tsar for help. The Tsarist armies

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triumphed, and by the treaty of Andrusovo in 1667 Eastern Ukraine was ceded — together with its Jewish population — to Russia.\textsuperscript{459} For the next hundred years, writes Hartley, these Jews of the Russian empire “lived mostly in the Ukraine although a small Jewish community became established in Moscow. The government legislated to contain and control the Jewish population within the empire’s borders. Both Catherine I (1725-27) and Elizabeth (1741-62) attempted to ban Jews from Russia; one estimate is that 35,000 Jews were banished in 1741.”\textsuperscript{460}

From the second half of the eighteenth century, however, the universalism and cosmopolitanism of the Enlightenment, together with the principles of human and national rights of the French revolution, led to the emancipation of the Jews, first in France, and then in most of the countries of Europe. This process was slow and accompanied by many reverses and difficulties, but inexorable. The only great power which firmly resisted it was Russia.\ldots

Contrary to popular myth, the myth of its being “the prison of the peoples”, the record of the Russian empire in its treatment of various subject populations was in general good. We only have to look at the large number of Baltic German names among the senior officials of the empire, the very large measure of autonomy given to the Finns (and to the Poles before they rebelled), and the way in which Tatar khans and Georgian princes were fully assimilated (or rather: assimilated to the degree that \textit{they} wanted). In fact, Russia was probably more liberal, and certainly less racialist, in its treatment of its subject peoples than its contemporary rival, the supposedly “liberal” empire of Great Britain.

But the Jews presented certain intractable problems not found in the other peoples of the empire. The first problem was the sheer \textit{number} of Jews who suddenly found themselves within its boundaries. Thus Hartley writes: “The empire acquired a further \textit{c.} 250,000 Jews after the establishment of the Congress Kingdom of Poland in 1815. There was a substantial Jewish population in Bessarabia (11.3 per cent in 1863). In 1854, the Jewish population of the whole empire was estimated as 1,062,132.”\textsuperscript{461} These numbers grew rapidly in the second half of the nineteenth century. And by the beginning of the twentieth century, according to Lebedev, \textit{about half} the number of the Jews \textit{in the whole world} were to be found in the Russian empire.

More fundamental, however, than the administrative problem presented by these large numbers was the fact that, as David Vital writes, “there were

\textsuperscript{459} 1667 was the very year in which Patriarch Nicon was unjustly deposed; so the first major influx of Jews into Russia coincided with the first serious undermining of Russian Church-State relations. (L.A. Tikhomirov, “Yevrei i Rossia” (“The Jews and Russia”), \textit{Kritika Demokratii (A Critique of Democracy)}, Moscow, 1997, p. 487 (in Russian)).


\textsuperscript{461} Hartley, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 15.
differences... between Russia and the other European states... in respect of the place of religion generally and what were taken to be the teachings of religion on what were unquestionably the state’s affairs. It was not merely that in principle Russia continued to be held by its Autocrat and its minions to be a Christian state with a particular duty to uphold its own Orthodox Church. It was that, far from the matter of the state’s specifically Christian duty slowly wasting away, as in the west, it continued actively to exercise the minds of Russia’s rulers as one of the central criteria by which questions of public policy were to be judged and decided. The continuous search for an effective definition of the role, quality, and ultimate purposes of the Autocracy itself was an enterprise which, considering the energy and seriousness with which it was pursued, sufficed in itself to distinguish Russia from its contemporaries. The programmes to which the state was committed and all its structures were under obligation to promote varied somewhat over time. But in no instance was there serious deviation from the rule that Russian Orthodoxy was and needed to remain a central and indispensable component of the ruling ethos. Nineteenth-century imperial Russia was therefore an ideological state in a manner and to a degree that had become so rare as to be virtually unknown in Europe and would not be familiar again for at least a century...”

Moreover, if Russia was the last ideological state in Europe, the large numbers of Ashkenazi Jews that came within the Russian empire between 1772 and 1815 constituted an ideological “state within the state” whose anti-Christian books, rabbinic leaders and kahal institutions caused them to be bitterly hostile to everything that Russia stood for. To put it bluntly: if the Russians worshipped Christ, the Jews hated Him. And no amount of state intervention, whether in a liberal or illiberal, emancipatory or anti-emancipatory direction, could resolve this basic contradiction or defuse the hostile sentiments it aroused on both sides. The situation was exacerbated by the fact that, unlike the Orthodox Christians, who are taught to recognise and obey secular authorities even if they are not Orthodox, and not only out of fear but for conscience’s sake (Romans 13.1-4), the Jews ultimately recognised no authorities beside their own, rabbinical ones. And if they did obey the Gentile powers, it was only because they had been taught that resistance was counter-productive, not because these powers had any moral authority over them.

This led the Jew, writes Vital, “to be deeply sceptical of civil authority of all kinds... The lasting effect of such scepticism was to leave him peculiarly independent in mind and social outlook. “Having no earthly masters to whom he thought he owed unquestioning political obedience (the special case of the Hasidic rebbe or zaddik and his devotees aside), ‘[the European Jew’s] was... a spirit that, for his times, was remarkably free. Permitted no land, he

had no territorial lord. Admitted to no guild, he was free of the authority of established master-craftsmen. Not being a Christian, he had neither bishop nor priest to direct him. And while he could be charged or punished for insubordination to state or sovereign, he could not properly be charged with disloyalty. Betrayal only entered into the life of the Jews in regard to their own community or, more broadly, to Jewry as a whole. It was to their own nation alone that they accepted that they owed undeviating loyalty.”

We have seen how important and harmful the internal Jewish authority of the kahal was considered to be by the enlightened Polish Jew Hourwitz. The Tsar’s servants were soon to make this discovery for themselves. Tsar Paul I appointed the poet and state official Gavriil Romanovich Derzhavin to investigate why Belorussia had been afflicted by such a severe famine. After visiting Belorussia twice in 1799 and 1800, Derzhavin came to the conclusion that the main cause of the famine was the desperate poverty into which the Jewish tavern-keepers and money-lenders, in connivance with the Polish landowners, had reduced the Belorussian peasants.

But more importantly, writes Platonov, Derzhavin “noted the ominous role of the kahals – the organs of Jewish self-rule on the basis of the bigoted laws of the Talmud, which ‘a well-constructed political body must not tolerate’, as being a state within the state. Derzhavin discovered that the Jews, who considered themselves oppressed, established in the Pale of Settlement a secret Israelite kingdom divided into kahal districts with kahal administrations endowed with despotic power over the Jews which inhumanly exploited the Christians and their property on the basis of the Talmud.”

“Derzhavin also uncovered the concept of ‘herem’ – a curse which the kahal issued against all those who did not submit to the laws of the Talmud. This, according to the just evaluation of the Russian poet, was ‘an impenetrable sacrilegious cover for the most terrible crimes’.

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464 Solzhenitsyn writes, quoting Derzhavin, that “some ‘landowners, giving the sale of wine on franchise to the Jews in their villages, are making agreements with them that their peasants should buy nothing that they needed from anyone else, and should take loans from nobody except these tax-farmers [three times more expensive], and should sell none of their products to anyone except these same Jewish tax-farmers... cheaper than the true price’” (op. cit., p. 47).
465 In 1800, I.G. Friesel, governor of Vilna, reported: “Having established their own administrative institution, called Synagogues, Kahals, or associations, the Jews completely separated themselves from the people and government of the land. As a result, they were exempt from the operation of the statutes which governed the peoples of the several estates, and even if special laws were enacted, these remained unenforced and valueless, because the ecclesiastical and temporal leaders of the Jews invariably resisted them and were clever enough to find means to evade them.” (Isaac Levitats, The Jewish Community in Russia, 1772-1844, New York, 1970, p. 29; quoted in Hartley, op. cit., pp. 98-99). (V.M.)
“In his note Derzhavin ‘was the first to delineate a harmonious, integral programme for the resolution of the Jewish question in the spirit of Russian statehood, having in mind the unification of all Russian subjects on common ground’.

“Paul I, after reading the note, agreed with many of its positions and decorated the author. However, the tragic death of the Tsar as the result of an international Masonic conspiracy destroyed the possibility of resolving the Jewish question in a spirit favourable for the Russian people. The new Emperor, Alexander I, being under the influence of a Masonic environment, adopted a liberal position. In 1802 he created a special Committee for the improvement of the Jews, whose soul was the Mason Speransky, who was closely linked with the Jewish world through the well-known tax-farmer Perets, whom he considered his friend and with whom he lived.

“Another member of the committee was G.R. Derzhavin. As general-governor, he prepared a note ‘On the removal of the deficit of bread in Belorussia, the collaring of the avaricious plans of the Jews, on their transformation, and other things’. Derzhavin’s new note, in the opinion of specialists, was ‘in the highest degree a remarkable document, not only as the work of an honourable, penetrating statesman, but also as a faithful exposition of all the essential sides of Jewish life, which hinder the merging of this race with the rest of the population.’

“In the report of the official commission on the Jewish question which worked in the 1870s in the Ministry of the Interior, it was noted that at the beginning of the reign of Alexander I the government ‘stood already on the ground of the detailed study of Jewry and the preparation that had begun had already at that time exposed such sides of the public institutions of this nationality which would hardly be tolerable in any state structure. But however often reforms were undertaken in the higher administrative spheres, every time some magical brake held up the completion of the matter.’ This magical brake stopped Derzhavin’s proposed reform of Jewry, which suggested the annihilation of the kahals in all the provinces populated by Jews, the removal of all kahal collections and the limitation of the influx of Jews to a certain percentage in relation to the Christian population, while the remaining masses were to be given lands in Astrakhan and New Russia provinces, assigning the poorest to re-settlement. Finally, he proposed allowing the Jews who did not want to submit to these restrictions freedom to go abroad. However, these measures were not confirmed by the government.

“Derzhavin’s note and the formation of the committee elicited great fear in the Jewish world. From the published kahal documents of the Minsk Jewish society it becomes clear that the kahals and the ‘leaders of the cities’ gathered in an extraordinary meeting three days later and decided to sent a deputation to St. Petersburg with the aim of petitioning Alexander I to make no
innovations in Jewish everyday life. But since this matter ‘required great resources’, a very significant sum was laid upon the whole Jewish population as a tax, refusal from which brought with it ‘excommunication from the people’ (herem). From a private note given to Derzhavin by one Belorussian landowner, it became known that the Jews imposed their herem also on the general procurator, uniting with it a curse through all the kahals ‘as on a persecutor’. Besides, they collected ‘as gifts’ for this matter, the huge sum for that time of a million rubles and sent it to Petersburg, asking that ‘efforts be made to remove him, Derzhavin, from his post, and if that was not possible, at any rate to make an attempt on his life’.\textsuperscript{466}

Not surprisingly, Tsar Alexander’s Statute for the Jews of December 9, 1804 turned out to be fairly liberal – much more liberal than the laws of Frederick Augustus in Napoleon’s Duchy of Warsaw. Its strictest provisions related to a ban on Jews’ participation in the distilling and retailing of spirits. Also, “there was to be no relaxation of the ancient rule that Jews (negligible exceptions apart\textsuperscript{467}) were to be prevented from penetrating into ‘inner Russia’. Provision was made for an eventual, but determined, attack on the rabbinate’s ancient – but in the government’s view presumptuous and unacceptable – practice of adjudicating cases that went beyond the strict limits of the religious (as opposed to the civil and criminal domain), but also on rabbinical independence and authority generally….\textsuperscript{468}

“But the Jews themselves could take some comfort in it being expressly stated that there was to be no question of forcible conversion to Christianity; that they were not to be oppressed or harassed in the observance of their faith and in their general social activities; that the private property of the Jews remained inviolable; and that Jews were not to be exploited or enserfed. They were, on the contrary, to enjoy the same, presumably full protection of the law that was accorded other subjects of the realm. They were not to be subject to the legal jurisdiction of the landowners on whose estates they might happen to be resident. And they were encouraged in every way the Committee could imagine – by fiscal and other economic incentives, for example, by the grant of land and loans to develop it, by permission to move to the New Russian Territories in the south – to undergo decisive and (so it was presumed) irreversible change in the two central respects which both Friezel and Derzhavin had indeed, and perfectly reasonably, regarded as vital: education and employment. In this they were to be encouraged very strongly; but they were not to be forced…”\textsuperscript{469}

However, the liberal Statute of 1804 was never fully implemented, and was succeeded by stricter measures towards the end of Alexander’s reign and in

\textsuperscript{466} Platonov, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 242, 243-245.

\textsuperscript{467} In fact they were not negligible at all. The Pale of Settlement was exceedingly porous!

\textsuperscript{468} The kahal was abolished in 1821 in Poland and in 1844 in the rest of the Russian empire.

\textsuperscript{469} Vital, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 95-96.
the reign of his successor, Nicholas I. There were many reasons for this. Among them, of course, was Napoleon’s invasion of Russia in 1812, which, if it had been successful, would have united the Western Sephardic Jews with the Eastern Ashkenazi Jews in a single State, free, emancipated, and under their own legally convened Sanhedrin. But not only did Napoleon not succeed: the invasion of Russia was the graveyard of his empire. In 1813, and again in 1815, the Russian armies entered Paris. From now on, the chief target of the Jews’ hatred in both East and West would be the Russian Empire…

But the main reason for the tightening of Russian policy was “the Jews’ abhorrence of Christianity, the intensely negative light in which non-Jewish society had always been regarded, and the deeply ingrained suspicion and fear in which all forms of non-Jewish authority were commonly held.” As a result, in the whole of the 19th century only 69,400 Jews converted to Orthodoxy. If the French delegates who emancipated French Jewry could ignore this fact, the Russian Tsars could not.

The Tsars’ gradual tightening of policy had little or no effect on the basic problem of religious and social antagonism. As Platonov writes: “The statute of the Jews worked out in 1804, which took practically no account of Derzhavin’s suggestion, continued to develop the isolation of the Jewish communities on Russian soil, that is, it strengthened the kahals together with their fiscal, judicial, police and educational independence. However, the thought of re-settling the Jews out of the western region continued to occupy the government after the issuing of the statute in 1804. A consequence of this was the building in the New Russian area (from 1808) of Jewish colonies in which the government vainly hoped to ‘re-educate’ the Jews, and, having taught them to carry out productive agricultural labour, to change in this way the whole structure of their life. Nevertheless, even in these model colonies the kahal-rabbinic administration retained its former significance and new settlements isolated themselves from the Christian communities; they did not intend to merge with them either in a national or in a cultural sense. The government not only did not resist the isolation of the Jews, but even founded for them the so-called Israelite Christians (that is, Talmudists who had converted to Orthodoxy). A special committee existed from 1817 to 1833.”

**The Reaction against Masonry**

Church-State relations were greatly strained in Alexander’s reign by the Bible Society. “Founded in 1804 in England by Methodists and Masons, the

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471 Vladimir Gubanov (ed.), Nikolai II-i i novie mucheniki (Nicholas II and the New Martyrs), St. Petersburg, 2000, p. 698 (in Russian). Gubanov took this figure from the Jewish Encyclopaedia.
472 Nor did the Jews receive emancipation from the great powers at the Congress of Vienna, although their situation had made it onto the agenda (Zamoyski, Rites of Peace, p. 568).
473 Platonov, op. cit., p. 245.
Bible Society extended its wide activity also in Russia. The Society had large financial resources. In 1810 the monetary contributions of the Bible Society attained 150,000 rubles, and at the end of 1823 there were already 300 such societies in Russia. Under the mask of love for one’s neighbour and the spreading of the word of God, the bible societies began to conduct oral propaganda and publish books directed against [the Orthodox Christian] religion and the State order. These books were published under the management of the censor, which was attached to the Ministry of Spiritual Affairs and Popular Enlightenment, which was headed by the Emperor Alexander’s close friend, Prince A.N. Golitsyn. The main leaders of the Bible societies were members of the Masonic lodges, who preached the rejection of Orthodoxy, the Church and the rites of the Church. In 1819 there was published Stankevich’s book, ‘A conversation in the coffin of a child’, which was hostile to the institution of the Orthodox Church. Then Yastrebov published a work entitled ‘An appeal to men to follow the inner promptings of the Spirit of Christ’. This work was recognised to be a sermon ‘of seditious elements against the Christian religion’ and the good order of the State. In 1824 there appeared ‘a blasphemous interpretation of the Gospel’ published by the director of the Russian Bible Society. This work openly pursued the aim of stirring up people against the Church and the Throne. Besides the publication of books directed against Orthodoxy, foreign religious propaganda was conducted. Two Catholic priests from Southern Germany, Gosner and Lindl, preached Protestantism, a sect beloved by the Masons. The Methodists and other sectarians sowed their tares and introduced heresies amidst the Orthodox. At the invitation of the Mason Speransky, the very pope of Masonry, Fessler, came and took charge of the work of destroying the Orthodox Church.

“The Orthodox clergy were silent. They could not speak against the evil that was being poured out everywhere. All the powerful men of the world were obedient instruments of Masonry. The Tsar, who was falsely informed about the aims and tasks of the Bible Society by Prince Golitsyn, gave the latter his protection from on high.”

“Golitsyn,” writes Oleg Platonov, “invited to the leadership of the Bible Society only certain hierarchs of the Russian Church that were close to him. He de facto removed the Holy Synod from participation in this matter. At the same time he introduced into it secular and clerical persons of other confessions, as if underlining that ‘the aim of the Society is higher than the interests of one, that is the Russian Church, and that it develops its activities in the interests of the whole of Christianity and the whole of the Christian world’.

“As the investigator of the Bible Society I.A. Chistovich wrote in 1873 [Istoria perevoda Biblii na russij iazyk (A History of the Translation of the Bible into

474 Ivanov, op. cit., p. 278.
Russian), St. Petersburg, pp. 50-55], ‘this indifferent cosmopolitanism in relation to the Church, however pure its preachers might be in their ideal simplicity of heart, was, however, an absurdity at that, as at any other time. Orthodoxy is, factually speaking, the existing form of the Christian faith of the Greco-Russian Church, and is completely in accord with the teaching and statutes of the Ancient Universal Church. Therefore Christianity in its correct ecclesiastical form only exists in the Orthodox Church and cannot have over or above it any other idea... But the Bible Society was directed precisely against such an ideal, and they sought it out or presupposed it.’

“In an official document of the Bible Society the ideas of Masonic ecumenism were openly declared. ‘The heavenly union of faith and love,’ it says in a report of the Russian Bible Society in 1818, ‘founded by means of Bible Societies in the great Christian family, reveal the beautiful dawn of the wedding day of Christians and that time when there will be one pastor and one flock, that is, when there will be one Divine Christian religion in all the various formations of Christian confessions.’

“The well-known Russian public figure, the academic A.S. Shishkov wrote on this score: ‘Let us look at the acts of the Bible Societies, let us see what they consist of. It consists in the intention to construct out of the whole human race one general republic or other and one religion – a dreamy and undiscriminating opinion, born in the minds either of deceivers or of the vainly wise... If the Bible Societies are trying only to spread piety, as they say, then why do they not unite with our Church, but deliberately act separate from her and not in agreement with her? If their intention consists in teaching Christian doctrines, does not our Church teach them to us? Can it be that we were not Christians before the appearance of the Bible Societies? And just how do they teach us this? They recruit heterodox teachers and publish books contrary to Christianity!... Is it not strange – even, dare I say it, funny – to see our metropolitans and hierarchs in the Bible Societies sitting, contrary to the apostolic rules, together with Lutherans, Catholics, Calvinists and Quakers – in a word, with all the heterodox? They with their grey hairs, and in their cassocks and klobuks, sit with laymen of all nations, and a man in a frock suit preaches to them the Word of God (of God as they call it, but not in fact)! Where is the decency, where the dignity of the church server? Where is the Church? They gather in homes where there often hang on the walls pictures of pagan gods or lascivious depictions of lovers, and these gatherings of theirs – which are without any Divine services, with the reading of prayers or the Gospel, sitting as it were in the theatre, without the least reverence – are equated with Church services, and a house without an altar, unconsecrated, where on other days they feast and dance, they call the temple of God! Is this not similar to Sodom and Gomorrah?’

At this critical moment for Russian Orthodoxy, God raised up righteous defenders of the faith, such as Metropolitan Michael (Desnitsky) and Archimandrite Innocent (Smirnov). Metropolitan Michael protested at Golitsyn's removal of the censorship of spiritual books from the Holy Synod, which meant giving free expression to the pseudo-mystical sects. There were stormy scenes between the prince and the metropolitan even in the Synod. "As a Member of the Synod, the hierarch Philaret [at that time archbishop of Yaroslavl], was witness to the heated speeches of Metropolitan Michael in defence of the Church and undoubtedly approved of his actions. In his eyes the first-ranking hierarch was rightly considered to be a pillar of the Orthodox Church, restraining the onslaught of false mysticism. And when this pillar collapsed\textsuperscript{476}, and the storms did not die down, Philaret, like many others, was seized by fear for the destiny of the Church. Under the influence of a vision seen by someone concerning Metropolitan Michael, a sorrowful picture of Church life, full of misery and darkness, was revealed. He believed that in such a situation only a person possessing the spirit and power of the Prophet Elijah could work with benefit for the Church. However, the holy hierarch was profoundly convinced that the Church was supported, not by people, but by the Lord. And since he saw that it was impossible to save the Church only by human efforts, without the help of God, he decided that it was better for him to withdraw himself from everything as far as he could. Evidently, Philaret preferred a different method of warfare with various kinds of heterodox preachers and sectarian societies from that employed by Metropolitan Michael. And these methods were: a correct organization of the spiritual schools throughout Russia and the spiritual enlightenment of the Russian people through the distribution of Orthodox spiritual literature..."\textsuperscript{477}

However, while Philaret withdrew to concentrate on spiritual education, Archimandrite Photius (Spassky) began an open defence of Orthodoxy in 1817. "Bureaucratic and military Petersburg were angry with the bold reprover. His first speech was unsuccessful. Photius' struggle... against the apostates from Orthodoxy, the followers of the so-called inner Church, ended with his expulsion from Petersburg.

"After the expulsion of Photius the Masons celebrated their victory. But the joy of the conquerors turned out to be short-lived. The exile was found to have followers. Photius received special support at a difficult time of his life from the great righteous woman, Countess Anna Alexeevna Orlova-Chesmenskaia, who presented a model of piety. She not only protected him, but chose him as her leader and confessor. The firmness and courage with which Photius fought against the enemies of Orthodoxy attracted the mind

\textsuperscript{476} Two weeks before he died, in March, 1821, he wrote to the Emperor: "Your Majesty, when this epistle reaches you, I will no longer be in this world. I have communicated nothing except the truth to people, especially now, when in my actions I am preparing to give an account to the Supreme Judge" (Snychev, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 147). (V.M.)

\textsuperscript{477} Snychev, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 148-149.
and heart of Countess Orlova, a woman of Christian humility and virtue. After the death of her instructor, Countess Orlova explained why it was Photius whom she chose as her spiritual director. ‘He attracted my attention,’ wrote Countess Orlova, ‘by the boldness and fearlessness with which he, being a teacher of the law of God at the cadet corps and a young monk, began to attack the dominant errors in faith. Everybody was against him, beginning with the Court. He did not fear this. I wanted to get to know him and entered into correspondence with him. His letters seemed to me to be some kind of apostolic epistles. After getting to know him better, I became convinced that he personally sought nothing for himself.”478

However, the struggle against Masonry was helped by other events. As we have seen, Kushelev reported to the Tsar on the revolutionary activity in the Polish and Russian lodges. And then there was the Congress of the Sacred Alliance in Verona in 1822.

Lebedev writes that at this Congress “Metternich unexpectedly, on the basis of Masonic documents that had unexpectedly fallen into his possession, demonstrated that the secret societies of all countries, being in constant communication with each other, constituted one common plot, which was subject only to the secret leaders, and only for form’s sake accepted different programmes in different countries, depending on circumstances and conditions. He was supported by the Prussian minister, Count Haugwitz, who himself had formerly been a Mason. He made a detailed report in which he showed that the ‘enmity’ of various unions of Masonry was only for show, to divert attention. In actual fact Masonry in its depths was one and its aim was the subjection of the world, and in the first place the subjection of the monarchs, so that they become weapons in the hands of the Masons. Haugwitz added that since 1777 he had personally ruled not only a part of the Prussian lodges, but also Masonry in Poland and Russia! We can imagine how shocked his Majesty Alexander I was as he sat in the hall. He had been born in the same year of 1777 and had entered Masonry in 1803. Everybody was stunned. The Austrian Emperor Frantz and the Russian Emperor Alexander I decided to attack this great evil. In 1822 Masonry was forbidden in Russia by a decree of the Tsar. The lodges were disbanded, the ‘brothers’ correspondence with abroad was strictly forbidden. At the same time this was the third powerful blow that shook the soul of Alexander I with the collapse of his faith in the nobility of the Masonic ideas and strivings. Strict censorship was introduced, especially in the publication of books of a spiritual nature. Now his Majesty began to pay attention to the rebukes of Masonry and mysticism issuing from Archimandrite Innocent, who had suffered earlier for this, of the metropolitan of the capital Michael, Metropolitan Seraphim who succeeded him, and also of the zealous defender of Orthodoxy Archimandrite Photius (Spassky)... Seraphim and Photius, joining forces, were able to show Alexander the danger for Orthodoxy of ‘fashionable’ tendencies in thought,

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478 Ivanov, op. cit. p. 280.
the harmfulness of the activity of Prince Golitsyn, and return the heart of the Tsar to Holy Orthodoxy. A visit to Valaam monastery, conversations with Vladyka Seraphim, with Elder Alexis of the Alexander Nevsky Lavra made a great impression on Alexander and showed him that what his exalted soul had sought throughout his life was contained in the experience, rules and methods of Orthodox asceticism, which was just then experiencing an unusual ascent, being armed with such books as The Philokalia and others, especially on the doing of the Jesus prayer (‘Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner!’). This was Alexander’s fourth powerful spiritual shock. It had two kinds of consequences. When, in April, 1824, after many fruitless exhortations, Archimandrite Photius publicly (in a private house) pronounced ‘anathema’ on Prince Golitsyn and the latter retired, his Majesty accepted his retirement.”

Archimandrite Photius wrote: “the Masonic faith is of Antichrist, and its whole teaching and writings are of the devil”, and “in the spring of 1824 [he] wrote two epistles to his Majesty. In one of them he said that ‘in our time many books, and many societies and private people are talking about some kind of new religion, which is supposedly pre-established for the last times. This new religion, which is preached in various forms, sometimes under the form of a new world..., sometimes of a new teaching, sometimes of the coming of Christ in the Spirit, sometimes of the union of the churches, sometimes under the form of some renewal and of Christ’s supposed thousand-year reign, sometimes insinuated under the form of a so-called new religion – is apostasy from the faith of God, the faith of the apostles and the fathers. It is faith in the coming Antichrist, it is propelling the revolution, it is thirsting for blood, it is filled with the spirit of Satan. Its false-prophets and apostles are Jung-Stilling, Eckartshausen, Thion, Bohme, Labzin, Fessler and the Methodists...’

“His Majesty was favourably disposed to the epistle of Archimandrite Photius in spite of the fact that it contained criticism of all his recent friends and of the people who had enjoyed his protection. Almost at the same time there appeared the book of Gosner, about whose harmful line Archimandrite Photius had reported to his Majesty on April 17, 1824.

“On April 20, 1824, Emperor Alexander received Photius, who was ordered: ‘Come by the secret entrance and staircase into his Majesty’s study so that nobody should know about this’. Their conversation lasted for three hours, and on May 7 Photius sent his second epistle with the title: ‘Thoroughly correct the work of God. The plan for the revolution published secretly, or the secret iniquities practised by secret society in Russia and everywhere.’

479 Lebedev, Velikorossia, op. cit., p. 289.
480 Elagin, op. cit., p. 243.
“On April 29 Photius gave his Majesty another note: ‘To your question how to stop the revolution, we are praying to the Lord God, and look what has been revealed. Only act immediately. The way of destroying the whole plan quietly and successfully is as follows: 1) to abolish the Ministry of Spiritual Affairs and remove two others from a well-known person; 2) to abolish the Bible Society under the pretext that there are already many printed Bibles, and they are now not needed; 3) the Synod is, as before, to supervise education, to see if there is anything against the authorities and the faith anywhere; 4) to remove Koshelev, exile Gosner, exile Fessler and exile the Methodists, albeit the leading ones. The Providence of God is now to do nothing more openly.’

“This flaming defence of Orthodoxy [by Photius] together with Metropolitan Seraphim was crowned with success: on May 15, 1824 the Ministry of Spiritual Affairs was abolished.”  

The Synod was now freer; it had a new over-procurator in the place of Golitsyn, and was purged of those members that had been linked with him. The Tsar had paid heed to Photius’ appeal, and so had become a spiritual as well as a physical conqueror. “God conquered the visible Napoleon who invaded Russia,” he said to him. “May He conquer the spiritual Napoleon through you!”

However, not everyone saw only good in the struggle against the Bible Society and the false mystics. Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow, who had been Archimandrite Photius’ early sponsor, had declined to enter into open warfare with them, partly because of his personal friendship with Golitsyn, and partly because he had another approach to the mystical ferment in Russia. “Under the cover of the mystical temptations,” writes Florovsky, “Philaret was able to recognize a living religious need, a thirst for religious instruction and enlightenment. He recognized the need in Russian society for the living enchurchment of the whole of life, whatever distorted and corrupt forms it sometimes assumed. And he considered that what was necessary was not reproof, but pastoral admonishment, penetrated by the spirit of love and completed by positive teaching.”

As for Golitsyn, writes Snychev, “the Muscovite archpastor saw in him much that was positive and recognized him to be one of the zealots of the spiritual side of the ecclesiastical organism. One way or the other, with the support of Prince Golitsyn it had been possible to publish many useful ecclesiastical books of a mystical character, but in an Orthodox spirit. Of course, Philaret was Orthodox in his views on mysticism. He clearly

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482 This, however, did not stop him from firmly refusing Golitsyn’s request to distribute a work published by the Tatarinova group. See Snychev, op. cit., p. 144.
understood that in mysticism the most important question is its relation to the Church and the institutions of the Church. Every form of isolation could bring only harm, not good. Philaret recognized the usefulness of mystical teaching in the spirit of Orthodoxy and was far from sympathizing with a superficial approach to the latter. In the actions of the opponents of mysticism he found excesses, while the very method of the struggle against the latter he considered to be open to criticism and of little use. What, for example, did the party of Arakcheev and Photius gain by their victory? Absolutely nothing.... First of all, mystical literature was subjected to terrible attacks, and that which was formerly considered useful was now recognized to be harmful, demonic and heretical. All books of a mystical character were ordered to be removed from the libraries of educational institutions and a veto placed on them. Terrible difficulties were placed in the way of the publication of patristic literature. Publishers were frightened, as it were, to publish, for example, the writings of St. Macarius, they were frightened to appear thereby to be supporters of mysticism. The opponents of the Bible Society did great harm also to the translation of the Holy Scriptures into Russian..."

Philaret had been taking an active part in this translation because he saw in it the best means of diverting the often misdirected religious aspirations of Russian society in the direction of Orthodoxy. “‘Let the bread not be taken away from the child’... - Metropolitan Philaret firmly believed in the renovatory power of the Word of God. He uninterruptedly bound his destiny with the work on the Bible, with the translation of the Holy Scriptures. And it is difficult properly to value his Biblical exploit. For him personally it was bound up with great trials and sorrow.”

For the work of translation was vigorously opposed by Metropolitan Seraphim, Archimandrite Photius and Admiral Shishkov, the new minister of education. Thus Shishkov “denied the very existence of the Russian language – ‘as if he saw in it only baseness and meanness’, ‘the simple people’s’ dialect of the single Slavic-Russian language. He saw in [Philaret’s] determination to translate the Word of God an ill-intentioned undertaking, ‘a weapon of revolutionary plots’, ‘how can one dare to change the words which are venerated as having come from the mouth of God?’... And translate it into what? Who would read these translations, would they not pile up everywhere in torn-up copies?... From the translation of the Bible Shishkov turned to the Catechism of Philaret and to his Notes on the Book of Genesis, where the Biblical and New Testament texts were translated in a Russian ‘reworking’. He was particularly disturbed by the fact that the Catechism was printed in a large print-run (18,000!) – he saw in this the clear manifestation of some criminal intention. Archimandrite Photius, on his part,... reproached the ‘unhealthy and harmful’ work of the Biblical translation – ‘the power of the translation was such that it clearly overthrew the dogmas of Church teaching or cast

doubt on the truth of the Church’s teaching and traditions’. And Photius directly attacked Philaret, who, in his words, ‘was struggling on behalf of a God-fighting assembly’ and was supposedly ‘influencing the translation of the Bible in order rather to give a new appearance to the Word of God, thereby assisting faithlessness, innovation and all kinds of ecclesiastical temptations’. He directly called Philaret’s Catechism ‘gutter water’. As Philaret was told by his disciple Gregory, who was then rector of the Petersburg Academy and many years later Metropolitan of Novgorod and Petersburg, they were saying about the Bible Society that ‘it was founded in order to introduce a reformation’. They feared the translation of the Old Testament, and in particular the five books of Moses, lest it somehow seduced people to return to the Old Testament ritual law, or fall into Molokanism and Judaism (this thought was Magnitsky’s). They began ‘to say unpleasant things’ about Philaret in Petersburg, and it was suggested that he be removed to the Caucasus as exarch of Georgia… In these years Philaret was in Moscow and took no notice of the Petersburg rumours and ‘Alexandrine politics’. As before, he directly and openly defended the work on the Bible and attempted to show that ‘the very desire to read the Holy Scriptures is already an earnest of moral improvement’. To the question, what was the purpose of this new undertaking in a subject so ancient and not subject to change as Christianity and the Bible, Philaret replied: ‘What is the purpose of this new undertaking? But what is new here? Dogmas? Rules of life? But the Bible Society preaches none of these things, and gives into the hands of those who desire it the book from which the Orthodox dogmas and pure rules of life were always drawn by the true Church in the past and to the present day. A new society? But it introduces no novelty into Christianity, and produces not the slightest change in the Church’… They asked: ‘Why is this undertaking of foreign origin?’ But, replied Philaret, so much with us ‘is not only of foreign origin, but also completely foreign’…

“The supposed zealots succeeded in obtaining the banning of Philaret’s Catechism on the excuse that there were ‘prayers’ in it – the Symbol of faith and the Commandments – in Russian. The Russian translation of the New Testament was not banned, but the translation of the Bible was stopped. And as Metropolitan Philaret of Kiev remembered later ‘with great sorrow and horror’, from fear of conversions to Judaism, ‘they found it necessary to commit to the flames of brick factories several thousand copies of the five books of the Prophet Moses translated into Russian in the St. Petersburg Theological Academy and printed by the Bible Society’. M. Philaret reacted sharply and sorrowfully to these actions, which were carried out bypassing the Holy Synod. [He wrote to Metropolitan Seraphim]: ‘I cannot understand by whom and how and why doubt can be cast on a work as pure and approved by all, as sacred as anything on earth. It would be no small matter if the doubt threatened only the one man who was the instrument of this work; but does it not threaten the Hierarchy? Does it not threaten the Church? If the Orthodoxy of a Catechism that was triumphantly approved by the Most Holy
Synod is in doubt, then will not the Orthodoxy of the Most Holy Synod itself not be in doubt? Will not allowing this shake the Hierarchy to its foundations, will it not disturb the peace of the Church? Will it not produce a serious temptation for the Church?’ Metropolitan Seraphim calmed Philaret, saying that Orthodoxy was not in question here, that everything came down to the language, but he refused ‘to reply in a satisfactory manner’ ‘why the Russian language must have no place in the Catechism, which was, moreover, short, and intended for small children who had no knowledge whatsoever of the Slavonic language, and for that reason were not able to understand the truths of the faith which were expounded to them in that language’… The ban on the Catechism (1828) was removed only when all the texts had been put into Slavonic and the Russian translation of the Symbol, the Lord’s Prayer and the Commandments had been left out. M. Philaret was deeply shaken by these events. ‘Smoke is eating into their eyes’, he wrote to his vicar, ‘and they are saying: how corrosive is the light of the sun! They can hardly breathe from the smoke and with difficulty decree: how harmful is the water from the source of life! Blessed is he who can not only raise his eyes to the mountains, but run there for the clean air, the living water!… Blessed is he who can sit in his corner and weep for his sins and pray for the Sovereign and the Church, and has no need to take part in public affairs, becoming tainted with the sins of others and multiplying his own sins!’ Above all Philaret was alarmed by the un-thought-through hastiness and interference of secular people, ‘people who have been called neither by God, nor by their superiors’, and who rise up in bold self-opinionated fashion against the appointed teachers.”

The destruction of the Holy Scriptures simply because they were in a Russian translation, and of the official Catechism simply because it quoted them in Russian rather than Slavonic, would, in another age, have led to a schism. But Philaret refrained from open protest precisely because he did not want to create a schism. However, with heresy overwhelming so many from the left, and blind prejudice parading as traditionalism from the right, the Russian Church was in a precarious position…

The Russian Bible Society was forced to close down its operations in 1826 by Tsar Nicholas I, and its property, worth some two million roubles, was transferred to the Holy Synod. The Society re-established itself in Russia in 1990. The project for the translation of the Holy Scriptures into Russian was resumed in the reign of Alexander II…

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486 Florovsky, “Philaret, mitropolit Moskovskij”, pp. 273-275. And yet his main enemies, sadly, were the zealots of Church piety. Thus Fr. Photius, on reading Philaret’s letter to Seraphim, wrote: “From the letters of Philaret it is not evident that he valued the faith, the Church and Orthodoxy, but only his own personality and honour” (in A.I. Yakovlev, “Sviatitel’ Filaret (Drozdov) in gosudarstvennaia zhizn’ Rossii v 1821-1831 godakh” (The Hierarch Philaret (Drozdov) and State life in Russia from 1821 to 1831), in Vladimir Tsurikov (ed.), Philaret, Metropolitan of Moscow 1782-1867, Jordanville: Variable Press, 2003, p. 138 ®.

487 Metropolitan Seraphim of St. Petersburg had threatened to retire if Philaret insisted on continuing his translation. (Snychev, op. cit., p. 181)
The nineteenth century was the age of nationalism par excellence; and it is generally considered that the nationalist liberation movements of that age were influenced above all by the ideology of the French revolution, which saw in the nation the source of all legitimacy and power. This is in general true; but there is at least one exception to this rule: the first of the nineteenth-century revolutions, and the only one that achieved its end without foreign support - that of Serbia. And the reason for this is that the Serbian revolution was not led by western-influenced intellectuals (of whom there were very few in Serbia), but by the Orthodox Church.

There were two Serbian Orthodox Churches: the Serbian metropolitanate of Karlovtsy in Slavonia in 1713, which by the end of the nineteenth century had six dioceses under Karlovtsy with about a million faithful, and the Peč patriarchate, which was abolished by the Ecumenical Patriarch Samuel in 1766. In spite of this administrative division, and foreign oppression, the Serbian Church preserved the fire of faith in the people. “For the Cross and Golden Freedom” was the battle-cry. And so it was that the Church played a major part in the Serbian revolution: “Abbot Paisius and Deacon Habbakuk were impaled at the Stambul gates in Belgrade. And in 1815, at the beginning of the second uprising, Abbot Meletius from Takov blessed Prince Milosh, supported him and went with his detachments into battle.”

The Serbians took their opportunity from a rebellion of the Dahis, the four top Janissary commanders in Serbia, against the Sultan. They were terrorising both Serbs and Muslims in the pashlik (province), which allowed the Serbs both to rebel against them and avoid retribution from the Sultan by claiming that they were being loyal to him – at any rate, for the time being.

Tim Judah writes: “Local leaders, including Karadjordje, a swine dealer who had fought both in the Austrian Freikorps and in the Turkish-organised Serbian army, began to plot their removal. But the Dahis struck first. In early 1804 they executed up to 150 of the Serbian knezes or local leaders in an operation they called ‘The Cutting Down of the Chiefs’. It was this that provoked the rebellion. At first the Serbs did not claim to be fighting to rid

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488 Adrian Fortescue, The Orthodox Eastern Church, London: Catholic Truth Society, 1920, p. 308. Originally, the Karlovtsy metropolitanate had jurisdiction over the Romanians of Hungarian Transylvania. However, in 1864 the authorities allowed the creation of a separate Romanian Church in Hungary, the metropolitanate of Hermannstadt (Nagy-Szeben) (Fortescue, op. cit., p. 316). From 1873 there was also a metropolitanate of Cernovtsy with jurisdiction over all the Orthodox (mainly Serbs and Romanians) in the Austrian lands (Fortescue, op. cit., pp. 323-325).

Significantly, when the Russian Church in Exile sought refuge in Serbia in the 1920s, their administration was set up in the former capital of the Serbian Church’s exile, Karlovtsy.

489 Bishop Nicholas (Velimirovich), Dusha Serbii (The Soul of Serbia), Moscow, 2006, p. 542 ©.
themselves of Ottoman domination but rather claimed to be rebelling in the name of the sultan against the repressive Dahis. Karadjordje was elected as leader of the uprising on 14 February 1804. He soon succeeded in liberating almost all of the pashalik, especially after the sultan ordered forces from Bosnia to intervene to finish off the Dahis.

“At this early stage, the Serbs were joined by at least part of the pashalik’s Mohammedan population, whom the Serbs called the ‘Good Turks’, and who were also keen to rid themselves of the rapacious Dahis. However, as the Serb aim soon changed to a demand for complete independence, co-operation rapidly turned to confrontation and massacre.

“In the negotiations that followed the defeat of the Dahis, the Serbs demanded the restoration of their autonomy, but the Turks became alarmed. The rebels were making contact with Serbs in other parts of the Ottoman Empire and with semi-independent Montenegro. Karadjordje had also sent a delegation to Russia to appeal for help, and he was talking ‘of throwing off the yoke that the Serb has borne since Kosovo’. Another Ottoman army was sent to crush the rebels, but it was soundly beaten at Ivankovac on 18 August 1805. Meeting in Smederovo in 1805, the insurgents decided not only to repudiate the pashalik’s annual tribute to the sultan but to take the struggle beyond the borders of the province. In reply a jihad or holy war was declared against them.

“At the end of 1806, Russia went to war with the Ottomans, and the Serbs were encouraged to keep fighting. A modest Russian force was sent to fight alongside the Serbs. Within weeks, though, the Russians and the Turks signed the Treaty of Slobozia, in which neither side bothered to mention the Serbs...

“In 1809, fighting between the Serbs and Turks resumed, with some Russian help. Russia soon needed to muster all its strength to counter Napoleon’s campaign of 1812, so a peace treaty was concluded in Bucharest with the Turks. It specified that Serbia would revert to Ottoman rule, with the proviso that there would be a general amnesty for participants in the insurrection. The Serbs rejected this, but their defences collapsed in the ensuing Turkish onslaught. Karadjordje fled, along with thousands of refugees, who sought protection in the Habsburg provinces, Wallachia and Russia. The Turkish vengeance was terrible. Villages were burned and thousand were sent into slavery. On 17 October 1813 alone, 1,800 women and children were sold as slaves in Belgrade. Soon afterwards a halt was called to the reprisals, and many of the refugees began returning. Some of the former insurgent leaders, such as Miloš Obrenović from the Rudnik district (who had

490 However, the Serbian pashalik was also made a subject of international law (Elena Kudriavtsev, “Blagie namerenia: Serbia i russkaia diplomatia v pervoj polovine XIX veka” (“Good Intentions: Serbia and Russian Diplomacy in the first Half of the 19th Century”), Rodina (Homeland), №10, 2003, p. 52). (V.M.).
not fled), now made their peace with the Turks, who confirmed them in their local positions of power. It was an untenable situation. In 1814, one of Karadjordje’s former commanders started a new rebellion, but it did not catch on. In the wake of the fresh reprisals following its defeat, however, preparations were made for yet another uprising. Led by Obrenović, the rebels had by mid-July 1815 succeeded in freeing a large part of the pashalik.

“Just as before, it was the international situation which helped shape developments. With Napoleon defeated at Waterloo in 1815, the Turks were wary of the Russians in case they intervened again on behalf of the Serbs. So, after much negotiation, a deal was struck with Obrenović. The Belgrade pashalik was to become an autonomous province. Serbian chiefs were granted the right to collect taxes, but the Turks could remain only in the towns and forts of the province.

“Obrenović was born in 1783 into a poor family which had originally come to Serbia from Hercegovina. As a child he tended cattle for his neighbours and later joined his brother, who had his own livestock business. He was a brave commander in the first uprising and after the second he proved himself a shrewd but brutal and murderous politician. He constantly sought increased concessions from the Turks while he gradually undermined their residual power in Serbia. In 1817, … Karadjordje slipped back into Serbia. Sensing danger for both himself and his plans, Obrenović sent his agents who murdered Karadjordje with an axe. His skinned head was stuffed and sent to the sultan. This act was to spark off a feud between the families which was periodically to convulse Serbian politics until 1903…

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

The early history of the Serbian princedom was not inspiring. Karadjordje had killed his stepfather before being killed by his godfather, and the pattern of violence continued. When his son Alexander replaced Miloš’s son Milan in 1842, he purged the Obrenović faction. But in 1858 the Obrenovićs returned to power. Then in 1868 Prince Michael and his family were murdered…

Serbian history from now on was dominated by two contrasting, but equally heterodox ideologies: the westernizing tradition deriving from the Enlightenment, and a nationalist tradition that sought to revive the glory of medieval Serbia in a “Greater Serbia” that would include all the Serbs under Ottoman or Habsburg rule. In 1844 Ilij Garašanin, an adviser to Prince Alexander, published his Nacertanije, or “Blueprint”, which was in effect a blueprint for a Greater Serbia that would also include the Croats, since they

were considered to be Catholicized Serbs. Garašanin looked to Russia as a likely patron and protector of Greater Serbia; but Russian diplomacy in the form of Nicholas I’s foreign minister Nesselrode had little respect for Serbia at this time…

The Serbian nationalist tradition, as represented by, for example, the Montenegrin bishop-prince Petar Petrović Njegoš (d. 1851)\(^{492}\), could sound very bloodthirsty.

Montenegro united Church and State in the only completely independent Orthodox land in the Balkans. Fortescue writes: “In 1516, Prince George, fearing lest quarrels should weaken his people (it was an elective princedom), made them swear always to elect the bishop as their civil ruler as well. These prince-bishops were called Vladikas… In the 18\(^{th}\) century the Vladika Daniel I (1697-1737) succeeded in securing the succession for his own family. As Orthodox bishops have to be celibate, the line passed (by an election whose conclusion was foregone) from uncle to nephew, or from cousin to cousin. At last, in 1852, Danilo, who succeeded his uncle as Vladika, wanted to marry, so he refused to be ordained bishop and turned the prince-bishopric into an ordinary secular principedom.”\(^{493}\)

In view of the Serbian wars of the 1990s, it is important to note the long-term influence of the Montenegrin Prince-Bishop Njegoš’ poem, The Mountain Wreath, which glorifies the mass slaughter of Mohammedans who refuse to convert to Christianity. The principal character, Vladyka Danilo, says:

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\text{The blasphemers of Christ’s name} \\
\text{We will baptize with water or with blood!} \\
\text{We’ll drive the plague out of the pen!} \\
\text{Let the son of horror ring forth,} \\
\text{A true altar on a blood-stained rock!}
\]

And in another poem Njegoš writes that “God’s dearest sacrifice is a boiling stream of tyrant’s blood”.\(^{494}\) An armed struggle against the infidel for the sake of Christ could indeed have served as the subject of a truly Christian glorification. But there is little that is Christian here. Even Bishop Nikolai Velimirović, an admirer of Njegoš, had to admit: “Njegoš’s Christology is

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\(^{492}\) Not to be confused with St. Peter of Cetinije, Metropolitan-Prince of Montenegro, who died on October 18, 1830. He became a monk at the age of twelve, and in 1782, at the age of 23, succeeded Metropolitan Sabas. He brought peace to the land, defeated Napoleon’s forces at the battle of Boka in Dalmatia, but always lived in a narrow monastic cell. His incorrupt relics and many healings are a witness to his sanctity.

\(^{493}\) Fortescue, op. cit., p. 309.

almost rudimentary. No Christian priest has ever said less about Christ than this metropolitan from Cetinje.”

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

The Greek Revolution

Greek nationalism under the Turkish yoke was nourished and sustained from three sources. One, the purest, was the Orthodox faith: since the Gospel and most of the patristic writings were written in Greek, a good knowledge of Orthodoxy required a good knowledge of Greek and Byzantine history in which Hellenism, the patriotic belief in the greatness of the Greek nation, was linked inseparably with its confession of the Orthodox faith. This kind of Orthodox Greek nationalism was to be found especially among the monks of Mount Athos.

Another source was a natural desire to be liberated from the Ottoman yoke. The situation of the Greeks in the Ottoman Empire was very difficult. As time passed and Ottoman power weakened, persecution of the faith increased. “The rights of the patriarch,” writes Fr. Alexander Schmemann, “were gradually reduced to nothing; all that was left to him was the ‘right’ of being responsible for the Christians. In the course of seventy-three years in the eighteenth century, the patriarch was replaced forty-eight times! Some were deposed and reinstalled as many as five times; many were put to torture. The rebellions of the Janissaries were accompanied by terrible bloodshed. Churches were defiled, relics cut to pieces, and the Holy Gifts profaned. Christian pogroms became more and more frequent. In the nineteenth century Turkey was simply rotting away, but the ‘sick man of Europe’ was supported at all points by other nations in opposition to Russia.”

The Patriarch was bound by his oath of allegiance to the Sultan not to encourage protest against the Turks. However, as Sir Steven Runciman writes, “the Greek in the provinces could not understand the subtle politics of the Patriarchate. He could not appreciate the delicacy that the Patriarch and his advisers had to show in their dealings with the Sublime Porte. He looked to

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496 Zamoyski, Holy Madness, p. 318.
his village priest or to the local abbot or the bishop to protect him against the Turkish governmental authorities, and he gave his support to anyone who would champion him against the government. In the great days of the Ottoman Empire, when the administration had been efficient and on the whole just, Greek nationalism could be kept underground. But by the eighteenth century the administrative machinery was beginning to run down. Provincial Turkish governors began to revolt against the Sultan and could usually count on the support of the local Greeks. A growing number of outlaws took to the mountains. In Slav districts they were known by the Turkish name of haiđouks; in Greece they were called the Klephts. They lived by banditry, directed mainly against the Turkish landowners; but they were quite ready to rob Christian merchants or travellers of any nationality. They could count on the support of the local Christian villagers, to whom they were latter-day Robin Hoods; they could almost always find refuge from the Turkish police in some local monastery…"498

The first and second sources of Greek nationalism combined: it was because the faith was being trampled on that the Greek revolution of 1821 had widespread support in the Church and was understood as a struggle “for faith and fatherland” in response to the insults cast at both by the Turks.

A third, less pure source of Greek nationalism was the western teaching on freedom promulgated by the French revolution, and brought back to Greece by the sons of the wealthy Phanariot families of Constantinople. As Mark Mazower writes, “it was the French Revolution which first suggested that emancipation might come through the action of the masses themselves [as opposed to a foreign king]. The toppling of the French monarchy, the rise of Bonaparte and above all, his invasion of Ottoman Egypt in 1798, radicalised the political thought of Balkan Christian intellectuals.”499

“According to my judgement,” wrote the Greek fighter Theodore Kolokotronis in his memoirs, “the French Revolution and the doings of Napoleon opened the eyes of the world. The nations knew nothing before, and the people thought that kings were gods upon the earth and that they were bound to say that whatever they did was well done. Through this present change it is more difficult to rule the people.”500

By the end of the eighteenth century most educated Greeks were deeply tainted by westernism. There were other, political and economic factors exciting the dreams of the Phanariots: the conquest of the Ionian islands by Napoleon and then by the British; the rebellion of the Mohammedan warlord Ali Pasha against the Sultan in 1820; the inexorable gradual southward expansion of the Russian Empire, which drew Greek minds to the prophecies

500 Kolokotronis, in Mazower, op. cit., p. 87.
about the liberation of Constantinople by “the yellow-haired race”, the
Russians; and the restrictions on the accumulation of capital in the Ottoman
empire, which contrasted unfavourably with the more business-friendly
regimes they had encountered in the West. However, the most important
influences were undoubtedly ideological – the influence of western ideas
made available by the explosion in the provision of educational opportunities
for young Greeks that the Phanariots created in the last quarter of the
eighteenth century and the first quarter of the nineteenth.

Such an emphasis on education had been made by Hieromartyr Cosmas of
Aitolia (+1779), who built over two hundred schools. But he emphasised
education in Orthodoxy in order to escape the snares of western culture.501
These merchants, however, sent young Greeks to the universities of Western
Europe, especially Germany. “Here,” writes Richard Clogg, “they came into
contact not only with the heady ideas of the Enlightenment, of the French
Revolution and of romantic nationalism but they were made aware of the
extraordinary hold which the language and civilisation of ancient Greece had
over the minds of their educated European contemporaries.502

“During the centuries of the Tourkokratia knowledge of the ancient Greek
world had all but died out, but, under the stimulus of western classical
scholarship, the budding intelligentsia developed an awareness that they
were the heirs to an heritage that was universally revered throughout the
civilised world. By the eve of the war in independence this progonoplexia
(ancestor obsession) and arkhaiolatreia (worship of antiquity), to use the

501 “It is better,” he said, “my brother, for you to have a Greek school in your village rather
than fountains and rivers, for when your child becomes educated, then he becomes a human
being. The school opens churches; the school opens monasteries.” And to the people of Parga
he said: “Take care to establish without fail a Greek school in which your children will learn
all that you are ignorant of [because] our faith wasn’t established by ignorant saints, but by
wise and educated saints who interpreted the Holy Scriptures accurately and who
enlightened us sufficiently by inspired teachings” (Nomikos Michael Vaporis, Witnesses for
Christ: Orthodox Christian Neomartyrs of the Ottoman Period 1437-1860, Crestwood, NY: St.

502 The Europeans were originally interested in the ancient monuments. Hence the removal of
the Elgin marbles and the Venus of Milo to London and Paris respectively. However,
attitudes were changed, as Zamoyski points out, “by Lord Byron’s visit to Greece in 1809,
whose fruits were the second canto of Childe Harold, published in 1809, The Giaour and The
Bride of Abydos (1813), and The Siege of Corinth (1816). More interested in people than in stones,
Byron concentrated on depicting the craggy nobility of the natives. He was also much
affected by the notion of a once great people under alien oppression. The negative picture of
the Turks and their culture – rococo Ottomania had given way to priggish neoclassical
contempt – made the oppression all the crueler to the European imagination, in which the
Turk combined lustfulness with barbarity. The educated European of 1800 was as disgusted
by the idea of the ‘terrible’ Turk defiling Greece as his twelfth-century forebear had been at
the idea of Saracens profaning the Holy Land. And just as the Holy Land called out to
Christendom for vengeance and crusade, so the oppressed Greek land called out for
liberation” (op. cit., p. 233). There is a tradition in Greece that Byron died as an Orthodox
Christian... (V.M.)
expressive Greek terms, had reached almost obsessive proportions. It was precisely during the first decade of the nineteenth century that nationalists, much to the consternation of the Church authorities, began to baptise their children with the names of (and to call their ships after) the worthies of ancient Greece rather than the Christian saints."

Such nationalistic worship of Greek antiquity could be combined with contempt for the real strength and glory of Greece – the Orthodox Church. A case in point was Adamantios Korais. Runciman writes: “He was born at Smyrna in 1748 and went as a young man to Paris, which he made his headquarters for the rest of his life. There he made contact with the French Encyclopédistes and their successors. From them he learnt a dislike for clericalism and for tradition. From reading Gibbon he came to believe that Christianity had ushered in a dark age for European civilization. His friend Karl Schlegel taught him to identify nationality with language. ‘Language is the nation.’ He wrote; ‘for where one says la langue de France one means the French nation.’ The Greeks of his time were therefore of the same race as the ancient Greeks. But to make the identification closer he sought to reform the language so that it would be nearer to the Classical form. He was, in fact, primarily responsible for the katharevousa, that artificial language which has had even to this day a disastrous effect in inhibiting the development of modern Greek literature. For the Byzantine past of Greece and for the Orthodox Church he had no use at all. His writings were eagerly read by the young intellectuals at the Phanar and by men of education all over Greece.”

Against this rampant westernism there appeared a work entitled The Paternal Exhortation and published in 1798 in Constantinople. “The author’s name was given as Anthimus, Patriarch of Jerusalem. Anthimus was a sick man at the time and not expected to survive; but when he surprised his doctors by making a recovery he indignantly repudiated the authorship. The true identity of the author is unknown, but there is reason to believe that it was the Patriarch Gregory V, then entering on his first spell at the Patriarchate. Gregory, or whoever the author was, clearly knew that the book would arouse angry criticism and hoped that the critics would be checked by the saintly reputation of the moribund Anthimus. The Paternal Exhortation opens by thanking God for the establishment of the Ottoman Empire, at a time when Byzantium had begun to slip into heresy. The victory of the Turks and the tolerance that they showed to their Christian subjects were the means for preserving Orthodoxy. Good Christians should therefore be content to remain under Turkish rule. Even the Ottoman restriction on the building of churches, which the author realized might be hard to explain as beneficial, is excused by the remark that Christians should not indulge in the vainglorious pastime of erecting fine buildings; for the true Church is not made by hands, and there will be splendour enough in Heaven. After denouncing the illusory

504 Runciman, op. cit., pp. 392-393.
attractions of political freedom, ‘an enticement of the Devil and a murderous poison destined to push the people into disorder and destruction’, the author ends with a poem bidding the faithful to pay respect to the Sultan, whom God had set in authority over them…

“…It was a document that found little sympathy with its Greek readers. Korais hastened to reply in a tract called the Fraternal Exhortation, in which he declared that the Paternal Exhortation in no way represented the feeling of the Greek people but was the ridiculous raving of a hierarch ‘who is either a fool or has been transformed from a shepherd into a wolf’”

Another product of the West that was beginning to have a baleful influence on the Greeks was Freemasonry. Ioannis Michaletos writes: “The first Freemason’s Lodge in Greece was created in 1782 on Corfu. At the time, the island was still under Venetian rule, while most of the rest of Greece was occupied by the Ottomans. The Lodge’s name was Beneficenza and was under the direction of the Grand Lodge of Verona, based in Padova, Italy. During that period there were quite a few Greek people residing or studying in Northern Italy, and they were the ones who formed the nucleus of the first Greek lodge; soon they would spread the organizational structure of Freemasonry all around the Greek diaspora in Europe.

“In 1790 in Vienna an organization similar in some respects to the Masons was formed by Greek merchants and intellectuals. It was called Bon Cuisins, and was presumably associated with the Greek pre-revolutionary intellectual Rigas Feraios, one of the leading figures in spreading revolutionary idea among those Greeks still under the Turkish occupation. This era was one of intellectual ferment, following the American and French revolutions, and thus offered an excellent environment for the dissemination of new ideas. This ideological development would ultimately lead to the dissolution of the world of empires and the emergence of the nation-state.

“In the case of Greece, it seems that the lodges became veritable repositories of knowledge, where the information and ideals needed to start an uprising were collected and shared with a select few. Usually, these were Greeks of the diaspora who had the intellectual capacity, as well as the capital, to take the first decisive revolutionary actions.

“After 1789, a series of Masonic lodges opened throughout the Heptanisa (“seven islands”) off of the western Greek coast, islands such as Corfu, Kefalonia, Lefkada, Ithaka, Zakinthos. At that time, these represented the only

area in the Hellenic world in relative peace and prosperity, being as they were under Venetian control.

“In 1810, one of the leading figures of Corfu, Dionysios Romas, merged together the two existing local lodges, Filogenia and Agathoergia and thus created the Grand Anatolian Lodge of Hellas and Corfu. After this event, Masonic lodges mushroomed across the Hellenic world so that already by 1812 the Greeks in Moscow were able to organize a formidable secret society. Under the auspices of Ioannis Kapodistrias, the Russian Foreign Minister, a Masonic lodge that encompassed the Greek elite of Tsarist Russia and played an important role towards creating the framework for the forthcoming Greek revolution was created.

“Interestingly, it was named the Phoenix Lodge. The ancient symbol of the Phoenix — the mythical bird that rises from its own ashes — is frequently encountered in Greek mysticism. Ioannis Kapodistrias would become the first head of state in Greece (1827-1831) and was the head of the Phoenix Lodge while still in Moscow. In fact, he even named the first Greek currency ‘phoenix,’ but after his assassination by a Greek clan chief, the famous ‘drachma’ was born.

“The grandest Greek secret society of them all, the Philiki Etaireia (“Friendly Society”) used the phoenix as its symbol...”

The Greek Orthodox Church officially condemned Freemasonry in 1744. And the future hieromartyr Archbishop Cyprian of Cyprus anathematized it in 1815. Kapodistrias later renounced Masonry, condemning it in 1828 and 1831.

Freemasonry was dangerous not only because it preached political revolution. It also preached religious ecumenism – that is, the idea that all religions have a part of the truth, that none of them is perfect, and that there is no one perfect revealed truth. Patriarch Gregory also opposed this heresy: “Let us neither say nor think that [they who teach erroneous doctrines] also believe in one Lord, have one Baptism, and confess the one Faith. If their opinions are correct, then by necessity our own must be incorrect. But if our own doctrines are upheld and believed and given credence and confessed by all as being good, true, correct, and unadulterated, manifestly then, the so-called sacraments of all heretics are evil, bereft of divine grace, abominable, and loathsome, and the grace of ordination and the priesthood by which these sacraments are performed has vanished and departed from them. And when

506 According to the Grand Lodge of Greece, he was both a member of the Hetairia and a member of the “Rosia” lodge (http://www.grandlodge.gr/Famous_gr_home.html). (V.M.)
there is no priesthood, all the rest are dead and bereft of spiritual grace. We say these things, beloved, lest anyone – either man or woman – be misled by the heterodox regarding their apparent sacraments and their so-called Christianity. Rather, let each one stand firmly in the blameless and true Faith of Christ, especially that we may draw to ourselves those who have been led astray and, as though they were own members, unite them to the one Head, Christ, to Whom be glory and dominion unto the ages of ages. Amen."

Unfortunately, the Church’s reaction against westernism and Masonry was often combined, especially among the monks, with a less healthy reaction against education as such, which was thought to be at the root of Phanariot impiety. Thus Runciman writes: “Cyril V’s brave attempt to found an Athonite academy showed by its failure that the monks refused to accept the intellectualism of the Phanar. There was a growing lack of sympathy between the monasteries even on Athos and the Greeks of Constantinople. With the monastic atmosphere growing hostile to culture, Athos lost its appeal to men of education. The monasteries received cruder and less worthy recruits. By the end of the eighteenth century the rate of literacy on the Holy Mountain had seriously declined; and by the early nineteenth century the monks had sunk into the state of boorish ignorance so brilliantly and maliciously described by travellers such as Richard Curzon.

“These travellers were not guiltless of exaggeration. They remarked on the exploitation by the clergy, but seldom mentioned that there were also kindly and saintly priests. They noticed how narrow were the interests of the monks and how neglected were most of their libraries. But there were still houses on Athos, such as the Grand Lavra, where the treasures of the past were still tended with care, as they were, too, in monasteries such as Sumela or Saint John on Patmos. Moreover, this distressing anti-Western anti-intellectualism was in its way an expression of integrity. The Republic of the Holy Mountain was trying to avoid the infection of worldly pride and ambition which seemed to be pervading Greek society. It was trying to keep alive the true Orthodox tradition of concentration on the eternal verities unharmed by man-made philosophies and scientific theories. The monks had been made to listen to [Bishop Eugene] Vulgaris’s lectures on German philosophy in the days of the Athonite academy; and they were shocked. Yet this was what they were now offered when they sought for spiritual guidance from Constantinople.”

The fall in intellectual standards in turn led to another kind of nationalism which was detrimental to Ecumenical Orthodoxy: the assumption that Greek

508 St. Gregory, An Explanation of the Apostolic Lections. The movement to reject the sacraments of the Latin and Protestant heretics had been initiated by Patriarch Cyril V in his famous synodal decree of 1756, which ruled that all western heretics coming to Orthodoxy must be baptized. It was supported by the monk Auxentios and the Chian doctor Eustratios Argenti, and opposed by Patriarchs Paisios and Callinicus IV, who exiled Cyril V to Rhodes.

509 Runciman, op. cit., p. 390.
Orthodoxy was necessarily superior to other national forms of Orthodoxy, and that in consequence the other nations had to be led by Greeks. “Even on Athos nationalism reared its head. The Greek monasteries began to show hostility to the Serbian and Bulgarian houses and soon, also, to the Roumanians and Russians; and the hostility was to grow in the nineteenth century.”\footnote{Runciman, op. cit., p. 391.}

The Phanariots tended to share the monks’ condescending attitude to other national Orthodox traditions. This was especially the case in relation to the Serbs and Bulgars. Thus “the first Greek had been appointed to the patriarchate of Peč in 1737 at the insistence of the Dragoman Alexandros Mavrokordatos on the plea that the Serbs could not be trusted. The Phanariotes began a policy which led to the exclusion of any Serbian nationals in the episcopacy.”\footnote{Frazee, The Orthodox Church and Independent Greece 1821-1853, Cambridge University Press, 1969, p. 7, note 1.} In September, 1766 the Ecumenical Patriarch took over the Serbian patriarchate at Peč, and in January, 1767 the Bulgarian Church was absorbed with the forced retirement of Archbishop Arsenius of Ochrid.

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

“This same sad picture prevailed in the East as well, in the patriarchates of Jerusalem, Antioch, and Alexandria, where Orthodox Arabs became the victims of this forced unification. All these offenses, stored up and concealed –all these unsettled accounts and intrigues – would have their effect when the Turkish hold began to slacken and the hour for the rebirth of the Slavic peoples drew near…”\footnote{Schmemann, op. cit., p. 280.}

Even in the eleventh century, when Emperor Basil II “the Bulgar-slayer” destroyed the First Bulgarian empire, and demoted the Bulgarian patriarchate to the status of a “holy archiepiscopate”, he did not destroy the autocephaly of the Bulgarian Church. Moreover, he appointed a Bulgarian as first archbishop of Ochrid in the new dispensation.\footnote{Alexander Dvorkin, Ocherki po Istoriu Vselenskoj Prawoslavnoj Tserkvi (Sketches on the History of the Universal Orthodox Church), Nizhni-Novgorod, 2006, p. 678 (in Russian).} In the eighteenth century, however, the Greeks achieved through “peaceful” means – and through the agency of the Turks – what they had not achieved in the eleventh century: the complete suppression of Slavic ecclesiastical independence.

The cause of this was not simply contempt for Christians of Slavic race. The Phanariots had to raise money from all the Christians in order to pay the
bribes that the Ottoman authorities required for raising candidates to the patriarchy. As Mazower writes, “the money, often borrowed by candidates for office from wealthy Phanariots, could only be recouped through the Church’s taxation of Christian peasants. Growing centralisation under the Ecumenical Patriarch increased the resources at stake and probably made the problem worse. ‘A saying common among the Greek peasants,’ according to a British traveller, was that ‘the country labours under three curses, the priests, the cogia bashis [local Christian notables] and the Turks, always placing the plagues in this order.’ In nineteenth-century Bosnia, ‘the Greek Patriarch takes good care that these eparchies shall be filled by none but Fanariots, and thus it happens that the... Orthodox Christians of Bosnia, who form the majority of the population, are subject to ecclesiastics alien in blood, in language, in sympathies, who oppress them hand in hand with the Turkish officials and set them, often, an even worse example of moral depravity.’ The reason was clear: ‘They have to send enormous bribes yearly to the fountainhead.’ This story of extortion and corruption spelled the end of the old Orthodox ecumenism, created bitterness between the Church and its flock, and - where the peasants were not Greek speakers – provoked a sense of their exploitation by the ‘Greek’ Church which paved the way for Balkan nationalism.”

And so, mixed with the righteous Greek nationalism, “for faith and fatherland”, was an unrighteous, fallen nationalism influenced by the ideas of the French revolution and ready at times to put the narrow interests of the Greek nation – or rather, of the nation’s ruling elite - above those of the other oppressed Orthodox under the Turkish yoke. Such was the nationalist bombast of, for example, Benjamin of Lesbos, who wrote: “Nature has set limits to the aspirations of other men, but not to those of the Greeks. The Greeks were not in the past and are not now subject to the laws of nature.”

This mixed character of the Greek revolution, symbolised by the use of three different flags, determined its mixed outcome, and the fact that, in the course of the nineteenth century, Orthodox Eastern Europe was liberated, not through a single, united Orthodox movement of liberation, but by separate nationalist movements - Greek, Bulgarian, Serb, Romanian - which ended up, in 1912-1913, fighting each other rather than the common enemy...

514 Mazower, op. cit., pp. 61-62.
515 Benjamin, Stoikheia tis Metaphysikis (The Elements of Metaphysics), 1820 (in Greek); quoted in Clogg, op. cit., p. 33.
516 Alexander Pushkin, who was in nearby Kishinev at the time, wrote that the Greeks “published proclamations which quickly spread everywhere – in them it is said that the Phoenix of Greece will arise from its own ashes, that the hour of Turkey’s downfall has come, and that a great power approves of the great-souled feat! The Greeks have begun to throng together in crowds under three banners; of these one is tricoloured [the revolutionary flag], on another streams a cross wreathed with laurels, with the text ‘By this sign conquer’ [the religious flag, derived from God’s promise to St. Constantine], on a third is depicted the Phoenix arising from its ashes [the patriotic flag]” (in Mazower, op. cit., p. 91).
“One of the first to develop plans for a co-ordinated revolt,” writes Clogg, “was Rigas Velestinlis, a Hellenised Vlach from Thessaly. After acquiring his early political experience in the service of the Phanariot hospodars of the Danubian principalities, he had been powerfully influenced by the French Revolution during a sojourn in Vienna in the 1790s. The political tracts, and in particular his Declaration of the Rights of Man, which he had printed in Vienna and with which he aspired to revolutionise the Balkans, are redolent of the French example. Potentially the most significant was the New Political Constitution of the Inhabitants of Rumeli, Asia Minor, the Islands of the Aegean and the Principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia. This envisaged the establishment of a revived Byzantine Empire but with the substitution of republican institutions on the French model for the autocracy of Byzantium. Although it was intended to embrace all the inhabitants of the Ottoman Empire, Greeks, whether by birth or by culture, were to predominate. Rigas’ carefully articulated schemes were without result for he was betrayed (by a fellow Greek) in Trieste as he was about to leave the Hapsburg territory to preach the gospel of revolution in the Balkans. With a handful of fellow conspirators he was put to death by the Ottomans in Belgrade in May 1798.”

However, the revolutionaries were opposed not only by the Turks, but also by the Patriarchate. Runciman writes: “A test came early in the nineteenth century when Sultan Selim made a serious effort to suppress brigandage. The Klephts in Greece, thanks to the spirit of revolt and to the hymns of Rhigas, had become popular heroes. It was a patriotic duty for a Greek to give them shelter against the police; and the village priest and the monks of the country monasteries were eager to help them. But they were a menace to orderly rule; and when the Sultan demanded of the Patriarch that he should issue a stern decree threatening with excommunication any priest or monk who would not aid the authorities in their suppression, the Patriarch could not well refuse. The decree was published in the Peloponnese; and though most of the higher clergy sullenly obeyed it, the villages and the poorer monasteries were outraged; and even at the Phanar there was open disapproval. It became clear that when the moment for revolt arrived the Patriarch would not be at its head.

“In spite of the Patriarch the plots continued. At the end of the eighteenth century there were even several secret societies in existence, with names such as the Athena, which hoped to liberate Greece with French help and which counted Korais among its members, or the Phoenix, which pinned its hopes on Russia. In 1814 three Greek merchants at Odessa in Russia, Nicholas Emmanuel Xanthos and Athanasius Tsakalof, the first a member of the Phoenix and the latter two freemasons, founded a society which they called

the *Hetaireia ton Philikon*, the Society of Friends.\(^{518}\) Thanks chiefly to the energy of Skouphas, who unfortunately died in 1817, it soon superseded all the previous societies and became the rallying point of the rebellion. Skouphas was determined to include in the society patriots of every description; and soon it had amongst its members Phanariots such as Prince Constantine Ypsilanti and his hot-headed sons, Alexander and Nicholas, all now living in exile in Russia, and members of the Mavrocordato and Caradja families, or high ecclesiastics such as Ignatius, Metropolitan of Arta and later of Wallachia, and Germanus, Metropolitan of Patras\(^{519}\), intellectuals such as Anthimus Ghazis, and brigand leaders such as the armatolos George Olympios and Kolokotronis. It was organized partly on Masonic lines and partly on what the founders believed to have been the early Christian organization. It had four grades.\(^{520}\) The lowest was that of Blood-brothers, which was confined to illiterates. Next were the Recommended, who swore an oath to obey their superiors but were not permitted to know more than the general patriotic aims of the society\(^ {521}\) and were kept in ignorance of the names of their superiors and were supposed not even to know of the existence of the Blood-brothers. Above them were the Priests, who could initiate Blood-brothers and Recommended and who, after solemn oaths, were allowed to know the detailed aims of the society. Above them again were the Pastors, who supervised the Pastors, who supervised the Priests and saw that they only initiated suitable candidates; a suitable Recommended could become a Pastor without passing through the grade of Priest. From the Pastors were chosen the supreme authorities of the society, the *Arche*. The names of the *Arche* were unknown except to each other, and their meetings were held in absolute secrecy. This was thought necessary not only security against external powers but also for the prestige of the society. Had the names of its directors been known, there might have been opposition to several of them, particularly among such a faction-loving people as the Greeks; whereas the mystery surrounding the *Arche* enabled hints to be dropped that it

\(^{518}\) Michaletos (op. cit.) writes: “Ksanthos was a member of the Lodge of Lefkada, while Skoufas’ associate Konstantinos Rados was a devotee of the Italian “Charcoal-burners” Carbonarism movement, an equivalent to the Greek group which sought the unification of Italy. For his part, the much younger Tsakalov had been a founding member of Ellinoglosso Xenodoxeio (the “Greek-speaking Hotel”), an unsuccessful precursor to the Etairia that was devoted to the same goal of an independent Greece.” (V.M.)

\(^{519}\) He came from the same village of Dhimitsana in the Peloponnese as Patriarch Gregory V. The attitudes of these two hierarchs came to symbolise a fundamental division in Greek society that was to continue for decades… (V.M.)

\(^{520}\) Although the *Philiki Hetairia* recalled Masonry in its four grades, its oaths of secrecy and obedience to unknown leaders, and in the fact that two of its three founders were in fact Freemasons, it was nevertheless Orthodox in its ideology, according to Archimandrite Ambrose, (Tektonismos kai Philiki Hetairia (Masonry and the Society of Friends), Athens, 1972 (in Greek)). (V.M.)

\(^{521}\) Adam Zamoyski writes that “its ultimate aim was the liberation of Greece and the restoration of a Greek Empire. More immediately it was concerned with the ‘purification’ of the Greek nation…. By 1821 the *Hetairia* had a total of 911 members.” (Holy Madness, p. 234) (V.M.)
included such weighty figures as the Tsar himself. All grades had to swear unconditional obedience to the Arche, which itself operated through twelve Apostles, whose business it was to win recruits and to organize branches in different provinces and countries. They were appointed just before the death of Skouphas; and their names are known. It was first decided to fix the headquarters of the society on Mount Pelion, but later, after the initiation of the Maniot chieftain, Peter Mavromichalis, it was moved to the Mani, in the south-east of the Peloponnese, a district into which the Turks had never ventured to penetrate.

“There were however two distinguished Greeks who refused to join the Society. One was the ex-Patriarch Gregory V. He had been deposed for the second time in 1808, and was living on Mount Athos, where the Apostle John Pharmakis visited him. Gregory pointed out that it was impossible for him to swear an oath of unconditional obedience to the unknown leaders of a secret society and that anyhow he was bound by oath to respect the authority of the Sultan. The reigning Patriarch, Cyril VI, was not approached. Still more disappointing was the refusal of the Tsar’s foreign minister, John Capodistrias, to countenance the Hetairia.523

“John Antony, Count Capodistrias, had been born in Corfu in 1770, and as a young man had worked for the Ionian government there, before going to Russia at the time of the second French occupation of the Ionian islands in 1807. He was given a post in the Russian diplomatic service and was attached to the Russian Embassy at Vienna in 1811, and next year was one of the Russian delegates at the treaty negotiations at Bucharest. His remarkable abilities impressed Tsar Alexander, who in 1815 nominated him Secretary of State and Assistant Foreign Minister. In his youth Capodistrias had made contacts with many of the Greek revolutionary thinkers, and he was well known to be a Greek patriot. In the past many Greeks had looked to France to deliver them from the Turks; but after Napoleon’s collapse the whole Greek world turned to Russia, and Capodistrias’s accession to power gave them confidence. The Russian sovereign was the great patron of Orthodoxy. The Greeks forgot how little they had gained from Catherine the Great, the imperialistic German free-thinker, who had incited them to revolt in 1770 and

522 Frazee, op. cit., p. 24. Moreover, these “highest authorities” (anotati arkhii) were called “Great Priests of the Eleusinian Mysteries” (Clogg, op. cit., p. 35). Almost certainly, no real connection with the pagan mysteries was meant. Nevertheless, it is understandable that the first priest in Orthodoxy could not be involved in such things! (V.M.)

523 The Hetairia sent an envoy to Capodistrias in St. Petersburg. He was appalled, and advised them that “if they [the conspirators] do not want to perish themselves and destroy together with themselves their innocent and unfortunate Race, they should abandon their revolutionary plots and live as before under the Governments they find themselves, until Providence decides otherwise.” (Archimandrite Ambrose, op. cit., p. 77). Again, when the revolution broke out, he said: “So, a premature revolution for Greece that is going to destroy all my efforts for a happy future” (Frazee, op. cit., p. 17). However, he did not betray the plan of the plotters, and when the revolution began he resigned his post as minister and went to Geneva, where he worked quietly to help the insurgents. (V.M.)
then had abandoned them. But at the Treaty of Küçük Kainarci in 1774 Russia had acquired the right to intervene in Turkish internal affairs in the interests of the Orthodox. Catherine’s son, Paul, was clearly unwilling to help the Greek cause; but when Alexander I succeeded his murdered father in 1801 hopes rose. Alexander was known to have liberal views and mystical Orthodox sympathies. Belief in his aid had encouraged the Princes of Moldavia and Wallachia to plot against the Sultan in 1806; and, when they were deposed by the Sultan, the Tsar cited his rights under the Treaty of Küçük Kainarci and declared war on Turkey. The only outcome of the war had been the annexation by Russia of the Moldavian province of Bessarabia. But the Greeks were not discouraged. Now, with a Greek as the Tsar’s Secretary of State, the time had surely come for the War of Liberation. The plotters refused to realize that Capodistrias was the Tsar’s servant and a practical man of the world; and they did not know that the Tsar himself was becoming more reactionary and less willing to countenance rebellion against established authority.

“The planners of Greek independence could not count on the open support of the Patriarchate. They should have realized that they also could not count on the support of Russia. And the nationalist ecclesiastical policy of the Church during the last century deprived them of the friendship of the other peoples of the Balkans. The leaders of the Hetairia were aware of this. They made earnest attempts to enrol Serbian, Bulgarian and Roumanian members. When Karageorge revolted against the Turks in Serbia Greek armatoles and klephs came to join him. Even the Phanariot princes had offered support; but they were rebuffed. ‘The Greek Princes of the Phanar,’ Karageorge wrote, ‘can never make common cause with people who do not wish to be treated like animals.’ Karageorge’s revolt was put down by the Turks in 1813. Two years later the Serbs revolted again, under Miloš Obrenović, a far subtler diplomat, who secured Austrian support and eventually induced the Sultan to accept him as a reliable vassal-prince. Miloš had no contact with the Greeks. The Hetairia therefore pinned its faith on Karageorge, who was persuaded to become a member in 1817. As Karageorge was greatly admired by the Bulgarians it was hoped that numbers of them would now join the movement. Karageorge was then sent back to Serbia. But the Serbs, who were satisfied with Miloš’s achievements, offered him no support; and Miloš regarded him as a rival to be eliminated. He was assassinated in June 1817. With his death any hope of interesting the Serbs in the coming Greek rebellion faded out; and there was no one capable of rallying the Bulgars to the cause. Karageorge alone could have given the Hetairia the air of not being exclusively Greek.

524 In 1770 “the ill-fated Orlov expedition to the Peloponessos, launched by Catherine the Great, and the combined Russian-Greek attempt to free the Peloponnesos from the tyranny of the Ottoman Mohammedans, ended in disaster. In addition to destroying the Greek military forces and many of the Russians, the Albanian Mohammedan mercenaries, who were called in by the Ottoman Mohammedans, wreaked havoc on the local population…” (Vaporis, op. cit., p. 337) (V.M.)
“The Hetairia had higher hopes of the Roumanians. There a peasant leader, Tudor Vladimirescu, who had led a band to help the Serbs, was defying the Turkish police in the Carpathian mountains and had gathered together a considerable company. He was in close touch with two leading het aerists, George Olympius and Phokianos Savvas, and he himself joined the society, promising to co-ordinate his movements with the Greeks’. But he was an unreliable ally; for he was bitterly opposed to the Phanariot princes, who, he considered, had brought ruin to his country…”

“By the end of 1820,” continues Runciman, “everything seemed to be ready. Ali Pasha of Janina was in open revolt against the Sultan; and had promised help to the Greeks; and though Osman Pasvanoglu was dead, his pashalik of Vidin was in disorder, tying up Turkish troops south of the Danube. The Arche of the Hetairia had a few months previously elected a Captain-General, choosing a young Phanariot Alexander Ypsilanti, son of the ex-Prince Constantine of Moldavia. It is interesting to note that the plotters considered that only a Phanariot had sufficient experience and prestige for the post. Alexander Ypsilanti was born in 1792 and spent his youth in Russia. He had won a reputation for gallantry and military skill when serving in the Russian army and had lost an arm at the battle of Kulm, fighting against the French. He was known to be an intimate friend of the Tsar and the Tsaritsa and of Capodistrias. He made it his first task to improve the efficiency of the Society and summoned the one and only plenary meeting of the Arche, which was held at Ismail in southern Russia in October 1820. The original plan had been to start the revolt in the Peloponnese, where there would be a secure base in the Mani and where the sympathy of the inhabitants was assured. Alexander now changed his mind. It would be better to start the main campaign in Moldavia. By the Treaty of Bucharest the Turks had undertaken not to send troops into the Principalities without Russian consent. Vladimirescu would distract what Turkish militia was there already; and a successful army sweeping through Wallachia and across the Danube was the only thing that might induce the Bulgarians and the Serbians to join in. Meanwhile a subsidiary rising in the Peloponnese, which Alexander’s brother Demetrius was sent to organize, would further embarrass the Turks.

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525 Runciman, op. cit. pp. 398-402. That the Romanians should have placed their hopes of freedom from the Turks on the Russian tsar rather than on a Greek phanariot was hardly surprising. Moldavia had been closely linked to Russia for many centuries, and in November, 1806, when the Russo-Turkish war began, Metropolitan Benjamin (Kostake) in his pastoral epistle wrote: “The true happiness of these lands lies in their union with Russia”. And when Bessarabia, that is, the part of Moldavia east of the Prut, was united to Russia in 1812, there was great rejoicing among the people, and in five years the population of Bessarabia almost doubled through an influx from the lands west of the Prut. (Vladimir Bukarsky, “Moskovskij Patriarkhat pod udarom: na ocheredi – Moldavia”, Pravoslavnaia Rus’, N 23 (1836), December 1/14, 2007, p. 4 (in Russian)).
“The invasion of Moldavia was timed to begin on 24 November (O.S.) 1820. Alexander had already gathered together a small army of Greeks and Christian Albanians on the Russian side of the frontier. Almost at the last moment Capodistrias counselled delay. The Austrian secret police had discovered the plans and had sent to warn the Sultan; and the Tsar was nervous of international reactions. But, in January 1821, Vladimirescu, encouraged by George Olympus, against the advice of Phokianos Savvas, began to attack Turkish police posts and was scornful of Ypsilanti’s hesitation. About the same time the Prince of Wallachia, Alexander Soutzo, died, poisoned it was rumoured by the Hetairia, of which he was known to disapprove. Demetrios Ypsilanti reported from the Peloponnese that everyone there was impatient of further delays. Alexander Ypsilanti decided that the time had come to act. He sought an audience of the Tsar before leaving St. Petersburg, but it was refused. The Tsaritsa, however, sent him her blessing; and he was assured that the Tsar would personally protect his wife. On 22 February (O.S.) Alexander and his little band crossed over the Pruth into Moldavia.

“In his desire to prevent a leakage of news Alexander had not warned his fellow-plotters. When news of his advance reached the Peloponnese, his brother Demetrios hesitated, fearing that it might be a false rumour. But the people would not wait. They found a leader in Germanus, Metropolitan of Patras, who, in defiance of the Patriarchate and of Orthodox tradition, raised the standard of revolt at the monastery of Agia Lavra, near Kalavryta, on 25 March. The Mani had already risen. The islands of Spetsai and Psara and a

526 Michael Binyon writes: “A letter from Alexander I, signed by Capo d’Istries, … denounced Ypsilanti’s actions as ‘shameful and criminal’, upbraided him for misusing the tsar’s name, struck him from the Russian army list, and called him to lay down his arms immediately” (Pushkin, London: HarperCollins, 2002, p. 133). Ironically, the officer sent by the Russian government to report on the insurrection was Pestel, the future leader of the Decembrist rebellion (op. cit., p. 134). (V.M.)

Troubetskoy writes: “Under normal circumstances there would have been no doubt about the tsar’s reaction: as champion of the Orthodox world, he could hardly have rejected such a plea. The circumstances at the time, however, were anything but normal. Central Europe was captive to the views of Austrian chancellor Metternich, to whom any hint of insidious liberalism – revolutionary movements in particular – was anathema. The Holy Alliance, of which Russia was an enthusiastic signatory and driving force, was to assure this. Despite his personal sympathy for the Greeks and antipathy to the Turks, there was no way the tsar could let down the established new order. It was a conundrum that he painfully resolved by disavowing and censuring Ypsilantis. There was to be no Russian help for the Greeks. Massacres followed slaughters – particularly in the Peloponnesus – and for the following nine years Greece was embroiled in war. Alexander never forgave himself for having failed his coreligionists.” (op. cit., pp. 112-113) (V.M.)

527 Germanus wrote to the ambassadors of the foreign powers: “We, the Greek race of Christians, seeing that the Ottoman people despises us and is intending destruction against us, sometimes in one way and at other times in another, have decided firmly: either we shall all die or we shall be liberated.” (Boonmerges, 24, March-April, 2006, p. 32 (in Greek)). Germanus was supported by eight other bishops, five of whom died in prison. (V.M.)
little later Hydra rose in early April. By the end of April all central and southern Greece was up in arms.

“But it was now too late for Alexander Ypsilanti. He had marched unopposed on Bucharest. But there was no news of any rising among the Bulgarians or the Serbs; and when he reached Bucharest he found that Tudor Vladimirescu and his troops were there before him; and they refused to let him into the city. ‘I am not prepared to shed Roumanian blood for Greeks,’ said Vladimirescu. There were skirmishes between the two forces. Then came news that the Tsar had repudiated the whole rebellion at the Congress of Laibach, and with his permission a huge Turkish army was approaching the Danube, ready to invade the Principalities. Ypsilanti retired north-east, towards the Russian frontier. Vladimirescu, after lingering for a few days in Bucharest trying to make terms with the Turkish commander, moved back on 15 May into the Carpathians. But he had lost control over his own followers. They allowed George Olympus to take him prisoner and to put him to death, on the evening of 26 May, for his treason to the cause. Phokianos Savvas and a garrison of Albanians held Bucharest for a week, then also retired into the mountains. The Turks entered Bucharest before the end of May, then moved in pursuit of Ypsilanti. On 7 June (O.S.) they routed his army at a battle at Dragasani. His best troops perished. He himself fled over the Austrian border into Bukovina, where by Metternich’s orders he was arrested. He spent the remainder of his life in an Austrian prison. The remnant of his army was rallied by George Cantacuzenus, who led them back towards the Russian frontier. But the frontier was closed to them. The Turks caught up with them at Sculeni on the Pruth and massacred them there, on 17 June, in sight of Russian territory. Savvas surrendered to the Turks in August and was put to death by them. George Olympus held out till September in the monastery of Secu. When all hope was lost he fired his powder stores and blew up the monastery with himself and all his garrison within it.”

However, while the Phanariot rebellion in the north failed, the rebellion of the bishops and the people in the south succeeded. But the cost was high. A characteristic of the Greek War on Independence was the extreme cruelty on both sides. Within a few months, shouting “Kill all the Turks in the Morea”, the Greeks had killed 20,000 men, women and children. At Tripolitsa, the Scottish Philhellene Thomas Gordon watched as the Greeks, “mad with vindictive rage, spared neither age nor sex – the streets and houses were inundated with blood, and obstructed with heaps of dead bodies. Some Mohammedans fought bravely and sold their lives dearly, but the majority were slaughtered without resistance…” 2000 women and children were massacred in a defile of Mount Maenalion. The Turks responded in kind. The most famous massacre took place in May, 1822 in Chios, where, in response to the arrival of a small party of Greek revolutionaries from Samos, 30,000

528 Runciman, op. cit., pp. 403-405.
Muslims invaded from Asia Minor, killed 25,000 Greeks and took 45,000 into slavery.

The war placed Patriarch Gregory V in Constantinople in an impossible position. The Sultan was convinced that he was at least in part to blame for the insurrection. So Gregory, writes Frazee, “called a meeting of the Greek leaders and people to discuss their common peril that same day after he had met with the sultan. Mahmud had demanded that the patriarch and Synod excommunicate those responsible for the uprising and those who had killed innocent Turks. At the patriarchate, therefore, the patriarch of Jerusalem, Polykarpos, four synodal archbishops, Karolos Kallimachi, Hospodar of Wallachia, the Dragoman of the Porte, Konstantinos Mourousi, and the Grand Logothete, Stephanos Mavroyeni, gathered to decided on their next step. A number of other Greeks were also in attendance ‘of every class and condition’. Gregorios and Mourousi presided. The assembled Greeks were all exhorted ‘to carefully guard against any move or action contrary to their allegiance and fidelity to their Sovereign’. A letter was drafted which incorporated the sultan’s suggestion and was sent off to be printed at the patriarchal press. The patriarch then urged that the Greeks prepare to leave the city quickly, promising that he would stay: ‘As for me, I believe that my end is approaching, but I must stay at my post to die, and if I remain, then the Turks will not be given a plausible pretext to massacre the Christians of the capital.’

“The letter of excommunication against the revolutionaries appeared on Palm Sunday, 4 April, in all the Greek churches of the capital signed by the patriarch, Polykarpos of Jerusalem, and twenty-one other prelates. In part, the document stated: ‘Gratitude to our benefactors is the first of virtues and ingratitude is severely condemned by the Holy Scriptures and declared unpardonable by Jesus Christ; Judas the ungrateful traitor offers a terrible example of it; but it is most strongly evidenced by those who rise against their common protector and lawful sovereign, and against Christ, who has said that there is no rule or power but comes from God. It was against this principle that Michael Soutzos and Alexandros Ypsilantis, son of a fugitive, sinned with an audacity beyond example, and have sent emissaries to seduce others, and to conduct them to the abyss of perdition; many have been so tempted to join an unlawful hetairia and thought themselves bound by their oath to continue [as] members, but an oath to commit a sin was itself a sin, and not binding – like that of Herod, who, that he might not break a wicked obligation committed a great wickedness by the death of John the Baptist.’ The text ended by solemnly condemning and excommunicating Soutzos and Ypsilantis, having been signed on the altar itself. The patriarchal letter was the final blow to strike Ypsilantis’ fading expedition in the Principalities.”

Some have argued that the patriarch secretly repudiated this anathema; which is why the Turks, suspecting him of treachery, hanged him on the

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529 Frazee, op. cit., pp. 28-29.
Sunday of Pascha. Gregory’s biographer, Kandiloros writes: “As the representative of Christ it cannot be believed that the patriarch signed such a letter. But as the head of a threatened people, he had to take measures, as well as he could, to save his powerless and hard-pressed population from being massacred.” In any case,” writes Fr. Anthony Gavalas, “the anathema was ignored, as were all the other letters unfavourable to the plans of the revolutionaries, as having been issued under duress. There is an opinion that the patriarch knew that the anathema would be so considered and issued it, hoping to placate the Turks on the one hand, and on the other, to gain time for the revolution to gain strength.”

In the opinion of the present writer, while the patriarch was undoubtedly a patriot who longed for the freedom of his country, his righteousness of character precludes the possibility that he could have been plotting against a government to which he had sworn allegiance and for which he prayed in the Divine Liturgy, or that he could have been hypocritical in such an important church act. After all, as we have seen, he had always refused to join the Philiki Hetairia. In this connection it is significant that the patriarch’s body was picked up by a Russian ship and taken to Odessa, mutely pointing to the place where the organisation that had indirectly caused his death was centred.

The Greeks had to pay a heavy price for the political freedom they gained. After the martyrdom of Patriarch Gregory, the Turks ran amok in Constantinople; and there were further pogroms in Smyrna, Adrianople, Crete and especially, as we have seen, Chios. Although many Greeks undoubtedly fought for the sake of Orthodoxy against Islam, the essentially western ideology of several of their leaders explains why so many young westerners, among whom the most famous was the poet Byron, decided to join the Greek freedom-fighters. But the westerners were fighting, not for Orthodox Greece, but for their romantic vision of ancient, pagan Greece. Significantly, there were no volunteers from Orthodox Russia, whose tsars correctly saw in the revolutionary spirit a greater threat to the well-being of the Orthodox peoples than Turkish rule.

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530 Kandiloros, in Frazee, op. cit. p. 29.
532 As always. Thus in 1601 Metropolitan Dionysius rebelled twice against the Turks, which led, not only to his own death, but to the deaths of many innocent Christians, including Hieromartyr Metropolitan Seraphim of Phanarion, who had taken no part in the rebellion.
533 Ypsilantis’ ideology had little to do with Orthodoxy. “’Let us recollect, brave and generous Greeks, the liberty of the classic land of Greece; the battles of Marathon and Thermopylae, let us combat upon the tombs of our ancestors who, to leave us free, fought and died,’ Ypsilantis wrote in his declaration of 24 February 1821. ‘The blood of our tyrants is dear to the shades of the Theban Epaminondas, and of the Athenian Thrasybulus who conquered and destroyed the thirty tyrants’ – and so on.” (Zamoyski, Holy Madness, p. 235).
Thus Capodistrias wrote to a friend: “The emperor has highly disapproved of these [means] which Prince Ipsilanti appears to wish to employ to deliver Greece. At a time when Europe is menaced everywhere by revolutionary explosions, how can one not recognise in that which has broken out in the two principalities [Wallachia and Moldavia] the identical effect of the same subversive principles, the same intrigues which attract the calamities of war... the most dreadful plague of demagogic despotism.”

The Greeks after the revolution were desperately poor and even more desperately divided. The new patriarch, Eugenius, again anathematised the insurgents. In response, twenty-eight bishops and almost a thousand priests in free Greece anathematised the patriarch, calling him a Judas and a wolf in sheep's clothing. The Free Greeks now commemorated “all Orthodox bishops” at the Liturgy instead of the patriarch. Not surprisingly, in 1824 the patriarchate refused a request from the Greek Church for Holy Chrism.

At the same time, in 1822 the Free Greeks entered into negotiations with the Pope for help against the Turks. Very soon the Faith was being betrayed for the sake of the political struggle, as it had been at the council of Florence. President Mavrokordatos wrote to the Papal Secretary of State: “The cries of a Christian nation threatened by complete extermination have the right to receive the compassion of the head of Christendom.” Greek delegates to the meeting of the Great Powers in Verona wrote to Pope Pius VII that the Greek revolution was not like the revolutions of other nations raised against altar and throne. Instead, it was being fought in the name of religion and “... asks to be placed under the protection of a Christian dynasty with wise and permanent laws”. In another letter the delegates addressed the pope as “the common father of the faithful and head of the Christian religion”, and said that the Greeks were worthy of the pope’s “protection and apostolic blessing”. Metropolitan Germanus was even empowered to speak concerning the possibility of a reunion of the Churches. However, it was the Pope who drew back at this point, pressurized by the other western States which considered the sultan to be a legitimate monarch.

How soon had a struggle fought “for faith and fatherland” betrayed the faith while only partially winning the fatherland! For real political independence had not been achieved. If the Turks had been driven out, then the British and the French and later the Germans came to take their place.

The election of Capodistrias as “governor of Greece” in 1827 brought a limited degree of order. In an encyclical to the clergy he wrote: “Speak to the

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534 Capodistrias, in Mazower, op. cit., pp. 91-92.
535 Frazee, op. cit., p. 44.
536 Frazee, op. cit., p. 62.
537 Frazee, op. cit., p. 54.
538 Frazee, op. cit., pp. 54-57.
hearts of the people the law of God, rightly dividing the word of truth. Announce peace. Evangeli se unanimity. Teach philanthropy, love for each other, that all may be one in Christ”. But he made many enemies by his contempt for the élites of Greek society. Thus “he dismissed the primates as ‘Christian Turks’, the military chieftains as ‘robbers’, the intelligentsia as ‘fools’ and the Phanariots as ‘children of Satan’”. And so on October 9, 1831 he was assassinated as he entered a church in Nauplion…

On May 7, 1832 Britain, France, Russia and Bavaria signed a treaty in London which guaranteed Greece’s independence and named Otto, son of King Ludwig I of Bavaria, as king. And yet this independence was purely nominal. When Byron was dying in Greece in 1824, the Duc d’Orléans had commented “that he was dying so that one day people would be able to eat sauerkraut at the foot of the Acropolis”. He was not far from the truth; for Greece was now under a German Catholic king ruling through German ministers and maintained in power by German troops. Zamoyski comments sardonically: “Sauerkraut indeed…”

Until King Otto came of age, three regents were appointed by the Great Powers to rule Greece in his name: Colonel Heideck, a Philhellene and the only choice of the Tsar but a liberal Protestant, Count Joseph von Armansperg, a Catholic but also a Freemason, and George von Maurer, a liberal Protestant. Pressed by the British and French envoys, von Armansperg and von Maurer worked to make Greece as independent of Russia and the patriarchate in Constantinople as possible. Russian demands that the king (or at any rate his children) become Orthodox, and that the link with the patriarchate be preserved, were ignored…

It was Maurer who was entrusted with working out a new constitution for the Church. He “found an illustrious collaborator, in the person of a Greek priest, Theocletus Pharmacides. This Pharmacides had received his education in Europe and his thought was exceedingly Protestant in nature; he was the obstinate enemy of the Ecumenical Patriarch and of Russia.”

Helped by Pharmacides, Mauer proceeded to work out a new constitution that proposed autocephaly for the Church under a Synod of bishops, and the subordination of the Synod to the State on the model of the Bavarian and Russian constitutions, to the extent that "no decision of the Synod could be published or carried into execution without the permission of the government having been obtained”. As Frazee comments: “If ever a church was legally

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539 Boanerges, 24, March-April, 2006, p. 32 (G).
540 Clogg, op. cit., p. 46.
541 Zamoyski, Holy Madness, pp. 243, 245.
stripped of authority and reduced to complete dependence on the state, Maurer’s constitution did it to the church of Greece.”

In spite of the protests of the Ecumenical Patriarch and the Tsar, and the walk-out of the archbishops of Rethymnon and Adrianople, this constitution was ratified by thirty-six bishops on July 26, 1833. The conservative opponent of Pharmacides in the government was Protopresbyter Constantine Oikonomos. He said that the constitution was “from an ecclesiastical point of view invalid and non-existent and deposed by the holy Canons. For this reason, during the seventeen years of its existence it was unacceptable to all the Churches of the Orthodox, and no Synod was in communion with it.” Not only did the Ecumenical Patriarchate condemn the new Church: many Greeks in Greece were also very unhappy with their situation.

The Greek Church therefore exchanged the uncanonical position of the patriarchate of Constantinople under Turkish rule for the even less canonical position of a Synod unauthorized by the patriarch and under the control of a Catholic king and a Protestant constitution! In addition to this, all monasteries with fewer than six monks were dissolved (425 out of 500), and heavy taxes imposed on the remaining monasteries. And very little money was given to a Church which had lost six to seven thousand clergy in the war, and whose remaining clergy had an abysmally low standard of education.

Among the westernising reforms envisaged at this time was the introduction of the new, Gregorian calendar. Thus Cosmas Flammiatos wrote: “First of all they were trying in many ways to introduce into the Orthodox States the so-called new calendar of the West, according to which they will jump ahead 12 days [now 13], so that when we have the first of the month they will be counting 13 [now 14]. Through this innovation they hope to confuse and overthrow the feastdays and introduce other innovations.” And again: “The purpose of this seminary in Halki of Constantinople which has recently been established with cunning effort, is, among other things, to taint all the future Patriarchs and, in general, all the hierarchy of the East in accordance with the spirit of corruption and error, through the proselytism of the English, so that one day, by a resolution of an ‘ecumenical council’ the abolition of Orthodoxy and the introduction of the Luthero-Calvinist heresy may be decreed; at the same time all the other schools train thousands and myriads of likeminded individuals and confederates among the clergy, the teachers and lay people from among the Orthodox youth.”

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545 Fortescue, *op. cit.*, p. 313.
For his defence of Orthodoxy, Cosmas was imprisoned together with 150 monks of the Mega Spilaion monastery. The monks were released, but Cosmas died in prison through poisoning.\(^{547}\)

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

“The inhabitants of the new states were as viciously divided among themselves in peace as they had been in war. In Serbia adherents of the Karageorge and Obrenovic factions tussled for power, locals vied with the so-called ‘Germans’ (Serb immigrants from the Habsburg lands), Turcophiles fought Russophiles. In Greece there were similar struggles between regional factions, between supporters of the various Powers, who each sponsored parties of their own, and between ‘autochthones’ and ‘heterochthones’. These divisions embittered politics from the start…”\(^{548}\)

**The Decembrist Rebellion**

The wave of revolutionary violence reached Russia after the supposed death of Tsar Alexander I on November 19, 1825.\(^{549}\) During the interregnum, on December 14, a group of army officers attempted to seize power in St. Petersburg. Already in 1823 Alexander I had been given a list of the future “Decembrists”. But he refused to act against them. Archpriest Lev Lebedev explains why: “‘It is not for me to punish them,’ said his Majesty, and cast the

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\(^{547}\) “A Biographical Note concerning Cosmas Flamiatos”, *Orthodox Christian Witness*, vol. XVIII, № 30 (833), March 18/31, 1985.

\(^{548}\) Mazower, op. cit., p. 95.

paper into the fire. ‘I myself shared their views in my youth,’ he added. That means that now, in 1823, Alexander I evaluated these diversions of his youth as sin, which also had to receive their retribution. Neither he nor [Grand Duke] Constantine [his brother] had the spiritual, moral right to punish the plotters, insofar as both of them had been guilty of the plot against their own father! That was the essence of the matter! Only he had the right to punish who had in no way been involved in the parricide and the revolutionary delusions – that is, the younger brother Nicholas. It was to him that the reins of the government of Russia were handed.”

The Decembrist conspirators were divided into a Northern Society based in St. Petersburg and a Southern society based in Tulchin, headquarters of the Second Army in the Ukraine.

“In the ideology of the Northern Society especially,” writes Walicki, “there were certain elements reminiscent of the views of the aristocratic opposition of the reign of Catherine II. Many of the members in this branch of the Decembrist movement were descendants of once powerful and now impoverished boyar families… Nikita Muraviev claimed that the movement was rooted in the traditions of Novgorod and Pskov, of the twelfth-century Boyar Duma, of the constitutional demands presented to Anne by the Moscow nobility in 1730, and of the eighteenth-century aristocratic opposition. The poet Kondraty Ryleev painted an idealized portrait of Prince Andrei Kurbsky (the leader of the boyar revolt against Ivan the Terrible) and even devoted one of his ‘elegies’ to him…In his evidence before the Investigating Commission after the suppression of the revolt, Petr Kakhovsky stated that the movement was primarily a response to the high-handedness of the bureaucracy, the lack of respect for ancient gentry freedom, and the favoritism shown to foreigners. Another Northern Decembrist, the writer and literary critic Aleksandr Bestuzhev… wrote that his aim was ‘monarchy tempered by aristocracy’. These and similar facts explain Pushkin’s view, expressed in the 1830’s, that the Decembrist revolt had been the last episode in the age-old struggle between autocracy and boyars…

“The Decembrists used the term ‘republic’ loosely, without appearing to be fully aware that there were essential differences between, for instance, the Roman republic, the Polish gentry republic, the old Russian city states, and modern bourgeois republics… Muraviev modelled his plan for a political system on the United States… The theorists of the Northern Society made no distinction between criticism of absolutism from the standpoint of the gentry and similar criticism from a bourgeois point of view. Hence they saw no difficulty in reconciling liberal notions taken largely from the works of Bentham, Benjamin Constant and Adam Smith with an idealization of former feudal liberties and a belief in the role of the aristocracy as a ‘curb on despotism’. The theoretical premise here was the ‘juridical world view’ of the

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Enlightenment, according to which legal and political forms determined the revolution of society."\textsuperscript{551}

The Northern Decembrists were in favour of the emancipation of the serfs. However, they insisted that the land should remain with the gentry, thereby ensuring the continued dependence of the serfs on the gentry. “The conviction that the peasants ought to be overjoyed merely at the abolition of serfdom was shared by many Decembrists. Yakushkin, for instance, could not conceal his exasperation at his peasants’ demand for land when he offered to free them. When they were told that the land would remain the property of the landlord, their answer was: ‘Then things had better stay as they were. We belong to the master, but the land belongs to us.’”\textsuperscript{552}

The Northern Decembrists worked out a new interpretation of Russian history conceived “as an antithesis to Karamzin’s theory of the beneficial role of autocracy”. “An innate Russian characteristic, the Decembrists maintained – one that later developments had blunted but not destroyed – was a deep-rooted love of liberty. Autocracy had been unknown in Kievan Russia: the powers of the princes had been strictly circumscribed there and decisions on important affairs of state were taken by the popular assemblies. The Decembrists were especially ardent admirers of the republican city-states of Novgorod and Pskov. This enthusiasm was of practical significance, since they were convinced that the ‘spirit of liberty’ that had once imbued their forbears was still alive; let us but strike the bell, and the people of Novgorod, who have remained unchanged throughout the centuries, will assemble by the bell tower, Ryleev declared. Kakhovsky described the peasant communes with their self-governing mir as ‘tiny republics’, a living survival of Russian liberty. In keeping with this conception, the Decembrists thought of themselves as restoring liberty and bringing back a form of government that had sound historical precedents.”\textsuperscript{553}

This reinterpretation of Russian history was false. Russia was imbued from the beginning with the spirit of Orthodox autocracy and patriarchy: the “republics” of Pskov and Novgorod were exceptions to the historical rule. And if Kievan autocracy was less powerful than the Muscovite or Petersburg autocracies, this was not necessarily to its advantage. Russia succumbed to the Mongols because the dividedness of her princes precluded a united defence. And there can be little doubt that she would not have survived into the nineteenth century as an independent Orthodox nation if she had not been an autocracy.

The leader of the Southern Society, Colonel Pavel Pestel, had more radical ideas in his draft for a constitution, \textit{Russian Justice}, which was based on two

\textsuperscript{551} Walicki, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 58, 59, 60.
\textsuperscript{552} Walicki, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 61.
\textsuperscript{553} Walicki, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 67.
assumptions: “that every man has a natural right to exist and thus to a piece of land large enough to allow him to make a basic living; and that only those who create surplus wealth have a right to enjoy it. After the overthrow of tsarism, therefore, Pestel proposed to divide land into two equal sectors: the first would be public property (or, more accurately, the property of the communes); the second would be in private hands. The first would be used to ensure everyone a minimum living, whereas the second would be used to create surplus wealth. Every citizen was entitled to ask his commune for an allotment large enough to support a family; if the commune had more land available, he would even be able to demand several such allotments. The other sector would remain in private hands. Pestel felt that his program ensured every individual a form of social welfare in the shape of a communal land allotment but also left scope for unlimited initiative and the opportunity of making a fortune in the private sector.

“Pestel believed that his program had every chance of success since land ownership in Russia had traditionally been both communal and private. Here he obviously had in mind the Russian village commune; it should be emphasized, however, that Pestel’s commune differed essentially from the feudal obshchina in that it did not restrict its members’ movement or personal freedom and did not impose collective responsibility for individual members’ tax liabilities.”

579 people arrested and brought to trial. 40 were given the death sentence and the rest – hard labour. In the end only five were executed.555 The soldiers were flogged. In August, 1826 Tsar Nicholas confirmed the ban on Masonry.

“And so for the first time in Russian history,” writes Lebedev, “a rebellion of the nobility had as its aim not the removal of one sovereign by another, but the annihilation of tsarist power altogether... It became clear that [the Decembrists’] links in ‘society’ were so significant and deep, and the sympathy for them so broad, that one could speak of a betrayal of the Throne and Church – or, at any rate, of the unreliability – of the noble class as a whole.”

V.F. Ivanov writes: “As an eyewitness put it, the rebellion in Petersburg shocked the general mass of the population of Russia profoundly. In his words, ‘the attempt to limit the Tsar’s power and change the form of government seemed to us not only sacrilege, but an historical anomaly; while the people, seeing that the plotters belonged exclusively to the upper class,

555 One of those executed was Sergius Ivanovich Muraviev-Apostol, a leader of the southern society. In his Catechesis we find a strong Christian element, but a tirade against the tsars for having “seized the people’s freedom” and a confession that he wanted to kill the tsar (http://decemb.hobby.ru/index.shtml?archive/pokaz2).
556 Lebedev, op. cit., p. 318.
considered the nobility to be traitors, and this added one more sharp feature to that secret hatred which it nourished towards the landowners. Only the progressives and the intelligentsia of the capital sympathised with the unfortunate madmen’ (Schilder).

“The best people turned away from the affair in disgust and branded the work of the Mason-Decembrists that of Cain. In the words of Karamzin: ‘Look at the stupid story of our mad liberals! Pray God that not so many real rogues are found among them. The soldiers were only victims of a deception. Sometimes a fine day begins with a storm: may it be thus in the new reign... God saved us from a great disaster on December 14...’”

In 1826 Karamzin wrote: “Liberals! What do you want? The happiness of men? But is there happiness where there is death, illness, vices, passions?... For a moral being there is no good without freedom: but this freedom is given not by his Majesty, not by Parliament, but by each of us to ourselves, with the help of God. We must conquer freedom in our hearts by peace of conscience and trust in Providence!”

In the same year Metropolitan Philaret said: “It is becoming clearer and clearer from what horrors and iniquities God delivered us, when he strengthened His Majesty on December 14. Pray that this evil will be completely annihilated by righteousness and wisdom. But there are people who, after talking previously about the visitation of God, are now talking about the wrath of God on us.”

The Decembrist rebellion was important not only for what it represented in itself but also for the halo of martyrdom which its exiles acquired. They were romantic dreamers rather than hardened revolutionaries – one of their leaders, the poet Ryleev, mounted the scaffold with a volume of Byron in his hands, and another, Count Sergius Volkonsky, remained a monarchist to the end of his life, breaking down in tears on hearing of the death of Nicholas I. But of course they were not monarchists: as Alexis Khomyakov said, they “preferred the tyranny of an armed minority to one-man rule”. And their naivety did not diminish the evil effect of their words and deeds on succeeding generations.

557 Ivanov, op. cit, pp. 307-308.
558 Yakovlev, op. cit, p. 143.
559 Yakovlev, op. cit, p. 130.
561 Figes, op. cit, p. 143. He also petitioned to be serve as a private in the Crimean war, which he saw as a return to the spirit of 1812. Figes sees Volkonsky as the link between the Decembrists and the Populists of a later generation. He wrote to his son in 1857: “I gave my blessing when you went into the service of the Fatherland and the Tsar. But I always taught you to conduct yourself without lordly airs when dealing with your comrades from a different class (op. cit, pp. 143-143). For more on the Decembrists and their wives (from a pro-Decembrist perspective), see Christine Sutherland, *The Princess of Siberia*, London: Quartet Books, 2001.
From now on, Russian liberals could appeal to the example of the “heroic” Decembrists in their struggle against the Orthodox autocracy…

**St. Seraphim of Sarov**

Just before the Decembrist rebellion, a young officer-Decembrist came up to St. Seraphim of Sarov, “and, taking off his cap, asked for his blessing. The always meek and quiet elder Seraphim was suddenly filled with such anger as nobody had ever seen in him. He began to shout loudly at the officer and cursed him. The unfortunate one, struck as if by thunder, went away, swaying from the shock and forgetting to put on his cap… An involuntary witness of the event had been a young monk who had brought Elder Seraphim some food. ‘Did you see?’ the elder asked him. ‘I saw,’ replied the monk. The elder pointed at the source, which he had so carefully tended: ‘Look!’ The monk glanced and saw that the source of grace-filled water, which had healed many sick people, and which was always clean and transparent, this time had become completely disturbed. ‘That’s how these gentlemen want to disturb Russia,’ said St. Seraphim. Soon Russia learned of the plot and the attempt at rebellion of the ‘Decembrists’ (the officer was one of them)…”

In 1844 Nicholas Alexandrovich Motovilov, a nobleman of Simbirsk province and a close friend of the saint, made notes of his conversations with him: “…As a demonstration of true zeal for God Batyushka Seraphim cited the holy Prophet Elijah and Gideon, and for hours at a time he talked in an inspired manner about them. Every judgement that he made about them was concluded by its application to life, precisely our own life, and with an indication of how we… can draw soul-saving instructions from their lives. He often spoke to me about the holy King, Prophet and Ancestor of God David, at which point he went into an extraordinary spiritual rapture. How one had to see him during those unearthly minutes! His face, inspired by the grace of the Holy Spirit, shone like the sun, and I – I speak the truth – on looking at him felt in my eyes as if I was looking at the sun. I involuntarily recalled the face of Moses when he had just come down from Sinai. My soul, pacified, entered such a quiet, and was filled with such great joy, that my heart was ready to embrace within itself not only the whole human race, but also the whole creation of God, pouring out in love towards everything that is of God…

“‘So, your Godbelovedness, so,’ Batyushka used to say, leaping from joy (those who still remember this holy elder will relate how he would sometimes be seen leaping from joy), ‘I have chosen David my servant, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will’”...

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“In explaining how good it was to serve the Tsar and how much his life should be held dear, he gave as an example Abishai, David’s war-commander.

“‘Once,’ said Batyushka Seraphim, ‘to satisfy the thirst of David, he stole into a spring in view of the enemy camp and got water, and, in spite of a cloud of arrows released at him from the enemy camp, returned to him completely unharmed, bringing the water in his helmet. He had been saved from the cloud of arrows only because of his zeal towards the King. But when David gave an order, Abishai replied: “Only command, O King, and everything will be done in accordance with your will.” But when the King expressed the desire to take part himself in some bloody deed to encourage his warriors, Abishai besought him to preserve his health and, stopping him from participating in the battle, said: “There are many of us, your Majesty, but you are one among us. Even if all of us were killed, as long as you were alive, Israel would be whole and unconquered. But if you are gone, then what will become of Israel?”…’

“Batyushka Fr. Seraphim loved to explain himself at length, praising the zeal and ardour of faithful subjects to the Tsar, and desiring to explain more clearly how these two Christian virtues are pleasing to God, he said:

“‘After Orthodoxy, these are our first Russian duty and the chief foundation of true Christian piety.’

“Often from David he changed the subject to our great Emperor [Nicholas I] and for hours at a time talked to me about him and about the Russian kingdom, bewailing those who plotted evil against his August Person. Clearly revealing to me what they wanted to do, he led me into a state of horror; while speaking about the punishment prepared for them from the Lord, and in confirmation of his words, he added:

“‘This will happen without fail: the Lord, seeing the impenitent spite of their hearts, will permit their undertakings to come to pass for a short period, but their illness will turn upon their heads, and the unrighteousness of their destructive plots will descend upon them. The Russian land will be reddened with streams of blood, and many noblemen will be killed for his great Majesty and the integrity of his Autocracy: but the Lord will not be wrath to the end, and will not allow the Russian land to be destroyed to the end, because in it alone will Orthodoxy and the remnants of Christian piety be especially preserved.

“Once,” as Motovilov continued in his notes, “I was in great sorrow, thinking what would happen in the future with our Orthodox Church if the evil contemporary to us would be multiplied more and more. And being convinced that our Church was in an extremely pitiful state both from the
great amount of carnal debauchery and... from the spiritual impiety of godless opinions sown everywhere by the most recent false teachers, I very much wanted to know what Batyushka Seraphim would tell me about this.

“Discussing the holy Prophet Elijah in detail, he said in reply to my question, among other things, the following:

“Elijah the Thesbite complained to the Lord about Israel as if it had wholly bowed the knee to Baal, and said in prayer that only he, Elijah, had remained faithful to Lord, but now they were seeking his soul, too, to take it... So what, batyushka, did the Lord reply to this? “I have left seven thousand men in Israel who have not bowed the knee to Baal.” So if in the kingdom of Israel, which had fallen away from the kingdom of Judah that was faithful to God, and had come to a state of complete corruption, there still remained seven thousand men faithful to the Lord, then what shall we say about Russia? I think that at that time there were no more than three million in the kingdom of Israel at that time. And how many do we have in Russia now, batyushka?’

“I replied: ‘About sixty million.’

“And he continued: ‘Twenty times more. Judge for yourself how many more of those faithful to God that brings!... So, batyushka, those whom He foreknew, He also predestined; and those whom He predestined, He also called; and those whom He called, He guards, and those He also glorifies... So what is there for us to be despondent about!... God is with us! He who hopes in the Lord is as Mount Sion, and the Lord is round about His people... The Lord will keep you, the Lord will protect you on your right hand, the Lord will preserve your coming in and your going out now and to the ages; by day the sun will not burn you, nor the moon by night.’

“And when I asked him what this meant, and to what end he was talking to me about it:

“To the end,’ replied Batyushka Fr. Seraphim, ‘that you should know that in this way the Lord guards His people as the apple of His eye, that is, the Orthodox Christians, who love Him and with all their heart, and all their mind, in word and deed, day and night serve Him. And such are those who completely observe all the commandments, dogmas and traditions of our Eastern Universal Church, and confess the piety handed down by it with their lips, and really, in all the circumstances of life, act according to the holy commandments of our Lord Jesus Christ.’

“In confirmation of the fact that there were still many in the Russian land who remained faithful to our Lord Jesus Christ, who lived in Orthodoxy and piety, batyushka Fr. Seraphim once said to one acquaintance of mine... that once, when he was in the Spirit, he saw the whole land of Russia, and it was
filled and as it were covered with the smoke of the prayers of believers praying to the Lord… 563

St. Seraphim prophesied: "More than half a century will pass. Then evildoers will raise their heads high. This will happen without fail: the Lord, seeing the impenitent evil of their hearts, will allow their enterprises for a short time. But their sickness will rebound upon their own heads, and the unrighteousness of their destructive plots will fall upon them. The Russian land will become red with rivers of blood... Before the birth of the Antichrist there will be a great, protracted war and a terrible revolution in Russia passing all bounds of human imagination, for the bloodletting will be most terrible: the rebellions of Ryazan, Pugachev and the French revolution will be nothing in comparison with what will take place in Russia. Many people who are faithful to the fatherland will perish, church property and the monasteries will be robbed; the Lord's churches will be desecrated; good rich people will be robbed and killed, rivers of Russian blood will flow..." 564

**Instinct and Consciousness**

Under the shock of the Decembrist rebellion, and of the resumption of the revolution's march in Europe, it was necessary for Russia to clearly formulate the foundations of her national life, and her religio-moral-political differences from Europe. This process now began, in informal discussion circles in St. Petersburg and in elegant aristocratic salons in Moscow.

"It is completely natural," writes L.A. Tikhomorov, "that the clarification of our political principle lagged behind the clarification of the principles of nationality and the faith. As long as our moral-religious ideal was wrapped in a kind of fog or was even, in our opinion, unsound, the monarchy could be represented to consciousness only as absolutism, that is, as a completely unlimited power. Monarchy... is limited by the content of its ideal: if the ideal is unclear, then the power is already in fact unlimited and becomes absolutist.

"And so the development of the monarchical principle, its self-consciousness, in this period could not fail to decline. It was preserved amongst us in accordance with the former voice of instinct, but it was not explained by reason. Therefore of all the aspects of scientific creativity, the state-legal remained throughout the new period the least developed among us, as well as being the most imitative, the most imbued by a simple copying of European ideas, and for that reason – in conformity with the state thought of Europe – assumed a constitutional character.

"The legitimists in Europe in their time were the channels of the monarchical idea. Our juridical thought was the channel of the anti-monarchical, democratic idea.

"When the question of limiting the autocracy or even of external external manifestations of the power of the Monarch in international relations was raised, voices were found among us that pointed to some close bond between the Tsar and Russia, a bond that was a limitation for the Monarch. By this absolutism was denied, as was the teaching that the sovereign can order everything ‘as he likes’. The political thought of Russian State law was as it were raised to the level of consciousness.

"Thus at the moment when Emperor Alexander I, who had been brought up on republican ideas and considered the republic higher than the monarchy, was thinking about limiting his own autocratic power, he heard an eloquent protest from Karamzin.

"‘If Alexander,’ wrote Karamzin, ‘inspired by a magnanimous hatred for the abuses of autocracy, had taken a pen to prescribe for himself new laws besides those of God and conscience, then the true Russian citizen would have been so bold as to stop his hand and say: Your Majesty, you are transgressing the bounds of your power. Taught by long-term disasters, Russia entrusted the autocracy to your forebear before the holy altar and demanded that he rule her supremely and undividedly. This covenant is the foundation of your power: we have no other. You can do everything, but you cannot lawfully limit your power.’

"In his note, ‘The Opinion of a Russian Citizen’, given to the sovereign in 1819 with reference to plans for the restoration of Poland, Karamzin tried to prove again that the sovereign had no right to do this:

"‘You think,’ writes Karamzin, ‘to restore the ancient kingdom of Poland, but is this restoration in accordance with the law of the State good of Russia? Is it in accordance with Your sacred duties, with Your love for Russia and justice itself?… Do the sovereigns not swear to preserve the integrity of their domains? These lands (that is, Belorussia, Lithuania, Volhynia and Podolia) were already Russia when Metropolitan Plato entrusted to you the crown of Monomakh, Peter and Catherine… Will they say that they unlawfully divided Poland? But You would be acting still more unlawfully if You thought to wipe out its injustice by dividing Russia herself. We took Poland by the sword: that is our right, to which all States are obliged for their existence, for all have been constituted from conquests. Catherine is responsible before God, and before history, for her act, but it is already done, and for You it is already holy: for You Poland is a lawful Russian dominion. There are no old deeds of purchase in politics: otherwise we would be bound to re-establish the Kazan and Astrakhan kingdoms, the Novgorod republic, the great Princedom of
Ryazan, etc. Moreover, even according to the old deeds of purchase Belorussia, Volhynia and Podolia, together with Galicia, were once the indigenous heritage of Russia…

“‘Until now,’ he continues, ‘our rule was: not a step towards an enemy, not a step towards a friend. Napoleon was able to conquer Russia, but You, although You are an Autocrat, were not able to cede to him a single Russian hut for free. That is our character and our State character… Your Majesty, I would vouch my life to You that an inevitable consequence of the wholesale restoration of Poland would be the loss, not only of our beautiful provinces, but also of our love for the Tsar; we would cool in soul in our feeling for the Fatherland, seeing it become the plaything of self-willed caprice…’

“In these interesting reasonings we catch the voice of feeling which Karamzin had in his heart and wanted to stir up in the heart of the Sovereign. But from the point of view of principle this is all very unclear and even questionable: Karamzin even refers to some pact between the tsar and the people when the dynasty was elected, although, of course, if that was the whole issue then the pact agreed upon by the parties could always be reviewed and changed. In his reasonings on Poland Karamzin bases everything on the obligation to preserve tradition… This, of course, is easily refuted. Nevertheless a certain truth can be felt here, the rejection of absolute power and an indication of the bond between the Tsar and the nation, a bond which serves as the source of the Tsar’s obligations.

“Instinctual feelings surfaced in Russia sufficiently constantly, but there was very little consciousness, very little theory of Tsarist power and the mutual relations of Tsar and people.

“This consciousness became the more necessary in that bureaucratic practice inexorably brought to us the idea of absolutism, while the European influence, affirming that Tsarist power was nothing other than absolutism, rejected it. In the 19th century Russian thought was sharply divided into ‘westerners’ and ‘Slavophiles’, and the whole of the westernising part conducted propaganda against autocracy…

“Throughout the 19th century the whole current of educated westernising thought, which created the so-called ‘intelligentsia’, conducted propaganda against autocracy – in Russia as far as censorship allowed it, and with complete openness in its press abroad. The national part of educated society could not help trying to defend its historical Russian institution of monarchy. The schism in the educated part of Russia between the ‘westerners’ (under various names) and the national part of the educated class grew still wider after 1861. Moreover, in the ‘westernizing’ tendency there developed a terrible rejection of everything that was typically Russian, while its ideas gained great strength in all the middle educated classes and encompassed the
whole people. This struggle, which embraced every aspect of life, was concentrated especially strongly on the autocracy, as a principle and as an institution.

“In this long historical period the monarchical idea was nevertheless clarified to a certain degree. The words of our great artists – Pushkin, Gogol, A. Majkov and others – sound like excellent expressions of the monarchical consciousness. But all these were expressions of feeling, manifestations of instinct, which was so strong in the Russian personality generally that quite often it unexpectedly appears even in the most extreme deniers, as, for example, Bakunin.

“But in the sense of consciousness, the monarchical idea was clarified mainly by means of public debates, in quarrels with opponents, not by a strictly scientific method. Scientific works, which remained basically imitative, in general gave almost nothing to clarify autocracy and most often served only to mix it up hopelessly with absolutism.

“In general, when our statist scholars went on to explain autocracy, then in the best case they repeated the publicists’ judgements. If the monarchical idea of power was in any way clarified amongst us, then it was not in science, not in the study or auditorium of the professor and academic, but on the pages of newspapers and journals, in the verbal disputes of the representatives of the parties and tendencies. Russian political thought, insofar as it had any success in the national spirit, was indebted in everything not to statist science, which instilled European ideas and concept – but to the publicists.

565 Nikolai Gogol indeed expressed a monarchical consciousness, but in rejecting the westerners’ arguments he went too far in an absolutist direction. Thus he wrote in 1847: “A State without an absolute monarch is an orchestra without its conductor… The more deeply one looks into the workings of our administration, the more one admires the wisdom of its founders; the more one feels that God Himself, unseen by us, built it through the hands of the sovereigns. Everything is perfect, everything is sufficient unto itself. I cannot conceive what use could be found for even one more official” (Selected Passages from My Correspondence with My Friends; in Cohen & Major, History in Quotations, London: Cassell, 2004, p. 552).

However, Gogol’s conversion to True Orthodoxy late in life was sincere and deep. As St. Barsanuphius of Optina said in 1909: “Our great writer Gogol was spiritually reborn under the influence of talks with Elder Macarius, which took place in this very cell, and a great turning point resulted in him. As a man of sound nature, not fragmented, he was not capable of compromise. Having understood that he could not live as he had done previously, he, without looking back, turned to Christ and strove towards the Heavenly Jerusalem. From Rome and the holy places which he visited, he wrote letters to his friends, and these letters comprised an entire book, for which his contemporaries condemned him. Gogol had not yet begun to live in Christ – hardly had he begun to wish for this life – and the world, which is at enmity with Christ, raised a persecution against him and passed a harsh sentence on him, considering him half crazy” (Victor Afanasiev, Elder Barsanuphius of Optina, Platina, Ca.: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 2000, p. 326). (V.M.)
“Among its representatives especially much was done by the Slavophiles in general and by I.S. Aksakov in particular, and particularly by M.N. Katkov who stood behind them....”

Tsar Nicholas I

However, before discussing these debates between the westerners and Slavophiles in more detail, it is necessary to examine the work of the Tsar who dominated the period, to the rage of the westerners and even some of the Slavophiles, but to the undoubted benefit of the Church and State of Russia. Tsar Nicholas I had never been swayed by liberal ideas. Having tasted something of the flavour of democratic life in France during the reign of his father, he said to Golenischev-Kutuzov: “If, to our misfortune, this evil genius transferred all these clubs and meetings, which create more noise than substance, to us, then I would beseech God to repeat the miracle of the confusion of the tongues or, even better, deprive those who use their tongues in this way of the gift of speech.”

A man of strict life and strict opinions, who was venerated by Saints Seraphim of Sarov and Theophilus of the Kiev Caves, his rule was made still stricter by the fact that he came to the throne in the midst of the Decembrist rebellion.

Some have portrayed the Tsar as having been unreasonably strict and censorious. However, he wanted to abolish serfdom, and took important preparatory measures towards that great act carried out by his son. Moreover, he had the ability to convert, and not simply crush, his opponents. Thus it was after a long, sincere conversation with Pushkin that he was able to say: “Gentlemen, I present to you a new Pushkin!” “And it was truly thus,” writes Lebedev. “Not out of fear before the authorities, not hypocritically, but sincerely and truly, Pushkin, the friend of the ‘Decembrists’, the worldly skiver, in life as in poetry, after 1826 renounced his free-thinking and Masonry and created his best and greatest works!”

“Having rejected a rotten support, the nobility,” writes Lebedev, Tsar Nicholas “made his supports the Orthodox Church, the system of state institutions (in which the class of bureaucrats, of officials, acquired great significance) and the Russian people which he loved! Having grasped this main direction of the Tsar’s politics, Count S. Uvarov, the minister of enlightenment expressed it [on March 21, 1833] in the remarkable formula: Orthodoxy, Autocracy and Nationhood....”

567 V.F. Ivanov, Russkaia Intelligentsia i Masonstvo ot Petra I do nashikh dnej (The Russian Intelligentsia and Masonry from Peter I to our days), Harbin, 1934, Moscow, 1997, pp. 316-317 (in Russian).
568 Lebedev, Velikorossia (Great Russia), St. Petersburg, 1999, p. 331 (in Russian).
569 Lebedev, op.cit, p. 319.
“This schema,” writes Sergius Firsov, “can be called a political reincarnation of the Byzantine theory of ‘the symphony of powers’ in the changed conditions of State realities in Russia.” 570 It “was often misunderstood,” writes Fr. Alexis Nikolin, “as follows: the Russian people in the sphere of faith lives by Orthodoxy; in the sphere of statehood it is maintained by Autocracy, and in the sphere of everyday life is strong through its Nationhood.”571 But the three elements of the formula were closely linked, and this link had to be explained.

Moreover, the priorities had to be understood: first Orthodoxy (as opposed to Catholicism and Protestantism), then Autocracy (as opposed to Absolutism and Democracy), and then Nationhood (as opposed to Internationalism and Nationalism). The supreme value was Orthodoxy, whose first line of defence was the Autocracy, and second - national feeling. Any attempt to invert this order – as, for example, to make Orthodoxy merely a support for Autocracy, or both as supports of Nationhood, would be equivalent to idolatry and lead to the downfall of Russia.

Some, such as D.S. Khomiakov, thought that an inversion of this order, placing Autocracy as the supreme value, did indeed take place.572 However,
this is not the view of Protopriest Lev Lebedev, who writes: “Beginning already with Paul I, the rapprochement of imperial power with the Church continued under Nicholas I, being raised to a qualitatively higher level. The All-Russian Autocrat from now on did not oppose himself to the Church and did not even consider himself ‘self-sufficient’ or ‘independent’ of her. On the contrary, he saw himself as a faithful son of the Orthodox Church, completely sharing the faith of his people and bound in all his politics to be guided by the commandments of God, proceeding precisely from the Orthodox world-view (and not from the demands of a certain non-existent ‘religion of nature’, as under Catherine II). This was a good, grace-filled radical change. It made itself immediately felt also in the relations of the two powers – the tsar’s and the Church’s. From now on the over-procurators of the Synod were people who enjoyed the respect and trust of the Russian hierarchs and considered themselves faithful children of the Church. Such were Admiral Shishkov and Count Protasov. There was not always unanimity between them and the members of the Synod. Metropolitan Philaret (Drozdov), for example, more than once ‘warred’ with Protasov. But these were quarrels about separate matters, where both sides were governed by the single desire to benefit Holy Orthodoxy (even if they understood this differently).”

This beneficial change in Church-State relations was reflected in the voluntary reunion of the uniates in the western territories with the Orthodox Church. Favourable conditions for this change had been created by the fall of Poland in 1815, the expulsion of the Jesuits from Russia in 1820 and the suppression of the Polish rebellion in 1830-1831. Then, in 1835, a secret committee on the uniate question was formed in St. Petersburg consisting of the uniate bishop Joseph Semashko, the real soul of the movement,

Orthodoxy in the absolute sense can stand only ‘for itself’ and excludes the possibility of a union with any state task whatever, and even with any national task. Orthodoxy is universal, it is far higher than states and peoples; it denies neither statehood nor nationalities, but it is united with nothing...

“None of these questions were clarified officially; and the Orthodoxy of Nicholas Pavlovich and Count Uvarov remained the same diffuse concept as the liberté of the French revolution. It in fact remained at the level only of a negative concept, as did the concept ‘Nationhood’. Only ‘Autocracy’ received a positive meaning, because, firstly, this is in essence a more concrete concept than the other two; and then mainly because it was and is a term clearly understood by those who established the formula. Autocracy for them is, both theoretically and practically, absolutism. Nobody was mistaken in this meaning and there were no misunderstandings concerning it: the more so in that it indeed revealed itself graphically. But Orthodoxy was understood only as not Roman Catholicism – a very convenient faith from the state’s point of view; and not Protestantism, which unleashed the undesirable liberty, not only in the sphere of the faith alone (if you can criticise the faith, then all the more the rest, also); and not as sectarianism – also a teaching displeasing to the police. In the same way ‘Nationhood’ did not find a concrete expression of itself; and in the absence of this it settled on language: the spread of the Russian language was respected as the spread also of the Russian spirit – its nationality…” (Pravoslavie, Samoderzhanie, Narodnost’ (Orthodoxy, Autocracy and Nationhood), Minsk: Belarusskaia Gramata, 1997, pp. 13-15 (in Russian).)

Lebedev, op. cit, p. 321.
Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow, the over-procurator of the Holy Synod and
the minister of the interior. By 1839 1,600,000 had converted to Orthodoxy.\(^{574}\)

In spite of these positive changes, there was no *formal* change in the Tsar’s
relationship to the Church, which continued to fall short of true “symphony”. In
fact, formally speaking, the power of the Tsar over the Church was
increased. Thus in 1832 a new collection of the Fundamental Laws was published
that included the words: “The Emperor as the Christian sovereign
is the supreme defender and preserver of the dogmas of the dominant faith
and the supervisor of right faith and every good order in the Holy Church”. In
the administration of the Church, intoned articles 42 and 43, “the autocratic
power acts by means of the Holy Governing Synod, which was founded by
it.”\(^{575}\) In these formulae, writes Fr. Georges Florovsky, “there is clearly and
faithfully conveyed the State’s consciousness of itself and self-definition: in
them there is taken to its logical conclusion the thought of Peter, who
considered himself to be ‘the supreme judge’ of the Spiritual College, and
who openly derived its privileges from his own autocratic power – ‘when it
was established by the Monarch and under his rule’”.\(^{576}\)

Such an overbearing attitude of the State towards the Church was bound to
lead to friction. And yet when there were clashes between the Tsar and the
hierarchs on matters of conscience, the Tsar showed himself ready to give
way, which gives strength to Lebedev’s claim that a qualitatively higher level
of Church-State relations had been attained. Thus once Metropolitan Philaret
refused to bless a triumphal monument because it had some pagan
hieroglyphs and representations of pagan gods. The Emperor, showing a
good grasp of church history, said: “I understand, but tell him [Philaret] that I
am not Peter the Great and he is not St. Metrophanes.” Still, he allowed
Philaret not to take part in the ceremony.\(^{577}\) According to another account, on
hearing of Philaret’s disinclination to serve, the Emperor said: “Prepare the
horses; I’m leaving today”, so that the ceremony took place without either
Tsar or metropolitan.\(^{578}\) Afterwards, on returning to the Trinity Lavra,
Philaret said to his spiritual father, Archimandrite Anthony: “Did I act well? I
annoyed the Tsar. I don’t have the merits of the hierarch Metrophanes.” (“Don’t take them upon yourself,” replied Fr. Anthony, “but remember that


\(^{575}\) Nicholas entrusted this work to the Mason Speransky, because his expertise in the subject
was unrivalled. However, above him he placed his former teacher Balugiansky, saying: “See
that he (Speransky) does not get up to the same pranks as in 1810. You will answer for that to
me” (in Ivanov, op. cit., p. 317).


\(^{577}\) Metropolitan Ioann (Snychev), *Zhizn’ i deiatel’nost’ mitropolita Philareta* (The Life and Activity of Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow), Tula, 1994, p. 238 (in Russian).

you are a Christian bishop, a pastor of the Church of Christ, to whom only one thing is terrible: to depart from the will of Jesus Christ.” Then the hierarch revealed that the previous night St. Sergius had entered his locked room, come up to his bed, and said: “Don’t be disturbed, it will all pass…”

Again, in 1835 the Emperor wanted his son and heir, the Tsarevich Alexander Nikolaevich, to become a member of the Holy Synod. But Metropolitan Philaret, together with the other hierarchs, was against the idea, and on meeting the tsarevich, asked him when he had received clerical ordination. Shamed, the tsarevich henceforth refrained from attending sessions of the Holy Synod.

Although the relationship between Church and State in Russia was far from ideal, particularly in the over-powerful role of the over-procurator, its faults can be exaggerated. When the Englishman William Palmer criticised the dominance of the State over the Church in Russia, Alexis Khomiakov replied: “That the Church is not quite independent of the state, I allow; but let us consider candidly and impartially how far that dependence affects, and whether it does indeed affect, the character of the Church. The question is so important, that it has been debated during this very year [1852] by serious men in Russia, and has been brought, I hope, to a satisfactory conclusion. A society may be dependent in fact and free in principle, or vice-versa. The first case is a mere historical accident; the second is the destruction of freedom, and has no other issue but rebellion and anarchy. The first is the weakness of man; the second the depravity of law. The first is certainly the case in Russia, but the principles have by no means been damaged. Whether freedom of opinion in civil and political questions is, or is not, too much restrained, is no business of ours as members of the Church (though I, for my part, know that I am almost reduced to complete silence); but the state never interferes directly in the censorship of works written about religious questions. In this respect, I will confess again that the censorship is, in my opinion, most oppressive; but that does not depend upon the state, and is simply the fault of the over-cautious and timid prudence of the higher clergy. I am very far from approving of it, and I know that very useful thoughts and books are lost in the world, or at least to the present generation.

“But this error, which my reason condemns, has nothing to do with ecclesiastical liberty; and though very good tracts and explanations of the Word of God are oftentimes suppressed on the false supposition of their perusal being dangerous to unenlightened minds, I think that those who suppress the Word of God itself should be the last to condemn the excessive prudence of our ecclesiastical censors. Such a condemnation coming from the Latins would be absurdity itself. But is the action of the Church quite free in

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Russia? Certainly not; but this depends wholly on the weakness of her higher representatives, and upon their desire to get the protection of the state, not for themselves, generally speaking, but for the Church. There is certainly a moral error in that want of reliance upon God Himself; but it is an accidental error of persons, and not of the Church, and has nothing to do with our religious convictions. It would be a difference case, if there was the smallest instance of a dogmatic error, or something near to it, admitted or suffered without protestation out of weakness; but I defy anybody to find anything like that…”581

**Russian Hegelianism**

The most important influence on young intellectuals in Russia in the 1820s was German idealism, especially the philosophy of Hegel. Many went to Germany and listened to the lectures of Hegel himself, and of other important German philosophers such as Schelling. The influence of these lectures on the Russian intelligentsia lasted deep into the nineteenth century.

“In Russia, as elsewhere,” writes Richard Pipes, “the principal consequence of Idealism was greatly to enhance the creative role of the human mind. Kant’s critique of empirical theories had this inadvertent result that it transformed the mind from a mere recipient of sensory impressions into an active participant in the process of cognition. The manner in which intelligence, through its inbuilt categories, perceived reality was in itself an essential attribute of that reality. With this argument, the Idealist school which sprung up to overshadow Empiricism, gave a weapon to all those interested in promoting the human mind as the supreme creative force – that is, in the first place, the intellectuals. It was now possible to argue that ideas were every bit as ‘real’ as physical facts, if not more so. ‘Thought’ broadly defined to include feelings, sensations, and, above all, creative artistic impulses was raised to a status of equality with ‘Nature’. Everything fitted together; nothing was accidental: intelligence merely had to grasp how phenomena related to ideas. ‘I owe to Schelling the habit I now have of generalizing the least events and the most insignificant phenomena which I encounter’, wrote V.F. Odoevskii, a leading Schellingian of the 1820s. In the late 1830s when Russian intellectuals became drunk on Hegel, the addiction acquired extreme forms. Alexander Herzen, having returned from exile, found his Moscow friends in a kind of collective delirium:

“…”Nobody at this time would have disowned such as sentence as this: “The concrescence of abstract ideas in the sphere of the plastic represents that phase of the self-questing spirit in which it, defining itself for itself, is

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potentialized from natural immanence into the harmonious sphere of the formal consciousness in beauty”… Everything that in fact is most immediate, all the simplest feelings were erected into abstract categories and returned from thence as pale, algebraic ghosts, without a drop of living blood… A man who went for a walk… went not just for a walk, but in order to give himself over to the pantheistic feelings of his identification with the cosmos. If, on the way, he met a tipsy soldier or a peasant woman who tried to strike up a conversation, the philosopher did not simply talk with them, he determined the substantiality of the popular element, both in its immediate and its accidental manifestations. The very tear which might arise to his eye was strictly referred to its proper category: to Gemüth or the “tragic element in the heart”.

“Secondly, and only slightly less importantly, Idealism injected into philosophy a dynamic element. It conceived reality, both in its spiritual and physical aspects, as undergoing constant evolution, as ‘becoming’ rather than ‘being’. The entire cosmos was evolving, the process leading towards a vaguely defined goal of a perfectly free and rational existence. This ‘historicist’ element, present in all Idealist doctrines, has become ever since an indispensable ingredient of all ‘ideologies’. It gave and continues to give the intelligentsia the assurance that the reality with which they happen to be surrounded and in varying degrees repudiate is by the very nature of things transitory, a stepping stone to something superior. Furthermore, it allows them to argue that whatever discrepancy there might exist between their ideas and reality is due to the fact that reality, as it were, has not yet caught up with their ideas. Failure is always temporary for ideologues, as success is always seen by them to be illusory for the powers that be.

“The net effect of Idealism was to inspire Russian intellectuals with a self-confidence which they had never possessed before. Mind was linked with nature, both participating in a relentless unfolding of historical processes; compared to this vision, what were mere governments, economies, armies and bureaucracies? Prince Odoevskii thus describes the exaltation he and his friends experienced on being first exposed to these heady concepts:

“‘What solemn, luminous, and joyful feeling permeated life once it had been shown that it was possible to explain the phenomena of nature by the very same laws to which the human spirit is subject in its evolution, seemingly to close forever the gap separating the two realms, and fashion them into a single receptacle containing the eternal idea and eternal reason. With what youthful and noble pride did we at that time envisage the share which had been allotted to man in this universal existence! By virtue of the quality and right of thought, man transposed visible nature within himself and analysed it in the innermost recesses of his own consciousness: in short, he became nature’s focal point, judge and interpreter. He absorbed nature and in him it revived for rational and inspired existence… The more radiantly the
eternal spirit, the eternal idea reflected themselves in man, the more fully did he understand their present in all the other realms of life. The culmination of the whole [Idealist] outlook were moral obligations, and one of the most indispensable obligations was to emancipate within oneself the divine share of the world idea from everything accidental, impure, and false in order to acquire the right to the blessings of a genuine, rational existence.

“Of course, not all Russian intellectuals succumbed to such ecstasy. Idealism had also more sober followers, as, for example, among academic historians who took from Hegel little more than a general scheme of development of human societies. But in some degree, in the reign of Nicholas I (1825-55) Idealism was an all-pervading philosophy of the Russian intelligentsia, and its influence persisted well into the second half of the nineteenth century, after its principal tenets had been repudiated and replaced by materialism.”

The Russians were also attracted to Hegelian historicism and the idea of universal history. Thus the great novelist Nicholas Gogol wrote: “Universal history, in the true meaning of the term, is not a collection of particular histories of all the peoples and states without a common link, plan or aim, a bunch of events without order, in the lifeless and dry form in which it is often presented. Its subject is great: it must embrace at once and in a complete picture the whole of humanity, how from its original, poor childhood it developed and was perfected in various forms, and, finally, reached the present age. To show the whole of this great process, which the free spirit of man sustained through bloody labours, struggling from its very cradle with ignorance, with nature and with gigantic obstacles – that is the aim of universal history! It must gather into one all the peoples of the world scattered by time, chance, mountains and seas, and unite them into one harmonious whole; it must compose out of them one majestic, complete poem. The event having no influence on the world has not right to enter here. All the events of the world must be so tightly linked amongst themselves and joined one to another like the rings of a chain. If one ring were ripped out, the chain would collapse. This link must not be understood in a literal sense: it is not that visible, material link by which events are often forcibly joined, or the system created in the head independently of facts, and to which the events of the world are later arbitrarily attached. This link must be concluded in one common thought, in one uninterrupted history of mankind, before which both states and events are but temporary forms and images! The must be presented in the same colossal size as it is in fact, penetrated by the same mysterious paths of Providence that are so unattainably indicated in it. Interest must necessarily be elicited to the highest degree, in such a way that the listener is tormented by the desire to know more, so that either he cannot close the book, or, if it is impossible to do that, he starts his reading again, so that it is evident how one event gives birth to another and how without the

original event the last event would not follow. Only in that way must history be created.”

However, it will be noted that there is no hint of Hegelian determinism in this picture: it is “the free spirit of man” that propels universal history forward. The determinism of Hegel did not attract the Russian thinkers; and characteristic of almost all of them was their emphasis on the importance of the individual and individual freedom. Those who inherited the Hegelians’ determinism later took the more radical road of atheism and Marxism.

Another difference between the Hegelian and the Russian interest in history was the greater concentration, among the Russians, on Hegel’s concept of “the historical nation”, and on Herder’s of the unique essence of every nation, which stimulated Russian thinkers to take a more historical and dialectical approach to the study of their own land.

Thus the nobleman Peter Chaadaev, a convert to Catholicism, according to Andrej Kompaneets, “attached a great importance to history in his investigations. Chaadaev was sure: if humanity allowed itself to see in their true light the causes and consequences of the historical process, then even nationalities divided up to now ‘would unite for the attainment of an agreed and general result’. The aim of the philosophy of history is ‘to attain a clear representation of the general law governing the succession of epochs’, but this law constituted a certain idea (a moral idea) moving civilisations. But when this idea is exhausted, the state perishes. Thus, for example, the Roman Empire, Egypt, Alexandria: ‘these were rotting corpses; they (the barbarians – A.K.) only scattered their dust in the wind.’"

“What was the relationship between the old, pre-Petrine Russia and the new, post-Petrine Russia?” they asked. “Could these antithetical Russias be reconciled in a new synthesis of the future?” “Is it necessary decisively to choose the one and reject the other?”

More particularly, it was Hegel’s failure “to find room for the Slavs”, as G. Vernadsky put it, that provoked and intrigued the Russian intellectuals. For Hegel wrote: “[The Slavs] did indeed found kingdoms and sustain vigorous conflicts with the various nations that came across their path. Sometimes, as an advance guard – an intermediate nationality – they took part in the struggle between Christian Europe and unchristian Asia. The Poles even liberated beleaguered Vienna from the Turks; and Slavs have to some extent been drawn within the sphere of Occidental Reason. Yet this entire body of peoples remains excluded from our consideration because hitherto it has not

appeared as an independent element in the series of phases that reason has assumed in the world.”\footnote{Hegel, \textit{Lectures on the Philosophy of History}; quoted in M.J. Cohen and John Major, \textit{History in Quotations}, London: Cassel, 2004, p. 175.} Was Russia no more than “an intermediate nationality”?, asked the Russian intellectuals. Had History really passed the Slavs by? Were they just a footnote to “the sphere of Occidental Reason”? Or did they have something original to contribute? In the next stage of the historical dialectic perhaps? After all, if Hegel thought that the Romano-French period of history had been overtaken by the German, why should not the German in its turn be overtaken by the Slav?\footnote{Geoffrey Hosking, \textit{Russia: Empire & People}, London: HarperCollins, 1997, p. 270.}

\textbf{Russia and Europe: (1) Chaadaev vs. Pushkin}

These questions and preoccupations led to the emergence of two schools of thought on the nature and destiny of Russia: the westerners, who basically thought that the westernizing path chosen by Peter had been correct, and the Slavophiles, who believed in Orthodoxy, in the pre-Petrine symphony of powers, and in a special, distinct path chosen by God for Russia. Almost the whole of the public intellectual life of Russia until the revolution could be described as increasingly complex variations on these two viewpoints and the various intermediate positions: Chaadaev and Pushkin, Belinsky and Gogol, Herzen and Khomiakov, Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky, Soloviev and Pobedonostev, Lenin and Tikhomorov. The result was paradoxical: an increasing westernization of the noble educated classes, who had suffered most from Peter’s revolution, and an increasing “Slavophilisation” of the tsars themselves, culminating in the most Orthodox and Slavophile of all the tsars, Nicholas II.

The great debate began in 1836 with the publication, by Chaadaev, of the first of his \textit{Philosophical Letters} (1829 – 1831). N.O. Lossky writes: “The letters are ostensibly addressed to a lady who is supposed to have asked Chaadaev’s advice on the ordering of her spiritual life. In the first letter Chaadaev advises the lady to observe the ordinances of the Church as a spiritual exercise in obedience. Strict observance of church customs and regulations may only be dispensed with, he says\footnote{The idea that Church regulations and customs, such as fasting on Wednesdays and Fridays, could be dispensed with was an attitude of the nobility which St. Seraphim of Sarov, in particular, criticised. He said that he who does not fast is not Orthodox. (V.M.)}, when ‘beliefs of a higher order have been attained, raising our spirit to the source of all certainty;’ such beliefs must not be in contradiction to the ‘beliefs of the people’. Chaadaev recommends a well-regulated life as favorable to spiritual development and praises Western Europe where ‘the ideas of duty, justice, law, order’ are part of the people’s flesh and blood and are, as he puts it, not the psychology, but the physiology of the West. He evidently has in mind the disciplinary influence of the Roman Catholic Church.
As to Russia, Chaadaev is extremely critical of it. Russia, in his opinion, is neither the West nor the East. ‘Lonely in the world, we have given nothing to the world, have taught it nothing; we have not contributed one idea to the mass of human ideas.’ ‘If we had not spread ourselves from [the] Behring Straits to [the] Oder, we would never have been noticed.’ We do not, as it were, form part of the human organism and exist ‘solely in order to give humanity some important lesson’. According to Chaadaev, “not a single useful thought has sprouted in our country’s barren soil; not a single great truth has emerged from our ambit…. Something in our blood repulses all true progress. In the end we have lived and now live solely to serve as some inscrutable great lesson for the distant generations that will grasp it; today, whatever anyone may say, we are a void in the intellectual firmament.”

Though writing from a westernizing viewpoint, Sir Isaiah Berlin sums up the matter well: “Chaadaev’s attack, with its deification of Western traditions, ideas and civilisation, was the key to later Russian ‘social thought’. Its importance was enormous. It set the tone, it struck the dominant notes which were echoed by every major Russian writer up to and beyond the Revolution. Everything is there: the proclamation that the Russian past is blank or filled with chaos, that the only true culture is the Roman West, and that the Great Schism robbed Russia of her birthright and left her barbarous, an abortion of the creative process, a caution to other peoples, a Caliban among nations. Here, too, is the extraordinary tendency toward self-preoccupation which characterises Russian writing even more than that of the Germans, from whom this tendency mainly stems. Other writers, in England, France, even Germany, write about life, love, nature and human relations at large; Russian writing, even when it is most deeply in debt to Goethe or Schiller or Dickens or Stendhal, is about Russia, the Russian past, the Russian present, Russian prospects, the Russian character, Russian vices and Russian virtues. All the ‘accursed questions’ (as Heine was perhaps the first to call them) turn in Russian into notorious proklyatyye voprosy – questions about the destinies (sud’by) of Russia: Where do we come from? Whither are we bound? Why are we who we are? Should we teach the West or learn from it? Is our ‘broad’ Slav nature higher in the spiritual scale than that of the ‘Europeans’ – a source of salvation for all mankind – or merely a form of infantilism and barbarism destined to be superseded or destroyed? The problem of the ‘superfluous man’ is here already; it is not an accident that Chaadev was an intimate friend of the creator of Eugene Onegin [Pushkin]. No less characteristic of this mental condition is Chaadaev’s contrary speculation that was also destined to have a career in subsequent writing, in which he wondered whether the Russians, who have arrived so late at the feast of the nations and are still young, barbarous and untried, do not thereby derive advantages, perhaps overwhelming ones, over older or more civilised societies. Fresh and strong,

the Russians might profit by the inventions and discoveries of the others without having to go through the torments that have attended their mentors’ struggles for life and civilisation. Might there not be a vast positive gain in being late in the field? Herzen and Chernyshevsky, Marxists and anti-Marxists, were to repeat this with mounting optimism. But the most central and far-reaching question was still that posed by Chaadaev. He asked: Who are we and what should be our path? Have we unique treasures (as the Slavophils maintained) preserved for us by our Church – the only true Christian one – which Catholics and Protestants have each in their own way lost or destroyed? Is that which the West despises as coarse and primitive in fact a source of life – the only pure source in the decaying post-Christian world? Or, on the contrary, is the West at least partially right: if we are ever to say our own word and play our part and show the world what kind of people we are, must we not learn from the Westerners, acquire their skills, study in their schools, emulate their arts and sciences, and perhaps the darker sides of their lives also? The lines of battle in the century that followed remained where Chaadaev drew them: the weapons were ideas which, whatever their origins, in Russian became matters of the deepest concern – often of life and death – as they never we in England or France or, to such a degree, in Romantic Germany. Kireyevsky, Khomiakov and Aksakov gave one answer, Belinsky and Dobrolyubov another, Kavelin yet a third.”

Chaadaev’s letter had an enormous impact on Russian society; Herzen remarked that it “shook the whole of intellectual Russia”. The tsar was furious. Klementy Rosset, an officer of the General Staff, wrote to the famous poet Alexander Pushkin: “The Emperor has read Chaadaev’s article and found it absurd and extravagant, saying that he was sure ‘that Moscow did not share the insane opinions of the Author’, and has instructed the governor-general Prince Golitsyn to inquire daily as to the health of Chaadaev’s wits and to put him under governmental surveillance…”

This letter, together with the other Philosophical Letters, elicited from Pushkin the first, and one of the best statements of the opposing, Slavophile position. Pushkin had known Chaadaev for a long time. In 1818, when his views were more radical (and blasphemously atheist) than they came to be at the end of his life, he had dedicated to Chaadaev the following lines:

Comrade, believe: joy’s star will leap
Upon our sight, a radiant token;
Russia will rise from her long sleep;
And where autocracy lies, broken,
Our names shall yet be graven deep.

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But even here anti-autocratic sentiments are combined with a belief in Russia. So although Pushkin admitted to the Tsar that he would have participated in the Decembrist rebellion if he had not been in exile, he was never a typical westernizer. This fact, combined with his deep reading in Russian history, the stabilising experience of marriage and, as we have seen, an enlightening interview with the Tsar himself, led Pushkin to a kind of conversion to Russia and to a belief in her significance as a phenomenon independent of Europe.

Pushkin’s change of views with regard to the autocracy is demonstrated by the following words: “Why is it necessary that one of us should become higher than all and even higher than the law itself? Because the law is a tree, and in the law man hears something cruel and unfraternal. You don’t get far with merely the literal fulfilment of the law: but none of us must break it or not fulfil it: for this a higher mercy softening the law is necessary. This can appear to men only in a fully-empowered authority. The state without a fully-empowered monarch is an automaton: many, if attains to what the United States has attained. But what is the United States? A corpse. In them man has disappeared to the point that he’s not worth a brass farthing. A state without a fully-empowered monarch is the same as an orchestra without a conductor. However good the musicians, if there is not one among them who gives the beat with the movement of his baton, the concert gets nowhere…”

The sincerity of his conversion was demonstrated during the Polish rebellion in 1830. Although “enlightened” Europe condemned the Tsar for crushing the rebellion, on August 2, 1830, just three weeks before the taking of Warsaw by Russian troops, Pushkin wrote “To the Slanderers of Russia”. From that time, as the friend of the poet’s brother, Michael Yuzefovich, wrote, “his world-view changed, completely and unalterably. He was already a deeply believing person: [he now became] a citizen who had changed his mind, having understood the demands of Russian life and renounced utopian illusions.”

However, Chaadaev had not undergone this conversion, and was still not convinced that Russia’s past was anything more than “a blank sheet of paper”, “an unhappy country with neither past, present nor future”.

Valery Lepakhin and Andrei Zavarzin have summarised the debate between Chaadaev and Pushkin as follows: “Russia and Europe. This problem especially occupied the minds of Russians at the beginning of the 19th century. Chaadaev considered the schism (the division of the Churches [in 1054]) as a tragedy for Russia, which separated it from Christianity (of course, from Catholicism, and not from Christianity, but at that time these

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593 Razgovory Pushkina (The Conversations of Pushkin), Moscow, 1926 (in Russian).
terms were synonymous for Chaadaev), from ‘the world idea’, form ‘real progress’, from ‘the wonderworking principle’, from ‘the enlightened, civilised peoples’. In principle Pushkin agreed with Chaadaev, but specified that ‘the schism disunited us from backward Europe’: first, it separated ‘us’, that is, not only Russia, but in general the whole of the eastern branch of Christianity, and secondly, it separated simply from ‘backward Europe’, and not from ‘enlightened and civilised people’, as Chaadaev claimed. In reading the Russian chronicles, sermons and lives of saints, it is impossible not to notice the fact that they are full of gratitude to God for the fact the Russ’ accepted baptism from Orthodox Constantinople, and not from Catholic Rome. This fact is never viewed as a tragedy in Russian literature and history, rather the opposite: beginning with the description of the holy Prince Vladimir’s choice of faith, this event became the subject of poetry and chant. And not out of hostility to Catholicism, and from faith in Divine Providence, which judged that it should be so and which the consciousness of believers perceived with gratitude, for Providence cannot err. But Chaadaev, who speaks so much about Christianity, sees in this fact ‘the will of fate’ in a pagan manner.

“Pushkin agreed with his friend of many years that ‘we did not take part in any of the great events which shook her (Europe)’. But it does not occur to Chaadaev to ask the simple question: why should Rus’ have taken part. Or, for example, would not this ‘participation’ have been for the worse, both for Europe and for Rus’? Pushkin gives a simple, but principled reply at this point: Russia has ‘her own special calling’, which Pushkin in another place calls ‘lofty’: ‘It was Russia and her vast expanses that were swallowed up by the Mongol invasion. The Tartars did not dar to cross our western frontiers and leave us in their rear. They departed for their deserts, and Christian civilisation was saved… By our martyrdom the energetic development of Catholic Europe was delivered from all kinds of hindrances’. From Pushkin’s reply it follows that indirectly at any rate Russia did take part in the life of Western Europe, and, in accordance with its historical significance, this participation was weighty and fraught with consequences for the West. It was not a direct participation insofar as Russia had a different calling. The complete opposition of Pushkin’s and Chaadaev’s views on the problem is characteristic. For the latter the Tartar-Mongol yoke was a ‘cruel and humiliating foreign domination’. For Pushkin this epoch was sanctified by the lofty word ‘martyrdom’, which Russia received not only for herself, but also for her western brothers, for Christian civilization generally. In his reply Pushkin links the special calling of Russia with her reception of Orthodoxy, and see in it not ‘the will of fate’, but Russia’s preparation of herself for this martyrdom.

595 At the time of the baptism of Rus’ in 988, Rome was still formally Orthodox and in communion with Constantinople. Nevertheless, the tendencies that led to the schism in 1054 were already clearly evident and deeply rooted.
“Chaadaev’s attitude to Byzantium also elicited objections from Pushkin. Chaadaev called Byzantium ‘corrupt’, he affirmed that it was at that time (the 10th century – the reception of Christianity by Rus’) ‘an object of profound disdain’ for the West European peoples. Now it is difficult even to say what there is more of in this passage from Chaadaev: simple ignorance of the history of Byzantium and Europe and complete absorption in his speculative historiosophical conception, or the conscious prejudice of a westerniser. The beginning of the 10th century in Byzantium was marked by the activity of Leo VI, ‘the Wise’, the middle – by the reign of Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, and the end – by the victories of Basil II the Bulgar-slayer. It was precisely this period that saw the development of political theories and the science of jurisprudence, theoretical military thought and knowledge of the natural sciences. New schools were opened, and a good education was highly prized both in the world and in the Church. Significant works were produced in the sphere of philosophy, literature and the fine arts, and theology produced such a light as Simeon the New Theologian, the third (after the holy Evangelist John the Theologian and St. Gregory the Theologian) to be given the title ‘theologian’ by the Orthodox Church. ... This period is considered by scientists to be the epoch of the flourishing of Byzantine aesthetic consciousness, of architecture and music. If one compares the 10th century in Byzantium and in Europe, the comparison will not be in favour of the latter. Moreover, Chaadaev himself speaks of the ‘barbarism’ of the peoples that despised Byzantium.

‘‘You say,’ writes Pushkin, ‘that the source from which we drew up Christianity was impure, that Byzantium was worthy of disdain and was disdained’, but, even if it was so, one should bear in mind that ‘from the Greeks we took the Gospel and the traditions, and not the spirit of childish triviality and disputes about words. The morals of Byzantium never were the morals of Kiev. For Chaadaev it was important ‘from where’, but for Pushkin ‘how’ and ‘what’ they took it. After all, ‘was not Jesus Christ Himself born as a Jew and was not Jerusalem a proverb among the nations?’ Pushkin did not want to enter into polemics on the subject of Byzantium insofar as that would have dragged out his letter. Moreover, the problem was a special one not directly connected with the polemic surrounding the history of Russia. For him it was evident that Russia, as a young and healthy organism, had filtered through her Byzantine heritage, assimilated the natural and cast out that which was foreign and harmful. Above mention was made of the fact that in the chronicles praise was often offered to God for the reception of Christianity by Rus’ from Byzantium. But no less often do we find critical remarks about the Greek metropolitans, and of the Greeks and Byzantium in general. Therefore Pushkin placed the emphasis on the critical assimilation of the Byzantine heritage. For him, Rus’ received from Byzantium first of all ‘the light of Christianity’....
“Both Chaadaev and Pushkin highly esteemed the role of Christianity in world history. In his review of *The History of the Russian People* by N. Polevoj, the latter wrote: ‘The greatest spiritual and political turning-point [in the history of] of our planet is Christianity. In this sacred element the world disappeared and renewed itself. Ancient history is the history of Egypt, Persia, Greece, Rome. Modern history is the history of Christianity.’ Chaadaev would also have signed up to these words, but immediately after this common affirmation differences would have arisen. For Chaadaev true Christianity rules, shapes and ‘lords over everything’ only in Catholic Europe – ‘there Christianity accomplished everything’. Chaadaev even considers the history of Catholic Europe to be ‘sacred, like the history of the ancient chosen people’.

“He recognises the right of the Russians, as, for example, of the Abyssinians, to call themselves Christians, but in the Christianity of the former and the latter that ‘order of things’, which ‘constitutes the final calling of the human race’ was not realised at all. ‘Don’t you think,’ says Chaadaev to his correspondent, ‘that these stupid departures from Divine and human truths (read: Orthodoxy) drag heaven down to earth?’ And so there exist Catholic Europe, the incarnation of Christianity, and Russia, Abyssinia and certain other historical countries which have stagnated in ‘stupid departures from Divine and human truths’. Chaadaev refuses these countries the right to their own path, even the right to have a future.

“In one of his reviews Pushkin indirectly replies to Chaadaev: ‘Understand,’ he writes, ‘that Russia never had anything in common with the rest of Europe; her history demands other thoughts, other formulae, different from the thoughts and formulae extracted by Guizot from the history of the Christian West’. For Pushkin it is absolutely obvious that any schema of historical development will remain a private, speculative schema and will never have a universal character. Any conception is built on the basis of some definite historical material, and to transfer it, out of confidence in its universality, to other epochs or countries would be a mistake. After all, as often as not that which does not fit into a once-worked-out schema is cut off and declared to have no significance and not worthy of study or analysis. But Pushkin makes his own generalisations, proceeding from history, from concrete facts. S. Frank wrote: ‘The greatest Russian poet was also completely original and, we can boldly say, the greatest Russian political thinker of the 19th century’. This was also noticed by the poet’s contemporaries. Vyzamesky wrote: ‘In Pushkin there was a true understanding of history... The properties of his mind were: clarity, incisiveness, sobriety... He would not paint pictures according to a common standard and size of already-prepared frames, as is often done by the most recent historians in order more conveniently to fit into them the events and people about to be portrayed’. But it was precisely this that was the defect of Chaadaev’s method. Moreover, the non-correspondence of schema and historical reality (frame and picture) was sometimes so blatant
with him that he had completely to reject the historical and religious path of Russia for the sake of preserving his schema of world development.

“Pushkin also did not agree with Chaadaev concerning the unity of Christianity, which for Chaadaev ‘wholly consisted in the idea of the merging of all the moral forces of the world’ for the establishment of ‘a social system or Church which would have to introduce the kingdom of truth among people’. To this Pushkin objected already in his letter of 1831: ‘You see the unity of Christianity in Catholicism, that is, in the Pope. Does it not consist in the idea of Christ, which we find also in Protestantism?’ Pushkin notes the Catholico-entrism of Chaadaev, and reminds him of the Protestant part of the Western Christian world. But the main point is that Pushkin turns out to be better-prepared theologically than Chaadaev. The Church is the Body of Christ, and Christ Himself is Her Head, according to the teaching of the Apostle Paul (Ephesians 1.23, 4.16; Colossians 1.18, etc.). Here Pushkin in a certain sense anticipates the problems of Dostoyevsky, who considered that Rus’ had preserved that Christ that the West had lost, and that the division of the Churches had taken place precisely because of different understandings of Christ.

“Pushkin considered it necessary to say a few words also about the clergy, although Chaadaev had not directly criticised them in his first letter. ‘Our clergy,’ writes the poet, ‘were worthy of respect until Theophan [Prokopovich]. They never sullied themselves with the wretchednesses of papism…, and, of course, they would never have elicited a Reformation at a moment when mankind needed unity more than anything.’ In evaluating the role of the clergy in Russian history, Pushkin distinguished between two stages: before Peter and after Peter. The role of the clergy in Russian life before Peter was exceptionally great. Ancient Rus’ inherited from Byzantium, together with the two-headed eagle on her arms, the idea of the symphony of secular and ecclesiastical power. This idea was equally foreign both to caesaropapism and papocaesarism and the democratic idea of the separation of the Church from the State. Of course, symphony never found its full incarnation in State life, but it is important that as an idea it lived both in the Church and in the State, and the role of the clergy as the necessary subject of this symphony was naturally lofty and indisputable. But even outside the conception of ‘symphony’, the clergy played an exceptionally important role in the history of Russia. In the epoch of the Tatar-Mongol yoke they were almost the only educated class in Russian society: ‘The clergy, spared by the wonderful quick-wittedness of the Tatars alone in the course of two dark centuries kept alive the pale sparks of Byzantine education’. In another place Pushkin even found it necessary to contrast the Russian and Catholic clergy – true, without detailed explanations of his affirmation: ‘In Russia the influence

596 For Chaadaev “the supreme principle” was “unity”, which he saw incarnate in Western Catholic Christendom – completely forgetting that the West was torn by the division between Catholicism and Protestantism. See Pushkin’s remark below. (V.M.)
of the clergy was so beneficial, and in the Roman-Catholic lands so harmful... Consequently we are obliged to the monks of our history also for our enlightenment’.

“A new era began from the time of Theophan Prokopovich (more exactly: Peter I), according to Pushkin. In a draft of a letter dated 1836 he wrote to Chaadaev: ‘Peter the Great tamed (another variant: ‘destroyed’) the clergy, having removed the patriarchate’. Peter made the clergy into an institution obedient to himself and destroyed the age-old idea of symphony. Now they had begun to be excised from the consciousness both of the clergy and of the simple people, and of state officials. In losing their role in society, the clergy were becoming more and more backward, more and more distant from the needs and demands of the life of society. They were being forced to take the role of ‘fulfillers of the cult’.

“In Pushkin’s opinion, a serious blow against the clergy was later delivered by Catherine II. And if we are to speak of the backwardness of the Russian clergy, it is there that we must see its source. ‘Catherine clearly persecuted the clergy, sacrificing it to her unlimited love of power, in the service of the spirit of the times… The seminaries fell into a state of complete collapse. Many villages did not have priests... What a pity! For the Greek [Orthodox Christian] confession gives us our special national character’. If Chaadaev reproaches Russia for not having ‘her own face’, then for Pushkin it is evident that Russia has ‘her own face’ and it was formed by Orthodoxy. Therefore a sad note is heard in Pushkin’s evaluation of the era of Catherine: she has her own face, her own ‘special national character’, if only she does not lose it because of ill-thought-out reforms and regulations foreign to the spirit of Russian life. In contrast to Chaadaev, Pushkin linked the backwardness of the contemporary clergy not with the reception of Christianity from Byzantium, but with the recent transformations in Russian State and Church life, and sought the roots of this backwardness not in the 10th century but in the 18th century, in the reforms of Peter and in the epoch of the so-called Enlightenment…”

Such was the debate in its main outlines. And yet, just as Pushkin moved towards the Slavophile position later in life, so, less surely, did Chaadaev. Thus in 1830 he praised Pushkin’s nationalist poems on the Warsaw insurrection. And later, in his Apology of a Madman (1837), he was inclined to think that the very emptiness of Russia’s past might enable her to contribute to the future. Indeed, he then believed that Russia was destined “to resolve the greater part of the social problems, to perfect the greater part of the ideas which have arisen in older societies, to pronounce judgement on the most

serious questions which trouble the human race”.\footnote{Walicki, op. cit., p. 89.} Moreover, in the same \textit{Apology} (1837), he spoke of the Orthodox Church as “this church that is so humble and sometimes so heroic”. And in a conversation with Khomiakov in 1843 he declared: “Holy Orthodoxy shines out for us from Holy Byzantium”\footnote{But Byzantium, he notes, was still in communion with Rome at that time, and “there was a feeling of common Christian citizenship”. (Wil van den Bercken, \textit{Holy Russia and Christian Europe}, London: SCM Press, 1999, p. 198).}.

However, while Slavophile tendencies sometimes surfaced in Chaadaev, as in other westerners, his fundamentally westernising radicalism was revealed by his anti-monarchical remark on the occasion of the European revolutions in 1848: “We don’t want any king except the King of heaven”…\footnote{Lossky, op. cit., p. 49. Moreover, in 1854, during the Crimean War, he wrote: “Talking about Russia, one always imagines that one is talking about a country like the others; in reality, this is not so at all. Russia is a whole separate world, submissive to the will, caprice, fantasy of a single man, whether his name be Peter or Ivan, no matter – in all instances the common element is the embodiment of arbitrariness. Contrary to all the laws of the human community, Russia moves only in direction of her own enslavement and the enslavement of all the neighbouring peoples. For this reason it would be in the interest not only of other peoples but also in that of her own that she be compelled to take a new path” (in Pipes, op. cit., p. 266). Note the use of the word “compel”…}

\textbf{Russia and Europe: (2) Belinsky vs. Gogol}

The figure of Peter the Great continued to be a critical point of difference between the Westerners and the Slavophiles. The Westerners admired him (for Chaadaev he was, with Alexander I, almost the only significant Russian): the Slavophiles criticised him as the corrupter of the true Russian tradition. All felt they had to interpret his place in Russian history.

Once again it was Pushkin who began the reappraisal with his famous poem on the statue of Peter, \textit{The Bronze Horseman}. However, it was the literary critic Vissarion Grigoryevich Belinsky who made the decisive contribution from the Westerners’ side. And another writer, Nicholas Vasilyevich Gogol, who took the Slavophile argument one step further…

Unlike most of the intellectuals of the time, Belinsky was not a nobleman, but a raznochinets (that is, of undetermined or “sundry” rank, a nobleman by birth who did not occupy himself with a nobleman’s pursuits). Moreover, he was an atheist. In fact, he rejected all the traditional pillars of Russian life. He was one of the first to recognize the greatness of Pushkin. And he was equally perceptive of the talent of Gogol and Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoyevsky. And yet these writers, “discovered” by Belinsky, turned decisively against his westernising philosophy…
Belinsky was concerned, writes Walicki, “above all with the role of Peter the Great and the antithesis of pre-and post-reform Russia. In his analysis, he made use of a dialectical scheme current among the Russian Hegelians, although he was the first to apply it to Russian history. Individuals as well as whole nations, he argued, pass through three evolutionary stages: the first is the stage of ‘natural immediacy’; the second is that of the abstract universalism of reason, with its ‘torments of reflection’ and painful cleavage between immediacy and consciousness; the third is that of ‘rational reality’, which is founded on the ‘harmonious reconciliation of the immediate and conscious elements’.

“Belinsky developed this idea in detail as early as 1841, in his long essay on ‘The Deeds of Peter the Great’, in which he wrote: ‘There is a difference between a nation in its natural, immediate and patriarchal state, and this same nation in the rational movement of its historical development’. In the earlier stage, he suggested, a nation cannot really properly be called a nation (natsiia), but only a people (narod). The choice of terms was important to Belinsky: during the reign of Nicholas the word narodnost’, used... by the exponents of Official Nationality [together with the words ‘Orthodoxy’ and ‘Autocracy’ to express the essence of Russian life], had a distinctly conservative flavour; natsional’nost’, on the other hand, thanks to its foreign derivation evoked the French Revolution and echoes of bourgeois democratic national developments.

“Belinsky’s picture of pre-Petrine Russia was surprisingly similar to that presented by the Slavophiles, although his conclusions were quite different from theirs. Before Peter the Russian people (i.e. the nation in the age of immediacy) had been a close-knit community held together by faith and custom – i.e. by the unreflective approval of tradition idealized by the Slavophiles. These very qualities, however, allowed no room for the emergence of rational thought or individuality, and thus prevented dynamic social change.

“Before Russians could be transformed into a nation it was necessary to break up their stagnating society... Belinsky argued that the emergence of every modern nation was accompanied by an apparently contradictory phenomenon – namely the cleavage between the upper and lower strata of society that so disturbed the Slavophiles. He regarded this as confirmation of certain general rules applying to the formation of modern nation-states: ‘In the modern world,’ he wrote, ‘all the elements within society operate in isolation, each one separately and independently... in order to develop all the more fully and perfectly... and to become fused once more into a new and homogeneous whole on a higher level than the original undifferentiated homogeneity’. In his polemics with the Slavophiles, who regarded the cleavage between the cultivated elite and the common people as the prime evil of post-Petrine Russia, Belinsky argued that ‘the gulf between society and
the people will disappear in the course of time, with the progress of civilization'. This meant ‘raising the people to the level of society’, he was anxious to stress, and not ‘forcing society back to the level of the people’, which was the Slavophiles’ remedy. The Petrine reforms, which had been responsible for this social gulf, were therefore, in Belinsky’s view, the first and decisive step toward modern Russia. ‘Before Peter the Great, Russia was merely a people [narod]; she became a nation [natsiia] thanks to the changes initiated by the reformer.’

Berlin writes: “The central question for all Russians concerned about the condition of their country was social, and perhaps the most decisive single influence on the life and work of Belinsky was his social origin. He was born in poverty and bred in the atmosphere, at once bleak and coarse, of an obscure country town in a backward province. Moscow did, to some degree, soften and civilise him, but there remained a core of crudeness, and a self-conscious, rough, sometimes aggressive tone in his writing. This tone now enters Russian literature, never to leave it. Belinsky spoke in this sort of accent because this kind of raised dramatic tone, this harshness, was as natural to him as to Beethoven. Belinsky’s followers adopted his manner because they were the party of the enragés, and this was the traditional accent of anger and revolt, the earnest of violence to come, the rough voice of the insulted and the oppressed peasant masses proclaiming to the entire world the approaching end of their suffering at the hands of the discredited older order.

“Belinsky was the first and most powerful of the ‘new men’, the radicals and revolutionaries who shook and in the end destroyed the classical aristocratic tradition in Russian literature. The literary élite, the friends of Pushkin, despite radical ideas obtained abroad after the Napoleonic wars, despite Decembrist tendencies, was on the whole conservative, if not in conviction, yet in social habits and temper, connected with the court and the army, and deeply patriotic. Belinsky, to whom this seemed a retrograde outlook, was convinced that Russia had more to learn from the West than to teach it, that the Slavophile movement was romantic illusion, at times blind nationalistic megalomania, that Western scientific progress offered the only hope of lifting Russia from her backward state. And yet this same prophet of material civilisation, who intellectually was so ardent a Westerner, was emotionally more deeply and unhappily Russian than any of his contemporaries, spoke no foreign language, could not breathe freely in any environment save that of Russia, and felt miserable and persecution-ridden abroad. He found Western habits worthy of respect and emulation, but to him personally quite insufferable. When abroad he began to sigh most bitterly for home and after a month away was almost insane with nostalgia. In this sense he represents in his person the uncompromising elements of a Slav temperament and way of life to a far sharper degree than any of his contemporaries, even Dostoyevsky.

601 Walicki, op. cit., pp. 93-94.
“This deep inner clash between intellectual conviction and emotional – sometimes almost physical – predilection is a very characteristically Russian disease. As the nineteenth century developed, and as the struggle between social classes became sharper and more articulate, this psychological conflict which tormented Belinsky emerges more clearly: the revolutionaries, whether they are social democrats, or social revolutionaries, or communists, unless they are noblemen or university professors – that is, almost professionally members of an international society – may make their bow with great conviction and sincerity to the West in the sense that they believe in its civilisation, above all its sciences, its techniques, its political thought and practice, but when they are forced to emigrate they find life abroad more agonising than other exiles...

“To some degree this peculiar amalgam of love and hate is intrinsic to contemporary Russian feeling about Europe: on the one hand intellectual respect, envy, admiration, desire to emulate and excel; on the other emotional hostility and suspicion and contempt, a sense of being clumsy, de trop, of being outsiders; leading as a result to an alternation between excessive self-prostration before, and aggressive flouting of, Western values. No recent visitor to the Soviet Union can have failed to remark this phenomenon: a combination of intellectual inadequacy and emotional superiority, a sense of the West as enviably self-restrained, clever, efficient and successful; also cramped, cold, mean, calculating and fenced in, incapable of large views or generous emotion, incapable of feeling which at times rises too high and overflows its banks, unable to abandon everything and sacrifice itself in response to some unique historical challenge; incapable of ever attaining a rich flowering of life. This attitude is the most constant element in Belinsky’s most personal and characteristic writings: if it is not the most valuable element in him, it is the most Russian: Russian history past and present is not intelligible without it, today more palpably than ever...”

The Slavophiles were free of this neurotic attitude to the West that Belinsky typified among the westerners; they were both more critical of the West, and calmer in relation to it. The reason was that they, unlike the Westerners, had discovered the heart of Russia, her Orthodox Christianity. For them, the critical event in European history was not the Catholic-Protestant schism, but the schism between Eastern and Western Christianity in the middle of the eleventh century. In thus tracing the origins of the difference between East and West to the religious schism between the Orthodox and the Roman Catholics of the eleventh century, as opposed to later events such as the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century or the reforms of Peter the Great in the eighteenth century, the Slavophiles made a very important step towards the reintegration of Russian historical thought with the traditional outlook on history of Orthodox Christianity. This wider and deeper historical

perspective enabled them to see that, after the schisms of the West from the unity of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church of the East for so many centuries, it was inevitable that a new kind of man, *homo occidentalis*, with a new psychology, new aims and new forms of social and political organization, should have been created in the West, from where it penetrated into the Orthodox East.

One of the first to see this clearly was Gogol. Having made his name by satirical and fantastical works such as *Notes of a Madman*, *The Greatcoat*, *The Government Inspector* and, above all, *Dead Souls*, he suddenly and quite unexpectedly turned to Orthodoxy, Autocracy and Nationhood. This change of heart was clearly proclaimed in *Correspondence with Friends*.

While Belinsky looked forward to the rationalism of Tolstoy, Gogol’s views on the Westernizer-Slavophile controversy both looked back to Pushkin and forward to Dostoyevsky’s *Pushkin Speech*. “All these Slavists and Europeans,” he wrote, “or old believers and new believers, or easterners and westerners, they are all speaking about two different sides of one and the same subject, without in any way divining that they are not contradicting or going against each other.” The quarrel was “a big misunderstanding”. And yet “there is more truth on the side of the Slavists and easterners”, since their teaching is more right “on the whole”, while the westerners are more right “in the details”.

“The main theme of the book,” writes I.M. Andreev, “was God and the Church. And when Gogol was reproached for this, he replied, simply and with conviction: ‘How can one be silent, when the stones are ready to cry out about God.’

“Like Khomiakov and Ivan Kireyevsky, Gogol summoned all ‘to life in the Church’.

“The pages devoted to the Orthodox Church are the best pages of the book! No Russian writer had expressed as did Gogol such sincere, filial love for the Mother Church, such reverence and veneration for Her, such a profound and penetrating understanding both of Orthodoxy as a whole and of the smallest details of the whole of the Church’s rites.

“‘We possess a treasure for which there is no price,’ is how he characterizes the Church, and he continued: ‘This Church which, as a chaste virgin, has alone been preserved from the time of the Apostles in her original undefiled purity, this Church, which in her totality with her profound dogmas and smallest external rites has been as it were brought right down from heaven for

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the Russian people, which alone has the power to resolve all our perplexing knots and questions... And this Church, which was created for life, we have to this day not introduced into our life’…

“The religio-political significance of Correspondence was huge. This book appeared at a time when in the invisible depths of historical life the destiny of Russia and Russian Orthodox culture was being decided. Would Russia hold out in Orthodoxy, or be seduced by atheism and materialism? Would the Russian Orthodox autocracy be preserved in Russia, or would socialism and communism triumph? These questions were linked with other, still more profound ones, that touched on the destinies of the whole world. What was to come? The flourishing and progress of irreligious humanistic culture, or the beginning of the pre-apocalyptic period of world history?

“Gogol loudly and with conviction proclaimed that the Truth was in Orthodoxy and in the Russian Orthodox Autocracy, and that the historical ‘to be or not to be’ of Russian Orthodox culture, on the preservation of which there also depended the destiny of the whole world in the nearest future, was now being decided. The world was on the edge of death, and we have entered the pre-apocalyptic period of world history.

“Correspondence came out in 1847. Pletnev published it at Gogol’s behest.

“This book, in its hidden essence, was not understood by its contemporaries and was subjected to criticism not only on the part of enemies, but also of friends (of course, the former and the latter proceeded from completely different premises).

“The enemies were particularly disturbed and annoyed by Gogol’s sincere and convinced approval of the foundations of those social-political ordered which to so-called ‘enlightened’ people seemed completely unsustainable.”

Belinsky was furious. “Russia expects from her writers salvation from Orthodox, Nationhood and Autocracy,” he wrote in his Letter to Gogol in 1847. And he now called Gogol a “preacher of the knout, apostle of ignorance, champion of superstition and obscurantism”.

Russia, he thundered, “does not need sermons (she has had her fill of them!), nor prayers (she knows them by heart), but the awakening in people of the feeling of human dignity, for so many centuries buried in mud and dung; she needs laws and rights compatible not with the doctrines of the church, but with justice and common sense.”

605 Hosking, op. cit., p. 299.
Gogol’s friends, continues Andreyev, “criticized Correspondence for other reasons... The most serious and in many respects just criticism belonged to the Rzhev Protopriest Fr. Matthew Konstantinovsky, to whom Gogol, who did not yet know him personally, sent his book for review. Fr. Matthew condemned many places, especially the chapter on the theatre, and wrote to Gogol that he ‘would give an account for it to God’. Gogol objected, pointing out that his intention had been good. But Fr. Matthew advised him not to justify himself before his critics, but to ‘obey the spirit living in us, and not our earthly corporeality’ and ‘to turn to the interior life’.

“The failure of the book had an exceptionally powerful effect on Gogol. After some resistance and attempts to clarify ‘the whirlwind of misunderstandings’, without rejecting his principled convictions, Gogol humbled himself and acknowledged his guilt in the fact that he had dared to be a prophet and preacher of the Truth when he personally was not worthy of serving it. Even to the sharp and cruel letter of Belinsky Gogol replied meekly and humbly: ‘God knows, perhaps there is an element of truth in your words.’”

Russia and Europe: (3) Herzen vs. Khomiakov

Belinsky had deified the West, but never felt at home there. Alexander Herzen was the first Westernizer to symbolize the westerners’ exile from Russian values by permanently settling in the West, in London. From there, writes Berlin, “he established his free printing press, and in the 1850s began to publish two periodicals in Russia, The Pole Star [recalling the Masonic lodge of the same name] and The Bell (the first issues appeared in 1855 and 1857 respectively), which marked the birth of systematic revolutionary agitation – and conspiracy – by Russian exiles directed against the tsarist regime.”

Herzen followed Belinsky and the westerners in his disdain for Russia’s pre-Petrine past: “You need the past and its traditions, but we need to tear Russia away from them. We do not want Russia before Peter, because for us it does not exist, but you do not want the new Russia. You reject it, but we reject ancient Rus”.

However, after the failure of the 1848 revolution, Herzen began to lose faith in the western path to happiness. He began to see the futility (if not the criminality) of violent revolution, and of such senseless slogans as Proudhon’s “all property is theft”, or Bakunin’s “the Passion to destroy is the same as the Passion to create”. The revolution had only left the poor poorer than ever, while the passion to destroy seemed as exhilarating as the passion to create

606 Andreev, op. cit., p. 175.
608 Herzen, in Lebedev, op. cit., p. 333.
only in the heat of the moment, and not when the pieces had to be picked up and paid for the next day…

“A curse on you,” he wrote with regard to 1848, “year of blood and madness, year of the triumph of meanness, beastliness, stupidity!… What did you do, revolutionaries frightened of revolution, political tricksters, buffoons of liberty?… Democracy can create nothing positive… and therefore it has no future… Socialism left a victor on the field of battle will inevitably be deformed into a commonplace bourgeois philistinism. Then a cry of denial will be wrung from the titanic breast of the revolutionary minority and the deadly battle will begin again… We have wasted our spirit in the regions of the abstract and general, just as the monks let it wither in the world of prayer and contemplation.” 609

And again: “If progress is the goal, or whom are we working? Who is this Moloch who, as the toilers approach him, instead of rewarding them, draws back; and, as a consolation to the exhausted and doomed multitudes, shouting ‘morituri te salutant’ [‘those who are about to die salute you’], can only give the… mocking answer that after their death all will be beautiful on earth. Do you truly wish to condemn the human beings alive today to the sad role… of wretched galley-slaves who, up to their knees in mud, drag a barge… with… ‘progress in the future’ upon its flag?… a goal which is infinitely remote is no goal, only… a deception; a goal must be closer – at the very least the labourer’s wage, or pleasure in work performed.” 610

“He was disillusioned with western civilization and found that it was deeply penetrated by the petty bourgeois spirit, and was built on ‘respect for the sacred right of property’ and ‘has no other ideals except a thirst for personal security’.

“‘Europe,’ said Herzen, ‘is approaching a terrible cataclysm. The medieval world is collapsing. The political and religious revolutions are weakening under the burden of their own powerlessness, they have done great things, but they have not fulfilled their task… They have destroyed faith in the throne and the altar, but have not realized freedom, they have lit in hearts a desire which they are not able to satisfy. Parliamentarism, Protestantism – all these were deferments, temporary salvation, powerless outposts against death and degeneration; their time has passed. From 1849 they began to understand that neither ossified Roman law nor cunning casuistry nor nauseating deistic philosophy nor merciless religious rationalism are able to put off the realization of the destinies of society.’

609 Herzen, From the Other Shore, 1849; in Cohen & Major, op. cit, p. 563.
“Herzen did not believe in the creative function of contemporary democracy, he considered that it possessed only a terrible power of destruction, but not the capacity to create.

“‘In democracy,’ said Herzen, ‘there is a terrible power of destruction, but when it takes it upon itself to create something, it gets lost in student experiments, in political etudes. There is no real creativity in democracy.’

“Hence Herzen drew the merciless conclusion that the perishing order must be destroyed to its foundations.

“This destruction had to be universal, it would come in a storm and blood.

“‘Who knows what will come out of this blood? But whatever comes out, it is enough that in this paroxysm of madness, revenge, discord and retribution the world that restricts the new man, and hinders him from living, hinders him from establishing himself in the future, will perish. And that is good, and for that reason let chaos and destruction flourish and may the future be constructed.’”

But then the unexpected: disillusioned with the West, this westernizer par excellence turns in hope to – Russia. “‘The future,’ declared Herzen, not without some pride, ‘belongs to the Russian people, who is called to bring an end to the decrepit and powerless world and clear a place for the new and beautiful [world].’

“In 1851 in a letter to Michelet Herzen wrote: ‘Amidst this chaos, amidst this dying agony and tormented regeneration, amidst this world falling into dust around its cradle, men’s gaze is involuntarily directed towards the East.’”

And when Alexander II emancipated the peasants in 1861, he hailed him in the words of Julian the Apostate to Christ: “You have conquered, Galilaean!”

That which particularly aroused the hopes of Herzen for Russia was the peasant commune or mir. He thought that this was a specifically Russian kind of socialism. As N.O. Lossky writes: “Disappointed with Western Europe and its ‘petty bourgeois’ spirit, he came to the conclusion that the Russian village commune and the artel hold a promise of socialism being realized in Russia rather than in any other country. The village commune meant for him peasant communism [‘The Russian People and Socialism’, 1852, II, 148]. In view of this he came to feel that reconciliation with the Slavophiles was possible. In his

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611 Ivanov, op. cit., pp. 341-342.
612 Ivanov, op. cit., p. 342.
613 And yet he continued his revolutionary agitation against “the Galilaean”, especially in Poland. But when the Polish uprising failed in 1863, subscriptions to Kolokol fell by a factor of six times.
article ‘Moscow Panslavism and Russian Europeanism’ (1851) he wrote: Is not socialism ‘accepted by the Slavophiles as it is by us? It is a bridge on which we can meet and hold hands’ (I, 338).”

Certainly, the Slavophiles agreed with Herzen on the mir. The most famous of them, Alexis Stepanovich Khomiakov, praised “its meetings that passed unanimous decisions and its traditional justice in accordance with custom, conscience, and inner truth.” As Richard Pipes writes, the Slavophiles “became aware of the peasant commune as an institution confined to Russia, and extolled it as proof that the Russian people, allegedly lacking in the acquisitive ‘bourgeois’ impulses of western Europeans, were destined to solve mankind’s social problems. Haxthausen popularised this view in his book, published in 1847. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the Russian mir became in Western Europe the starting-point of several theories concerning communal land-tenure of primitive societies…” Moreover, there seemed to be some prima facie similarity between Herzen’s idea of “Russian socialism” and Khomiakov’s key idea of sobornost’...

Khomiakov had not gone through the tormenting journey from westernism to Orthodoxy that his friend Kireyevsky had undergone, but had remained that rarity in the Russian educated classes – a committed Orthodox who practised his faith openly and without shame while remaining completely au courant with modern developments (he had several technological inventions to his credit). As Roy Campbell writes, “he was as far removed from the ‘ridiculousness of conservatism’ as he was from the revolutionary movement with its ‘immoral and passionate self-reliance’”.

“In contradistinction to Kireyevsky and K. Aksakov,” writes Lossky, “Khomiakov does not slur over the evils of Russian life but severely condemns them. At the beginning of the Crimean War (against Turkey, France and England, 1854-1855) he denounced with the fire and inspiration of

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615 Lossky, op. cit., p. 39.
616 Pipes, op. cit., p. 17. “In 1854, however, this whole interpretation was challenged by Boris Chicherin, a leading spokesman for the so-called Westerner camp, who argued that the peasant commune as then known was neither ancient nor autochthonous in origin, but had been introduced by the Russian monarchy in the middle of the eighteenth century as a means of ensuring the collection of taxes. Until then, according to Chicherin, Russian peasants had held their land by individual households. Subsequent researches blurred the lines of the controversy. Contemporary opinion holds that the commune of the imperial period was indeed a modern institution, as Chicherin claimed, although older than he had believed. It is also widely agreed that pressure by the state and landlord played a major part in its formation. At the same time, economic factors seem also to have affected its evolution to the extent that there exists a demonstrable connection between the availability of land and communal tenure: where land is scarce, the communal form of tenure tends to prevail, but where it is abundant it is replaced by household or even family tenure” (op. cit., pp. 17-18).
a prophet, the Russia of his day (before the great reforms of Alexander II) and called her to repentance.

“Western Europe has failed to embody the Christian ideal of the wholeness of life through overemphasizing logical knowledge and rationality; Russia has so far failed to embody it because complete, all-embracing truth from its very nature develops slowly... Nevertheless Khomiakov believes in the great mission of the Russian people when it comes fully to recognize and express ‘all the spiritual forces and principles that lie at the basis of Holy Orthodox Russia.’ ‘Russia is called to stand at the forefront of universal culture; history gives her the right to do so because of the completeness and many-sidesness of her guiding principles; such a right given to a nation imposes a duty upon every one of its members.’ Russia’s ideal is not to be the richest or most powerful country but to become ‘the most Christian of all human societies’.

“In spite of Khomiakov’s... critical attitude toward Western Europe,... [he] speaks of it in one of his poems as ‘the land of holy miracles’. He was particularly fond of England. The best things in her social and political life were due, he thought, to the right balance being maintained between liberalism and conservatism. The conservatives stood for the organic force of the national life developing from its original sources while the liberals stood for the personal, individual force, for analytical, critical reason. The balance between these two forces in England has never yet been destroyed because ‘every liberal is a bit of a conservative at bottom because he is English’. In England, as in Russia, the people have kept their religion and distrust analytical reason. But Protestant scepticism is undermining the balance between the organic and the analytic forces, and this is a menace to England in the future...”618 In another place, Khomiakov saw the menace to England in her conservatism: “England with her modest science and her serious love of religious truth might give some hope; but – permit the frank expression of my thoughts – England is held by the iron chain of traditional custom.”619

While attached to England, when it came to comparing the Eastern and Western forms of Christianity, Khomiakov was severe in his judgements. Influenced by Elder Ambrose of Optina as Kireyevsky had been by Elder Macarius, he had a deep, unshakeable confidence in the Orthodox Church. “Peter Christoff characterizes Khomiakov’s belief as follows, ‘Although Khomiakov respected and valued much in the Western nations he was absolutely convinced of the superiority of Orthodoxy.’ The Slavic world-view and the Russian peasant commune specifically served as a foundation for a new social order with the emphasis on the Orthodox Church. To refer to Khomiakov’s Christian Orthodox messianism would in no way do him an

618 Lossky, op. cit., p. 40.
injustice. Khomiakov believed that Russia had a mission to bring the whole world under the ‘roof’ of the Orthodox Church.”

“The Church,” he wrote in his famous ecclesiological tract, *The Church is One*, “does not recognise any power over herself other than her own, no other’s court than the court of faith”. The Church is One, declared Khomiakov, and that Church is exclusively the Orthodox Church. “Western Christianity has ceased to be Christianity,” he wrote. “In Romanism [Roman Catholicism] there is not one word, not one action, upon which the seal of spiritual life might lie”. “Both Protestantisms (Roman and German)… already bear death within themselves; it is left to unbelief only to take away the corpses and clean the arena. And all this is the righteous punishment for the crime committed by the ‘West’”.

This sharp rejection of the right of Catholics and Protestants to call themselves members of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church was in itself remarkable in view of the mild ecumenism so prevalent in his time. This anti-ecumenism was shared by some of his educated contemporaries, such as Elder Ambrose and Bishop Ignatius Brianchaninov, but not by many.

However, it was not only the Oneness of the Church that Khomiakov explicited with particular success, but also Her *Catholicity* (*sobornost’* in the Slavonic translation), which he defined as “unity-in-diversity”. “The Church is called Catholic,” writes Khomiakov, “because She belongs to the whole world, and not to some particular locality; because the whole of humanity and the whole of the earth is sanctified by Her, and not some particular people or country; because Her essence consists in the agreement and unity of spirit and life of all Her members who recognize Her throughout the earth.

“It follows from this that when a community is called a local Church, like the Greek, Russian or Syrian, this signifies only the gathering of the members of the Church living in such-and-such a country (Greece, Russia, Syria, etc.), and does not contain within itself the presupposition that one community of Christians could express the teaching of the Church, or give a dogmatic interpretation to the teaching of the Church, without the agreement of the other communities; still less does it presuppose that some community or community pastor could prescribe its or his interpretation to others. The grace of faith is not separate from holiness of life and not one community of Christians or pastor can be recognized as preservers of the whole faith, just as not one pastor or community can be considered representative of the whole

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holiness of the Church.”

The principle of sobornost’, writes Lossky, “implies that the absolute bearer of truth in the Church is not the patriarch who has supreme authority, not the clergy, and not even the ecumenical council, but only the Church as a whole. ‘There have been heretical councils,’ says Khomiakov; ‘for instance, those in which a half-Arian creed was drawn up; externally, they differed in no way from the ecumenical councils – but why were they rejected? Solely because their decisions were not recognized by the whole body of the faithful as the voice of the Church.’ Khomiakov is referring here to the epistle of the Eastern Patriarchs to Pope Pius IX (1848), which says: ‘The invincible truth and immutable certainty of the Christian dogma does not depend upon the hierarchs of the Church; it is preserved by the whole of the people composing the Church which is the body of Christ.’ (A letter to Palmer, October 11, 1850, II, 363).”

“Solely because their decisions were not recognized as the voice of the Church by the entire ecclesial people, but that people and within that world where, in questions of faith, there is no difference between the scholar and the unlearned, cleric and lay person, man and woman, and king and subject… and where… the heresy of a learned bishop is refuted by an illiterate shepherd, so that all might be joined in the free unity of living faith which is the manifestation of the Spirit of God.”

Although councils are not infallible, it is nevertheless in the coming together of the people in councils to decide dogmatic and canonical questions that the Holy Spirit of truth reveals Himself, as in the Seven Ecumenical Councils. And so the Church is Conciliar by essence; Her truth is revealed to a multitude of Her members meeting in council, and not to just one of her members thinking in solitude, as the West supposes - whether that individual is the Roman Pope or a Protestant layman.

It is at this point that the Slavonic translation of the Greek word καθολικός, “Catholic”, by the Slavonic word sobornaia becomes illuminating. For the

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624 Khomiakov, The Church is One, 5. In Grabbe, op. cit., p. 113.
625 Lossky, op. cit., p. 35. The epistle continues: “With us neither Patriarchs nor Councils could ever introduce anything new, because the defender of religion is the very body of the Church, or the people itself, who wanted their religion to remain forever unchanged and in accord with the religion of their Fathers.”
word sobornaia is derived from sobor, meaning a council or a large church with two or three altars. This implies a direct link between the Church's Catholicity and Her Conciliarity. And this in turn suggests that the vital distinguishing quality of Orthodox Catholicity, as opposed to Roman "Catholic" despotism and Protestant "Anti-Catholic" democratism, lies in its Conciliarity.

For it is in Her conciliar life that the Church preserves Her unity in the truth. This the Protestants cannot do, since they make the opinion of every man the supreme arbiter of truth. And the Romanist cannot do it, since they make the opinion of one man the supreme arbiter.

Now, as Fr. Michael Pomazansky points out, "in Greek there is no philological or linguistic connection between the concepts "catholic" and "council" (ecumenical). A council of the Church is called in Greek Συνοδός, and an ecumenical council, οικουμενική Συνοδός". 627

Nevertheless, there is a philological link between the Greek word "Catholic" and the Greek word for a parish church, "Catholicon". 628 In any case, the lack of a philological connection does not mean that there is no deeper semantic and theological connection, a connection seen by the translators Saints Cyril and Methodius when they chose this translation.

Moreover, there is no serious difference between Khomiakov’s definition of Catholicity and Pomazansky’s: "Catholicity refers to the fact that the Church is not limited to space, by earthly boundaries, nor is it limited in time, that is, by the passing of generations into the life beyond the grave. In its catholic fullness, in its catholicity, the Church embraces both the Church of the called and the Church of the chosen, the Church on earth and the Church in Heaven." 629

It also accorded with St. Maximus the Confessor’s definition: "Men, women and children, profoundly divided as to race, nation, language, manner of life, work, knowledge, honour, fortune... are all recreated by the Church in the Spirit. To all equally she communicates a divine aspect. All receive from her a unique nature which cannot be broken asunder, a nature which no longer permits one henceforth to take into consideration the many and profound differences which are their lot. In that way all are raised up and united in a truly catholic manner." 630

628 Fr. Andrew Louth writes: “A parish church was called in Greek the katholikon (the church for all)” (Greek East and Latin West, Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2007, p. 195).
629 Pomazansky, op. cit., p. 49.
630 St. Maximus the Confessor, Mystagogy, I, P.G. 91, 665-668.
Khomiakov wrote: “'Sobor' expresses the idea of a gathering not only in the sense of an actual, visible union of many in a given place, but also in the more general sense of the continual possibility of such a union. In other words: it expresses the idea of unity in multiplicity. Therefore, it is obvious that the word καθόλικος, as understood by the two great servants of the Word of God sent by Greece to the Slavs, was derived not from κατα and ὅλα, but from κατα and ὅλον; for κατα often has the same meaning as our preposition 'according to', for instance: κατα Ματθαων, κατα Μαρκον, 'according to Matthew', 'according to Mark'. The Catholic Church is the Church according to all, or according to the unity of all, καθ’όλον τὸν πιστεύοντον, the Church according to complete unanimity, the Church in which all peoples have disappeared and in which there are no Greeks, no barbarians, no difference of status, no slave-owners, and no slaves; that Church about which the Old Testament prophesied and which was realised in the New Testament - in one word, the Church as it was defined by St. Paul.”

“The Apostolic Church of the ninth century (the time of Saints Cyril and Methodius) is neither the Church καθ’ εκαστὸν (according to the understanding of each) as the Protestants have it, nor the Church κατα τὸν ἐπισκόπον τῆς Ρώμης (according to the understanding of the bishop of Rome) as is the case with the Latins; it is the Church καθ’ ὅλον (according to the understanding of all in their unity), the Church as it existed prior to the Western split and as it still remains among those whom God preserved from the split: for, I repeat, this split is a heresy against the dogma of the unity of the Church.”

The Catholicity of the Orthodox Church was shared, according to Khomiakov, neither by the Roman Church, which sacrificed diversity for the sake of unity, nor by Protestantism, which sacrificed unity for diversity. Instead of Orthodox Catholicity, which belonged only to the Orthodox Church, the Papists had Romanism, that is, mechanical obedience to the Bishop of Rome and his ex cathedra definitions of truth. This guaranteed external unity (for a time), but no inner consensus. And so it violated the truth of the Church Herself, Her Catholicity.

Moreover, Romanism contains the seeds of Protestantism insofar as the Pope was the first protester against the inner Catholicity of the Church. This Catholicity was expressed especially in the Seven Ecumenical Councils, which were accepted in both East and West but which the Romanists later replaced with the “infallibility” of the Pope. As Khomiakov put it: "Having appropriated the right of independently deciding a dogmatic question within the area of the Ecumenical Church, private opinion carried within itself the

seed of the growth and legitimization of Protestantism, that is, of free investigation torn from the living tradition of unity based on mutual love.\textsuperscript{633} The truth is given, not to individuals as such, but to the Church, - “the pillar and ground of the truth” (I Timothy 3.15), in St. Paul’s words, - understood as a conciliar organism united in freedom and love. Thus “clarity of understanding is placed in dependence on the moral law. The communion of love is not only useful, but completely necessary for the attainment of the truth, and the attainment of the truth is based on it and is impossible without it. The truth, being unattainable for individualistic thought, is accessible only to the coming together of thoughts bound by love.”\textsuperscript{634}

We see, then, that Khomiakov’s conception of sobornost’ is theological, and cannot be identified with Herzen’s idea of the mir as the embryo of “Russian socialism”. However, some have accused him of just such a degradation of a theological mystery into a secular ideal, of confusing sobornost’ with democracy, the spiritual warmth of communion in Christ with the natural warmth of a family or society.

It is certainly true to say that for Khomiakov, as for the other early Slavophiles, there was a close connection between his teaching on the Church and his teaching on the peasant commune. Indeed, as Fr. Georges Florovsky writes, “the hidden meaning of the Slavophile teaching becomes completely clear only when we divine that both these, at first sight discordant teachings coincide completely, in that what the commune should be in the sphere of external inter-human relationships, in the sphere of ‘earthly’ life, is what the Church is in the order of the spiritual life of the person. And the other way round: the commune is that form of social existence which is realized as a result of the application of the principles of Orthodox ecclesiasticism to the question of social inter-relations.”\textsuperscript{635}

“One could even say,” writes S. Khoruzhij, “that the social aspect, the interpretation of sobornost’ as the principle of social existence, in time came to occupy centre stage, leaving the original ecclesiological meaning of the concept in the background and almost forgotten. Here we see a fairly systematic evolution. From the beginning there lived in the minds of the early Slavophiles an idea of the communal ideal expressing the harmonious management of social life. They were in agreement in considering the closest historical approximation to it the village commune, the peasant mir, and, correspondingly, the ideal was usually called ‘communality’ or ‘communal unity’, being defined as ‘unity which consists in… the concept of a natural and moral brotherhood and inner justice’ (I, 99). It is a banal tradition to


\textsuperscript{635} Florovsky, “Vechnoe i prekhodiaschee v uchenii russkih slavianofilov” (The eternal and the passing in the teaching of the Russian Slavophiles”), in \textit{Vera i Kul’tura}, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 93.
reproach the Slavophiles for idealizing the communal set-up and Russian history. For all its triteness, the reproach is just; although Khomiakov tried to moderate this tendency (especially after the Crimean war), he never managed to measure with one measure and judge with an equal judgement home and abroad, Russia and the West. But we must point something else out here. However embellished were his descriptions of the sources and bases of Russian history and statehood, embellishment never became deification, nor was communality identified with sobornost’. They were two different principles, and Khomiakov did not think of merging them into each other, bringing a human, secular matter to the level of the Theandric and grace-filled. He saw an impassible boundary between the one and the other.

“However, it was not long before people with frightening ease lost the ability to discern this boundary – and then learned to deny it. Sobornost’ was inexorably, with greater and greater strength and openness, brought down to earth, deprived of its grace-filled content and reduced to a simple social and organic principle: to a certain degree this process was the very essence of the ideological evolution of Slavophilism, from its earlier to its later variants, and from it to the conservatism of the last reign, to post-revolutionary Eurasianism and still further. In this process of the degeneration of the path of sobornost’ it crossed paths with the socialist idea: as has been pointed out more than once, ‘in this attraction to the ideal of… the commune it is not difficult to discern a subconscious and erroneous thirst for sobornost’ [Florovsky]. Therefore in the same descending line we find in the end all the communard variations on the theme of collectivisation, Soviet patriotism and even National Bolshevism... At the same time as grace freedom is cast out – and, as a result, sobornost’ completely lost its spiritual nature, being turned into the regulative principle either of mechanical statehood, or of the organic life of the primitive community. The link with the Church, churchness, was for the most part preserved externally. However, it goes without saying that the very idea of the Church could here degenerate as much as the idea of sobornost’. In the first case the Church was likened to the state to the point of being indistinguishable from it, and in the second it was a primitively pagan institution for the sanctification of life and manners. They claimed to be preserving churchness, while rejecting the principle of freedom – and this was spiritual blindness. ‘Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom’, says Paul, and Orthodoxy reveals his covenant through the ascetic principle of synergy: the grace of the Holy Spirit lives in the Church, but each member of the Church acquires it by his personal spiritual activity, to the realization of his own personal liberty. And only in ‘the agreement of personal liberties’ (Khomiakov) is the grace-filled Body of the Lord put together.”

Russia and Europe: (4) Kireyevsky

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

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

At this stage the full uniqueness and saving truth of Orthodoxy was perhaps not yet fully revealed to Kireyevsky. The decisive moment in his conversion, as Nina Lazareva writes, was his marriage to Natalya Petrovna Arbeneva in 1834: “The beginning of his family life was for Ivan Vasilievich also the beginning of the transformation of his inner world, the beginning of his coming out of that dead-end in which his former rationalistic world-view had led him. The difference between the whole structure of Natalya Petrovna’s life, educated as she had been in the rules of strict piety, and that of Ivan Vasilievich, who had passed his days and nights in tobacco-filled rooms reading and discussing the latest philosophical works, could not fail to wound both of them.

“In the note written by A.I. Koshelev from the words of N.P. Kireyevsky and entitled ‘The Story of Ivan Vasilievich’s Conversion’, we read: ‘In the first

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“This classical world of ancient paganism, which did not enter into the inheritance of Russia, essentially constitutes the triumph of the formal reason of man over everything that is inside and within him – pure, naked reason, based on itself, recognizing nothing higher than or outside itself and appearing in two forms – the form of formal abstraction and the form of abstract sensuality. Classicism’s influence on European education had to correspond to this same character.

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

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

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

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

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

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

“But this society was not autonomous and could not order itself, or itself acquire laws for itself, because it was not separated from other similar communities that were ruled by uniform custom. The innumerable multitude of these small communes, which constituted Russia, was all covered with a net of churches, monasteries and the remote dwellings of hermits, whence there spread everywhere identical concepts of the relationship between social
matters and personal matters. These concepts little by little were bound to pass over into a general conviction, conviction – into custom, whose place was taken by law, which established throughout the whole space of the lands subject to our Church one thought, one point of view, one aim, one order of life. This universal uniformity of custom was probably one of the reasons for its amazing strength, which has preserved its living remnants even to our time, in spite of all the opposition of destructive influences which, in the course of two hundred years, strove to introduce new principles in their place.

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

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

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“Only one serious thing was left to man, and that was industry. For him the reality of being survived only in his physical person. Industry rules the world without faith or poetry. In our times it unites and divides people. It determines one’s fatherland, it delineates classes, it lies at the base of state structures, it moves nations, it declares war, makes peace, changes mores, gives direction to science, and determines the character of culture. Men bow down before it and erect temples to it. It is the real deity in which people sincerely believe and to which they submit. Unselfish activity has become inconceivable; it has acquires the same significance in the contemporary world as chivalry had in the time of Cervantes.”640

This long and tragic development had its roots, according to Kireyevsky, in the falling away of the Roman Church. "In the ninth century the western Church showed within itself the inevitable seed of the Reformation, which placed this same Church before the judgement seat of the same logical reason which the Roman Church had itself exalted... A thinking man could already see Luther behind Pope Nicolas I just as... a thinking man of the 16th century could foresee behind Luther the coming of 19th century liberal Protestantism..."641

According to Kireyevsky, just as in a marriage separation or divorce takes place when one partner asserts his or her self against the other, so in the Church schisms and heresies take place when one party asserts itself over against Catholic unity. In the early, undivided Church “each patriarchate, each tribe, each country in the Christian world preserved its own characteristic features, while at the same time participating in the common unity of the whole Church.” 642

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

641 Kireyevsky, quoted by Fr. Alexey Young, A Man is His Faith: Ivan Kireyevsky and Orthodox Christianity, London: St. George Information Service, 1980.
642 Kireyevsky, in Young, op. cit.
in a different, particularist, anti-Catholic sense – that is, “Roman” as opposed to “Greek”, “the Roman Church” as opposed to “the Greek Church”, “the Roman Faith” as opposed to, and something different from and inherently superior to, “the Greek Church”. From this time that the Roman Church ceased to be a part of the Catholic Church, having trampled on the dogma of Catholicity. Instead she became the anti-Catholic, or Romanist, or Latin, or Papist church.

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

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

**Russia and Europe: (5) Dostoyevsky**

Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoyevsky had, like Gogol, been a protégé of Belinsky. But, again like Gogol, he had broken with Belinsky, because of the latter’s atheism and readiness to subordinate art to propaganda. However, he did not decisively cast off his socialist acquaintances, and his return to conscious Christianity was correspondingly tortuous, slow and punctuated by harsh lessons from life.

Dostoyevsky’s Christian critique of socialism, though not yet fully articulate in the 1840s, had already begun to reveal itself in his relations with Belinsky, of whom he wrote much later: “Treasuring above all reason, science and realism, at the same time he comprehended more keenly than anyone that reason, science and realism alone can merely produce the ant’s nest, and not social ‘harmony’ within which man can organize his life. He knew that

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644 Monk Damascene Christenson, *Not of this World: The Life and Teaching of Fr. Seraphim Rose*, Forestville, Ca.: Fr. Seraphim Rose Foundation, 1993, pp. 589-590
moral principles are the basis of all things. He believed, to the degree of
delusion and without any reflex, in the new moral foundations of socialism
(which, however, up to the present have revealed nothing but abominable
perversions of nature and common sense). Here was nothing but rapture. Still,
as a socialist he had to destroy Christianity in the first place. He knew that the
revolution must necessarily begin with atheism. He had to dethrone that
religion whence the moral foundations of the society rejected by him had
sprung up. Family, property, personal moral responsibility – these he denied
radically. (I may observe that, even as Herzen, he was also a good husband
and father.) Doubtless, he understood that by denying the moral
responsibility of man, he thereby denied also his freedom; yet, he believed
with all his being (much more blindly than Herzen, who, at the end, it seems,
began to doubt) that socialism not only does not destroy the freedom of man,
but, on the contrary, restores it in a form of unheard-of majesty, only on a new
and adamantine foundation.

“\At this juncture, however, there remained the radiant personality of
Christ Himself to contend with, which was the most difficult problem. As a
socialist, he was duty bound to destroy the teaching of Christ, to call it
fallacious and ignorant philanthropy, doomed by modern science and
economic tenets. Even so, there remained the beatific image of the God-man,
its moral inaccessibility, its wonderful and miraculous beauty. But in his
incessant, unquenchable transport, Belinsky did not stop even before this
insurmountable obstacle, as did Renan, who proclaimed in his \Vie de Jésus\ – a
book permeated with incredulity – that Christ nevertheless is the ideal of
human beauty, an inaccessible type which cannot be repeated even in the
future.

“\‘But do you know,’ he screamed one evening (sometimes in a state of
great excitement he used to scream), ‘do you know that it is impossible to
charge man with sins, to burden him with debts and turning the other cheek,
when society is organized so meanly that man cannot help but perpetrate
villainies; when, economically, he has been brought to villainy, and that it is
silly and cruel to demand from man that which, by the very laws of nature, he
is impotent to perform even if he wished to…?’

“\That evening we were not alone: there was present one of Belinsky’s
friends whom he respected very much and obeyed in many ways. Also
present was an author, quite young, who later gained prominence in
literature [Dostoyevsky].

“\‘I am even touched to look at him,’ said Belinsky, suddenly interrupting
his furious exclamations, turning to his friend and pointing at me. ‘Every time
I mention Christ his face changes expression, as if he were ready to start
weeping… But, believe me, naïve man,’ he jumped at me again, ‘believe me
that your Christ, if He were born in our time, would be a most imperceptible
and ordinary man; in the presence of contemporary science and contemporary propellers of mankind, He would be effaced!’"

The essence of “The Parable of the Grand Inquisitor” is in that scene, with Belinsky in the role of Inquisitor and Dostoyevsky - in that of the silent Christ.

However, Dostoyevsky was not yet ready to break decisively with the socialist camp. As he wrote: “All these new ideas of those days were very appealing to us in Petersburg; they seemed holy in the highest degree and moral, and – most important of all – cosmopolitan, the future law of all mankind in its totality. Even long before the Paris revolution of ’48 we fell under the fascinating influence of these ideas. Already in ’46 I had been initiated by Belinsky into the whole truth of that future ‘regenerated world’ and into the whole holiness of the forthcoming communist society. All these convictions about the immorality of the very foundations (Christian) of modern society, the immorality of religion, family, right of property; all these ideas about the elimination of nationalities in the name of universal brotherhood of men, about the contempt for one’s native country as an obstacle to universal progress, and so on and so forth – all these constituted such influences as we were unable to overcome and which, contrariwise, swayed our hearts and minds in the name of some magnanimity. At any rate, the theme seemed lofty and far above the level of the then prevailing conceptions, and it was precisely this that was tempting…

“The human mind, once having rejected Christ, may attain extraordinary results. This is an axiom. Europe, in the persons of her highest intellectual representatives, renounces Christ, while we, as is known, are obligated to imitate Europe…”

The revolution of 1848 in Europe, writes V.F. Ivanov, “gave wings of hope to all the antichristian and destructive forces.

“The profound thinker V.A. Zhukovsky, in January, 1848, in an excerpt from a letter, What is Going to Happen, prophetically foretold the bloody chaos of which we are the witnesses in our own days.

“We live,’ wrote Zhukovsky, ‘on the crater of a volcano which not long ago was giving out fire, which calmed down and which is now again preparing to throw up. Its first lava flow has not yet cooled, and already in its depths a new one is bubbling, and the thunder of stones flying out of the abyss is announcing that it will soon pour out. One revolution has ended, and another stepping on its toes, and what is remarkable is that the course of the last is observing the same order as did the first, in spite of the difference in their characters. The two are similar in their first manifestations, and now, as

646 Dostoyevsky, The Diary of a Writer, 1873, pp. 148-149, 151.
then, they are beginning with a shaking of the main foundation of order: religion. But now they are doing it in a bolder way and on a broader scale. Then they attack the faith obliquely, preaching tolerance, but now they are directly attacking every faith and blatantly preaching atheism; then they were secretly undermining Christianity, apparently arming themselves against the abuses of Church authorities, but now they are yelling from the roots that both Christianity and the Church and the Church authorities and every authority is nothing other than abuse. What is the aim of the present reformers? - I am speaking about those who sincerely desire what is better, sincerely believe in the reality and beneficence of their speculations - what is the aim of the present reformers?, who are entering on the same path which their predecessors trod, whose end we saw with shuddering, knowing that the desired improvement would never be found there. What is the aim of the present reformers? They themselves do not clearly see it. It is very probable that many of them are deceiving themselves, and, while going forward with banners on which there shine the words of our age: forward, freedom, equality, humanity, they themselves are sure that their path leads straight to the promised land. And perhaps it is fated for them, as for many others of their predecessors, to shudder on the edge or on the bottom of this abyss, which will soon open up under their feet.

""Behind these preachers of education and progress, who are acting openly, others are acting in secret, who are not blinded, who have a practical aim which they see clearly in front of them: for them it is no longer a matter of political transformation, or of the destruction of privileges and age-old historical formations (that was already accomplished in the first revolution), but simply of the annihilation of the difference between yours and mine, or, more correctly, of turning yours into mine.""

The first revolutionary movement in Russia after 1848 was the abortive “Petrashevtsy” rebellion of 1849, named after its leader, Michael Petrashevsky. He expressed his “realist” views with typically Russian explicitness: "[Naturalism] means a science which holds that by thought alone, without the help of tradition, revelation, or divine intervention, man can achieve in real life a state of permanent happiness through the total and independent development of all his natural faculties. In the lower phases of its evolution, naturalism considers the appearance of the divine element in positive religions to be a falsehood, the result of human rather than divine action. In its further evolution, this science - having absorbed pantheism and materialism - conceives divinity as the supreme and all-embracing expression of human understanding, moves towards atheism, and finally becomes transformed into anthropotheism - the science that proclaims that the only supreme being is man himself as a part of nature. At this stage of its rational evolution, naturalism considers the universal fact of the recognition of God in positive religions to be a result of man's deification of his own personality and

647 Ivanov, op. cit., pp. 337-338.
the universal laws of his intellect; it considers all religions that reflected the historical evolution of mankind to be a gradual preparation for anthropotheism, or - in other words - total self-knowledge and awareness of the vital laws of nature."\textsuperscript{648}

The Petrashevtsy especially admired Fourier; and at a meeting on his birthday D.D. Akhsharumov declared: “We venerate his memory because he showed us the path we must follow, he revealed the source of wealth, of happiness. Today is the first banquet of the Fourierists in Russia, and we are all here: ten people, not much more! Everything begins from something small and grows into something big. Our aim is to destroy the capitals and cities and use all their materials for other buildings, and turn the whole of this life of torments, woes, poverty and shame into a life that is luxurious, elegant, full of joy, wealth and happiness, and cover the whole poor land with palaces and fruits and redecorate them in flowers. We here, in our country, will begin its transfiguration, and the whole land will finish it. Soon the human race will be delivered from intolerable sufferings…”\textsuperscript{649}

One member of the circle, the proud, silent and handsome Nikolai Speshnev, considered all distinctions between beauty and ugliness, good and evil to be “a matter of taste”. He did not believe in the transformation of Russia from the top, but in a socialist revolution from below, to which end only verbal propaganda was necessary. “I intend to use it, without the slightest shame or conscience, to propagandise socialism, atheism, terrorism, and all that is good.”\textsuperscript{650} Speshnev formed his own “Russian Society”, which was joined by Dostoyevsky. He called him his “Mephistopheles”, and was fascinated by him. But he was never wholly convinced by him,…

However, in 1849 the Petrashevtsy, including Dostoyevsky, were arrested – Dostoeyevsky, for reading Belinsky’s \textit{Letter to Gogol} in public. They were imprisoned in the Peter and Paul fortress, and then, after a mock-execution, sent to four years’ hard labour in Siberia. The experience – recounted in \textit{The House of the Dead} – brought Dostoyevsky to repentance.

As he wrote to his brother: “In my absolute spiritual solitude, I re-examined the whole of my former life. I scrutinized every minute detail. I thought very carefully about my past. Alone as I was, I judged myself harshly, without mercy. Sometimes I even thanked my fate because it had sent me into solitude, for without it, this new judgement of myself would never have

\textsuperscript{649} Akhsharumov, in Ivanov, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 323-324.
happened...”  

As St. Ambrose of Optina said: “This is a man who repents!”  

Then, in Siberia, by being “personally classed with villains”, he came to know the Russian people as they really were for the first time. And through them, as he wrote later, “I again received into my soul Christ, Who had been revealed to me in my parents’ home and Whom I was about to lose when, on my part, I transformed myself into a ‘European liberal’.”

“The moral idea is Christ,” wrote Dostoyevsky. “In the West, Christ has been distorted and diminished. It is the kingdom of the Antichrist. We have Orthodoxy. As a consequence, we are the bearers of a clear understanding of Christ and a new idea for the resurrection of the world... If faith and Orthodoxy were shaken in the people, then they would begin to disintegrate... The whole matter lies in the question: can one believe, being civilized, that is, a European, that is, believe absolutely in the Divinity of the Son of God, Jesus Christ? (for all faith consists in this)... You see: either everything is contained in faith or nothing is: we recognize the importance of the world through Orthodoxy. And the whole question is: can one believe in Orthodoxy? If one can, then everything is saved: if not, then better to burn... But if Orthodoxy is impossible for the enlightened man, then... all this is hocus-pocus and Russia’s whole strength is provisional... It is possible to believe seriously and in earnest. Here is everything, the burden of life for the Russian people and their entire mission and existence to come...”

And so Dostoyevsky became, after Pushkin and Gogol, the third great Russian writer to be rescued from European atheism and converted to “the Russian God”, Jesus Christ... Like the other Slavophiles, Dostoyevsky saw the beginning of the European disease in the reforms of Peter the Great. Unlike them, however, he came to believe that this turning to the West was providential – and not only in that enabled Russians to acquire European arts and sciences. “Throughout these hundred and fifty years after Peter we have done nothing but live through a communion with all human civilization, affiliating ourselves with their history and their ideals. We have learned, and trained ourselves, to love the French, the Germans and everybody else, as if they were our brethren – notwithstanding the fact that they never liked us and made up their minds never to like us. However, this was the essence of our reform – the whole Peter cause; we have derived from it, during that century and a half, an expansion of our view, which, perhaps, was unprecedented and cannot be traced in any other nation, whether in the ancient or the new world. The pre-Peter Russia was active and solid, although

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651 Dostoyevsky, in Kjetsaa, op. cit., p. 105.  
653 Dostoyevsky, The Diary of a Writer, 1880.  
politically she was slow to form herself; she had evolved unity within herself and she had been ready to consolidate her border regions. And she had tacitly comprehended that she bore within herself a treasure which was no longer existent anywhere else – Orthodoxy; that she was the conservatrix of Christ’s truth, genuine truth – the true image of Christ which had been dimmed in all other religions and in all other nations. This treasure, this eternal truth inherent in Russia and of which she had become the custodian, according to the view of the best Russians of those days, as it were, relieved their conscience of the duty of any other enlightenment. Moreover, in Moscow the conception had been formed that any closer intercourse with Europe might even exercise a harmful and corrupt influence upon the Russian mind and the Russian idea; that it might distort Orthodoxy itself and lead Russia along the path to perdition ‘much in the same way as all other peoples’. Thus ancient Russia, in her isolation, was getting ready to be unjust – unjust to mankind, having taken the resolution to preserve passively her treasure, her Orthodoxy, for herself, to seclude herself from Europe – that is, mankind – much as our schismatics who refuse to eat with you from the same dish and who believe it to be a holy practice that everyone should have his own cup and spoon. This is a correct simile because prior to Peter’s advent, there had developed in Russia almost precisely this kind of political and spiritual relation with Europe. With Peter’s reform there ensued an unparalleled broadening of the view, and herein – I repeat – is Peter’s whole exploit. This is also that very treasure about which I spoke in one of the preceding issues of the Diary – a treasure which we, the upper cultured Russian stratum, are bringing to the people after our century-and-a-half absence from Russia, and which the people, after we ourselves shall have bowed before their truth, must accept from us sine qua non, ‘without which the fusion of both strata would prove impossible and everything would come to ruin.’ Now, what is this ‘expansion of the view’, what does it consist of, and what does it signify? Properly speaking, this is not enlightenment, nor is it science; nor is it a betrayal of the popular Russian moral principles for the sake of European civilization. No, this is precisely something inherent only in the Russian people, since nowhere and at no time has there ever been such a reform. This is actually, and in truth, almost our brotherly fifty-year-long living experience of our intercourse with them. This is our urge to render universal service to humanity, sometimes even to the detriment of our own momentous and immediate interests. This is our reconciliation with their civilizations; cognition and excuse of their ideals even though these be in discord with ours; this is our acquired faculty of discovering and revealing in each one of the European civilizations – or, more correctly, in each of the European individualities – the truth contained in it, even though there be much with which it would be impossible to agree. Finally, this is the longing, above all, to be just and to seek nothing but truth. Briefly, this is, perhaps, the beginning of that active application of our treasure – of Orthodoxy – to the universal service of mankind to which Orthodoxy is designated and which, in fact, constitutes its essence. Thus, through Peter’s reform our former idea – the Russian Moscow idea – was
broadened and its conception was magnified and strengthened. Thereby we got to understand our universal mission, our individuality and our role in humankind; at the same time we could not help but comprehend that this mission and role do not resemble those of other nations since, there, every national individuality lives solely for, and within, itself. We, on the other hand, will begin – now that the hour has come – precisely with becoming servants to all nations, for the sake of general pacification. And in this there is nothing disgraceful; on the contrary, therein is our grandeur because this leads to the ultimate unity of mankind. He who wishes to be first in the Kingdom of God must become a servant to everybody. This is how I understand the Russian mission in its ideal.”

The Slavophiles on the Autocracy

We have discussed Orthodoxy and Nationhood, but said little about the central element in the tripartite formula of Nicholas I’s reign: Autocracy, which was coming more and more under attack from the westerners as the century wore on. With the exception of Kireyevsky, the Slavophiles had little to say about Autocracy. As Lev Tikhomirov writes, “the greatest merit of the Slavophiles consisted not so much in their working out of a political teaching, as in establishing the social and psychological bases of public life.” They were not opposed to the autocracy; but the emphasis of their thought, especially Khomiakov’s, was on the people rather than on the autocracy.

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

656 Tikhomirov, op. cit., p. 310.
657 Khomiakov, Suschnost’ zapadnogo khristianstva (The Essence of Western Christianity), Montreal, 1974 (in Russian). Florovsky writes that the Slavophiles “opposed their ‘socialism’ to the statism of West European thought, both in its absolutist-monarchist and in its constitutional-democratic varieties” (“The Eternal and the Passing in the Teaching of the Russian Slavophiles”, op. cit., p. 95).
Here again we see the myth of an early pact between the Tsar and the people. For this was what the Slavophiles were above all concerned to emphasize: that the Tsar is not separated from his people, that Tsar and people form one harmonious whole and have a single ideal.

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

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

This estimate is probably least true in relation to Kireyevsky, although of all the Slavophiles he had the most problems with the Tsarist censor. At one point he was required to give an assurance to the minister of popular enlightenment that in his thinking he did not “separate the Tsar from Russia”. Offended by the very suggestion, Kireyevsky proceeded to give one of the earliest, and, with Metropolitan Philaret’s writings on the subject, one of the best justifications of the Autocracy in post-Petrine Russian history.

He began from the fact that “the Russian man loves his Tsar. This reality cannot be doubted, because everyone can see and feel it. But love for the Tsar, like every love, can be true and false, good and bad – I am not speaking about feigned love. False love is that which loves in the Tsar only one’s advantage;

658 Lossky, op. cit., pp. 35-36.
this love is base, harmful and, in dangerous moments, can turn to treachery. True love for the Tsar is united in one indivisible feeling with love for the Fatherland, for lawfulness and for the Holy Orthodox Church. Therefore this love can be magnanimous. And how can one separate in this matter love for the Tsar from the law, the Fatherland and the Church? The law is the will of the Tsar, proclaimed before the whole people; the Fatherland is the best love of his heart; the Holy Orthodox Church is his highest link with the people, it is the most essential basis of his power, the reason for the people’s trust in him, the combination of his conscience with the Fatherland, the living junction of the mutual sympathy of the Tsar and the people, the basis of their common prosperity, the source of the blessing of God on him and on the Fatherland.

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

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

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

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

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660 Kireyevsky, “Ob otnoshenii k tsarskoj vlasti” (on the relationship to Tsarist power), in Razum na puti k istine, op.cit., pp. 51-53, 62.
correct self-knowledge and sincerely converts to the faith of the people, as we hope; or the people sees that it is being deceived, as we fear.

“But what are the normal, desirable relations between the Church and the State? The state must not agree with the Church so as to search out and persecute heretics and force them to believe (this is contrary to the spirit of Christianity and has a counter-productive effect, and harms the state itself almost as much as the Church); but it must agree with the Church so as to place as the main purpose of its existence to be penetrated constantly, more and more, with the spirit of the Church and not only not look on the Church as a means to its own most fitting existence, but, on the contrary, see in its own existence only a means for the fullest and most fitting installation of the Church of God on earth.

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

Another Russian supporter of Orthodoxy, Autocracy and Nationality who is sometimes classified as a Slavophile was the poet and diplomat Fyodor Ivanovich Tiutchev. Already at the age of 19, in his poem, On Pushkin’s Ode on Freedom, he had rebuked his fellow-poet for disturbing the hearts of the citizens by his call to freedom. While sharing the world-view of the Slavophiles, he took their sympathies and antipathies to their logical conclusions.

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662 As Demetrius Merezhkovsky expressed it, Tiutchev put bones into the soft body of Slavophilism, crossed its ‘t’s and dotted its ‘i’s (Dve tajny russkoj poezii. Nekrasov i Tiutchev (Two Mysteries of Russian Poetry. Nekrasov and Tiutchev), St. Petersburg, 1915 (in Russian)).
Thus he posed the contrast between Russia and the West as a struggle between Christ and Antichrist. “The supreme power of the people,” he wrote, “is in essence an antichristian idea.” Popular power and Tsarist power mutually exclude each other. So it was not a question of two cultures living side by side with each other and complementing each other in some sense. No: it was a fight to the death between the Russian idea and the European idea, between the Rome of the Papacy and the political and social structures it evolved, and the Third Rome of the Orthodox Tsar...

Tiutchev believed in the Empire, whose soul was the Orthodox Church and whose body was the Slavic race. More particularly, he believed in “the Great Greco-Russian Eastern Empire”, whose destiny was to unite the two halves of Europe under the Russian Emperor, with some Austrian lands going to Russia. There would be an Orthodox Pope in Rome and an Orthodox Patriarch in Constantinople. The Empire was a principle, and so indivisible. Western history had been a struggle between the schismatic Roman papacy and the usurper-empire of Charlemagne and his successors. This struggle “ended for the one in the Reformation, i.e. the denial of the Church, and for the other in the Revolution, i.e. the denial of the Empire”. The struggle between Russia and Napoleon had been the struggle “between the lawful Empire and the crowned Revolution”.663

As a diplomat Tiutchev knew much about the threat to the Orthodox autocracy posed by the 1848 revolution under the new Napoleon in Europe; and in April, 1848, just as this revolution was gathering pace, he wrote: “There have long been only two real powers in Europe – the revolution and Russia. These two powers are now opposed to each other, and perhaps tomorrow they will enter into conflict. Between them there can be no negotiations, no treaties; the existence of the one is equivalent to the death of the other! On the outcome of this struggle that has arisen between them, the greatest struggle that the world has ever seen, the whole political and religious future of mankind will depend for many centuries.

“The fact of this rivalry is now being revealed everywhere. In spite of that, the understanding of our age, deadened by false wisdom, is such that the present generation, faced with a similar huge fact, is far from completely comprehending its true significance and has not evaluated its real causes.

“Up to now they have sought for its explanation in the purely political sphere; they have tried to interpret by a distinction of concepts on the exclusively human plane. In fact, the quarrel between the revolution and Russia depends on deeper causes. They can be defined in two words.

“Russia is first of all the Christian Empire; the Russian people is Christian not only by virtue of the Orthodoxy of its convictions, but also thanks to

something more in the realm of feelings than convictions. It is Christian by virtue of that capacity for self-denial and self-sacrifice which constitutes as it were the basis of her moral nature. The revolution is first of all the enemy of Christianity! Antichristian feeling is the soul of the revolution: it is its special, distinguishing feature. Those changes in form to which it has been subjected, those slogans which it has adopted in turn, everything, even its violence and crimes have been secondary and accidental. But the one thing in it that is not accidental is precisely the antichristian feeling that inspires it, it is that (it is impossible not to be convinced of this) that has acquired for it this threatening dominance over the world. He who does not understand this is no more than a blind man present at a spectacle that the world presents to him.

“The human I, wishing to depend only on itself, not recognising and not accepting any other law besides its own will – in a word, the human I, taking the place of God, - does not, of course, constitute something new among men. But such has it become when raised to the status of a political and social right, and when it strives, by virtue of this right, to rule society. This is the new phenomenon which acquired the name of the French revolution in 1789.

“Since that time, in spite of all its permutations, the revolution has remained true to its nature, and perhaps never in the whole course of this development has it recognized itself as so of one piece, so sincerely antichristian as at the present moment, when it has ascribed to itself the banner of Christianity: ‘brotherhood’. In the name of this we can even suppose that it has attained its apogee. And truly, if we listen to those naively blasphemous big words which have become, so to speak, the official language of the present age, then will not everyone think that the new French republic was brought into the world only in order to fulfil the Gospel law? It was precisely this calling that the forces created by the revolution ascribed to themselves – with the exception, however, of that change which the revolution considered it necessary to produce, when it intended to replace the feeling of humility and self-denial, which constitutes the basis of Christianity, with the spirit of pride and haughtiness, free and voluntary good works with compulsory good works. And instead of brotherhood preached and accepted in the name of God, it intended to establish a brotherhood imposed by fear on the people-master. With the exception of these differences, its dominance really promises to turn into the Kingdom of Christ!

“And nobody should be misled by this despicable good will which the new powers are showing to the Catholic Church and her servers. It is almost the most important sign of the real feeling of the revolution, and the surest proof of the position of complete power that it has attained. And truly, why should the revolution show itself as hostile to the clergy and Christian priests who not only submit to it, but accept and recognize it, who, in order to propitiate it, glorify all its excesses and, without knowing it themselves, become partakers in all its unrighteousness? If even similar behaviour were founded on
calculation alone, this calculation would be apostasy; but if conviction is added to it, then this is already more than apostasy.

“However, we can foresee that there will be no lack of persecutions, too. On that day when concessions have reached their extreme extent, the catholic church will consider it necessary to display resistance, and it will turn out that she will be able to display resistance only by going back to martyrdom. We can fully rely on the revolution: it will remain in all respects faithful to itself and consistent to the end!

“The February explosion did the world a great service in overthrowing the pompous scaffolding of errors hiding reality. The less penetrating minds have probably now understood that the history of Europe in the course of the last thirty three years was nothing other than a continuous mystification. And indeed with what inexorably light has the whole of this past, so recent and already so distant from us, been lit up? Who, for example, will now not recognize what a laughable pretension was expressed in that wisdom of our age which naively imagined that it had succeeded in suppressing the revolution with constitutional incantations, muzzling its terrible energy by means of a formula of lawfulness? After all that has happened, who can still doubt that from the moment when the revolutionary principle penetrated into the blood of society, all these concessions, all these reconciling formulas are nothing other than drugs which can, perhaps, put to sleep the sick man for a time, but are not able to hinder the further development of the illness itself…”664

In spite of his fervent support for the Autocracy, Tiutchev criticised the Tsarist imposition of censorship. In 1857 he wrote: “It is impossible to impose on minds an absolute and too prolonged restriction and yoke without substantial harm for the social organism…. Even the authorities themselves in the course of time are unable to avoid the disadvantages of such a system. Around the sphere in which they are present there is formed a desert and a huge mental emptiness, and governmental thought, not meeting from outside itself either control or guidance or even the slightest point of support, ends by weakening under its own weight even before it destined to fall under the blows of events.”665

“Why,” he wrote to his daughter Anna in 1872, “can we oppose to harmful theories and destructive tendencies nothing except material suppression? Into what has the true principle of conservatism been transformed with us? Why has our soul become so horribly stale? If the authorities because of an insufficiency of principles and moral convictions pass to measures of material oppression, it is thereby being turned into the most terrible helper of denial

and revolutionary overthrow, but it will begin to understand this only when the evil is already incorrigible.”

Other Slavophiles, such as the Aksakov brothers, similarly combined a belief in the autocracy and the imperial mission of Russia with a belief in civil liberties. This sometimes brought them into conflict with Tsar Nicholas.

Thus in his memorandum, The Eastern Question (February, 1854), Constantine Aksakov hoped that the Tsar would promote “an alliance of all Slavs under the supreme patronage of the Russian Tsar... Galicia and the whole Slavonic world will breathe more easily under the patronage of Russia once she finally fulfils her Christian and fraternal duty.”

Konstantin’s brother Ivan was somewhat more cautious. He recognized that “The Catholicism of Bohemia and Poland constitutes a hostile and alien element” and in any case “the greater part of these Slavic peoples are already infected by the influence of Western liberalism which is contrary to the spirit of the Russian people and which can never be grafted onto it.”666

So Ivan was less “Pan-Slavist” than Constantine...

However, both brothers believed in the spiritual freedom of the individual within the autocratic state. Thus, as N. Lossky writes, “on the accession of Alexander II to the throne in 1855 [Constantine] Aksakov submitted to him, through Count Bludov, a report ‘On the Inner Condition of Russia’. In it he reproached the Government for suppressing the people’s moral freedom and following the path of despotism, which has led to the nation’s moral degradation. He pointed out that this might popularise the idea of political freedom and create a striving to attain it by revolutionary means. To avoid these dangers he advised the Tsars to allow freedom of thought and of speech and to re-establish the practice of calling Zemski Sobors.”667

There was some truth in this. The government’s oppressive measures could be undiscerning, and its inability to develop a coherent philosophy to counteract the revolutionary propaganda limited its success in counteracting it. This was due in large part to the superficial Orthodoxy of the ruling circles, which Tiutchev expressed as follows:

Not flesh, but spirit is today corrupt,
And man just pines away despairingly.
He strives for light, while sitting in the dark,
And having found it, moans rebelliously.
From lack of faith dried up, in fire tossed,
The unendurable he suffers now.

666 Aksakov, in Almond, op. cit., p. 104.
He knows right well his soul is lost, and thirsts
   For faith – but ask for it he knows not how.
Ne’er will he say, with prayers and tears combined,
   However deep before the closed door his grief:
   “O let me in, my God, O hear my cry!
   Lord, I believe! Help Thou mine unbelief!”

By contrast, Tiutchev continued to believe in the Orthodoxy of the common people and in the unique destiny of Russia, poor in her exterior aspect but rich in inner faith and piety:

These poor villages which stand
   Amidst a nature sparse, austere –
   O beloved Russian land,
   Long to pine and persevere!
   The foreigner’s disdainful gaze
   Will never understand or see
   The light that shines in secret rays
   Upon your humility.
   Dear native land! While carrying
   The Cross and struggling to pass through,
   In slavish image Heaven’s King
   Has walked across you, blessing you.

However, the successes of government measures are easily forgotten. We have already noted the conversion of Pushkin, Gogol and Dostoyevsky. Moreover, those who were urging the government to remove censorship were not supported by the leading churchmen of the age, and showed a dangerous naivety about the way in which the forces of evil could—and, in the reign of Alexander II, did—exploit this freedom. This naivety manifested itself in a certain anti-statism, an attempt to bypass the state as being irrelevant to the deeper life of the people, the “ancient Russian freedom” that existed in the peasant communes and the Church.

We see this particularly clearly, as Walicki writes, “in the historical writings of Konstantin Aksakov. Republican liberty, he argued, was political freedom, which presupposed the people’s active participation in political affairs; ancient Russian freedom, on the other hand, meant freedom from politics—the right to live according to unwritten laws of faith and tradition, and the right to full realization in a moral sphere on which the state would not impinge.

“This theory rested on a distinction the Slavophiles made between two kinds of truth: the ‘inner’ and the ‘external’ truth. The inner truth is in the

668 Tiutchev, Nash Vek (Our Age) (in Russian).
669 Tiutchev, translated in Christensen, op. cit., p. 645.
individual the voice of conscience, and in society the entire body of values enshrined in religion, tradition, and customs – in a word, all values that together form an inner unifying force and help to forge social bonds based on shared moral convictions. The external truth, on the other hand, is represented by law and the state, which are essentially conventional, artificial, and ‘external’ – all the negative qualities Kireyevsky and Khomiakov ascribed to institutions and social bonds that had undergone a rationalizing and formalizing process. Aksakov went even further than the other Slavophiles in regarding all forms of legal and political relations as inherently evil; at their opposite pole was the communal principle embodied in the village commune, based (in Aksakov’s view) purely on truth and unanimity and not on any legal guarantees or conditions and agreements characteristic of a rational contract. For Aksakov the difference between Russia and the West was that in Russia the state had not been raised to the ‘principle’ on which social organization was largely founded. When the frailty of human nature and the demands of defense appeared to make political organization necessary, Russians ‘called’ their rulers from ‘beyond the sea’ in order to avoid doing injury to the ‘inner truth’ by evolving their own statehood; Russian tsars were given absolute powers so that the people might shun all contacts with the ‘external truth’ and all participation in affairs of state. Relations between ‘land’ (that is the common people who lived by the light of the inner truth) and state rested upon the principle of mutual non-interference. Of its own free will the state consulted the people, who presented their point of view at Land Assemblies but left the final decision in the monarch’s hands. The people could be sure of complete freedom to live and think as they pleased, while the monarch had complete freedom of action in the political sphere. This relationship depended entirely on moral convictions rather than legal guarantees, and it was this that constituted Russia’s superiority to Western Europe. ‘A guarantee is an evil,’ Aksakov wrote. ‘Where it is necessary, good is absent; and life where good is absent had better disintegrate than continue with the aid of evil.’ Aksakov conceded that there was often a wide gap between ideal and reality, but ascribed this entirely to human imperfections. He strongly condemned rulers who tried to interfere in the inner life of the ‘land’, but even in the case of Ivan the Terrible, whose excesses he condemned, he would not allow that the ‘land’ had the right to resistance and he praised its long-suffering loyalty.”

Although there is some truth in this account, it is exaggerated. Certainly, the “inner truth” of Orthodoxy was more important than the “external truth” of government and law; and it was true that the presence of this inner truth in Russia had prevented statehood becoming the “primary principle” it had become in the West, where “inner truth” had been lost. And yet the State had always taken a very active and essential role in Russian life from the beginning in protecting and fostering the internal freedom provided by the Orthodox way of life, and was accepted as such with gratitude by the people.

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670 Walicki, op. cit., pp. 96-97.
Moreover, it was inaccurate to represent the power of the Russian tsars as being “external” to the true life of the people. For the tsars were themselves Orthodox Christians anointed for their role by the Church and guided in their decisions by the Church, the Holy Scriptures and the decrees of the Ecumenical Councils.

Paradoxically, Aksakov betrays the influence of precisely that western political tradition – in its English liberal variant – which he sincerely claimed to deplore. As Walicki writes, “he subconsciously adopted and applied to Russia’s past one of the chief assumptions of Western European liberal doctrine – the principle of the total separation of the political and social spheres. At the same time he rejected both liberal constitutionalism and the very content of the liberal idea of freedom. Aksakov’s interpretation of the freedom of the ‘land’ is not to be confused with the freedom of the individual, since in his interpretation freedom only applied to the ‘land’ as a whole; it was not the freedom of the individual in the community, but the community’s freedom from outside interference in matters of faith, traditions, or customs. This non-interference had nothing to do with the liberal doctrine of laissez-faire, since, according to Aksakov, the moral principles of the ‘land’ rendered economic individualism out of the question. Even his call for freedom of speech was not a truly liberal postulate since it did not envisage the acceptance of pluralistic beliefs or of minority oppositions within society. While demanding freedom in the non-political sphere, Aksakov wanted every individual to submit totally to his mir – a submission, moreover, that was to be ‘according to conscience’ and not only ‘according to law’. His ideal was a ‘free unity’ based on a total unanimity that would reduce external constraints to a minimum but at the same time exclude individual autonomy and any departure from communal tradition.”

With the failure of the 1848 revolution in Europe, hopes were raised in the hearts of Russian Slavophiles that the time had at last come for the fulfilment of the age-old dream of Russia the Third Rome. Tiutchev had his own idiosyncratic version of this dream, seeing Russia as the new Slavic Empire which could liberate the East Europeans, including even the Czechs and Moravians, from the false empire, church and civilization of the West. According to V. Tsimbursky, Tiutchev called on Nicholas I “to play on the revolutionary self-destruction of western civilization to place on its ruins the ‘ark’ of the new Empire: may ‘the Europe of Peter’ take the place of ‘the Europe of Charles’. With Tiutchev, as in the fears of the West, the europeanization of Russia becomes the growth of a power called to take the place and replace Romano-German Europe. Tiutchev... in return for the Florentine unia of 1439, puts forward a project for helping the Roman papacy

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out of the corner it was driven into by the Italian revolution on condition of its honourable return to Orthodoxy.” 672

However, Nicholas did not share this vision. Alone among the rulers of Europe, he believed in the legitimacy of Europe’s existing regimes, with the exception of revolutionary France but including Austria’s, in which many Slavs lived. For as K.N. Leontiev wrote, he “was a true and great ‘legitimist’. He did not like even the Orthodox ‘rayas’ [peoples of the Ottoman Empire] permitting themselves to rebel against the Sultan, reasonably ascribing to himself alone the lawful right to conquer the Sultan and bring him into submission, as the right of a tsar…

“The unsuccessful and lightmindedly liberal Decembrist rebellion of the nobility had a less profound influence on his royal mind than the later events of the 1830s, which shook him and made him understand. From that time the Tsar became an opponent of all emancipation, all equalization, all confusion both in Russia and in other countries....

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

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

“Nicholas Pavlovich understood at that time that liberationist politics beyond the bounds of one’s own state is something that, while useful at the beginning, is in essence extremely dangerous and can, with the slightest incaution, turn onto the head of the liberator.

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

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

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

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The Crimean War

However legitimate the Tsar might consider most of European
governments (except Napoleon III’s), this was not how they looked at him.
The 1848 revolution, while in general unsuccessful, had changed the balance
of forces in Europe. Gratitude to Russia for keeping the peace by defeating the
Hungarian revolutionaries, never strong, had completely disappeared with
the rise of a new generation of leaders, such as the rabidly anti-Russian
Palmerston in England. In 1851 the exiled Hungarian revolutionary Kossuth
denounced Russian “despotism” in front of a cheering crowd in London.
Meanwhile, the new French Emperor Napoleon III was looking to challenge
the Vienna settlement of 1815 and divide Austria and Russia.

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Nevertheless, it was a remarkable turn-around for these countries to ally
themselves with the Ottoman empire against a Christian state, Russia, when
they were in no way threatened by Russia...

One factor making for instability was the gradual weakening of the power
of Turkey, “the sick man of Europe”, in the Tsar’s phrase. Clearly, if Turkey
collapsed, its subject peoples of Orthodox Christian faith would look to
Russia to liberate them. But the Western Powers were determined to prevent

this, which would threaten their hegemony in the Eastern Mediterranean and greatly increase the power of their rival Russia.

There were also religious rivalries. The Tsar saw himself as the natural protector of the Orthodox Christians in the Ottoman empire. But the Catholics, whose main political protector was France, were not prepared to allow him to play this role.

“The spark to the tinderbox,” writes Trevor Royle, “was the key to the main door of the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. By tradition, history, and a common usage which had been built up over the centuries, the great key was in the possession of the monks of the eastern, or Greek Orthodox… Church; they were the guardians of the grotto in which lay the sacred manger where Christ himself was… born. That state of affairs was contested with equal fervour by their great rivals, the monks of the Roman Catholic, or Latin, church who had been palmed off with the keys to the lesser inner doors to the narthex (the vestibule between the porch and the nave). There was also the question of whether or not a silver star adorned with the arms of France should be permitted to stand in the Sanctuary of the Nativity, but in the spring of 1852 the rivals’ paramount thoughts were concentrated on the possession of the great key to the church’s main west door….

“[Alexander] Kinglake wrote: ‘When the Emperor of Russia sought to … keep for his Church the holy shrines of Palestine, he spoke on behalf of fifty millions of brave, pious, devoted subjects, of whom thousands for the sake of the cause would joyfully risk their lives. From the serf in his hut, even up to the great Tsar himself, the faith professed was the faith really glowing in his heart…” 675

“Nicolas I had both temporal and spiritual reasons for wanting to extend his protection of the Eastern Church within the Ottoman Empire. Napoleon III’s were rather different. Having dismissed the French parliament he needed all the support he could get, most especially from the Roman Catholics, before he could declare himself emperor. It suited him therefore to have France play a greater role in Palestine and ‘to put an end to these deplorable and too-frequent quarrels about the possession of the Holy Places’. To that end the Marquis de Lavalette, his ambassador to the Porte – or the Sublime Porte, the court or government of the Ottoman Empire – insisted that the Turks honour the agreement made in 1740 that confirmed that France had ‘sovereign authority’ in the Holy Land. Otherwise, hinted de Lavalette, force might have to be used.

“On 9 February 1852 the Porte agreed the validity of the Latin claims but no sooner had the concession been made than the Turks were forced to bow once more, this time to Russian counter-claims. Basing his argument on an

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agreement, or firman, of 1757 which restored Greek rights in Palestine and on
the Treaty of Kutchuk-Kainarji (1774) which gave Russia protection of the
Christian religion within the Ottoman Empire, Nicholas’s ambassador
succeeded in getting a new firman ratifying the privileges of the Greek
Church. This revoked the agreement made to the French who responded by
backing up their demands with a show of force.

“Later that summer, much to Nicholas’s fury and to Britain’s irritation,
Napoleon III ordered the 90-gun steam-powered battleship Charlemagne to sail
through the Dardanelles. This was a clear violation of the London Convention
of 1841 which kept the Straits closed to naval vessels, but it also provided a
telling demonstration of French sea power. It was nothing less than gunboat
diplomacy and it seemed to work. Impressed by the speed and strength of the
French warship, and persuaded by French diplomacy and money, Sultan
Abd-el-Medjid listened ever more intently to the French demands. At the
beginning of December he gave orders that the keys to the Church of the
Nativity were to be surrendered to the Latins and that the French-backed
church was to have supreme authority over the Holy Places. On 22 December
a new silver star was brought from Jaffa and as Kinglake wrote, in great state
‘the keys of the great door of the church, together with the keys of the sacred
manger, were handed over to the Latins’.

“Napoleon III had scored a considerable diplomatic victory. His subjects
were much gratified, but in so doing he had also prepared the ground for a
much greater and more dangerous confrontation. Given the strength of
Russian religious convictions Tsar Nicholas was unwilling to accept the
Sultan’s decision – which he regarded as an affront not just to him but to the
millions of Orthodox Christians under his protection – and he was
determined to have it reversed, if need be by using force himself.”

In October, 1852, the Tsar arrived in Kiev and confided to the metropolitan:
“I do not want to shed the blood of the faithful sons of the fatherland, but our
vainglorious enemies are forcing me to bare my sword. My plans are not yet
made – no! But my heart feels that the time is nearing and they will soon be
brought to fulfilment.”

Seeking advice on his political projects, the Tsar asked if there were any
holy elders in Kiev. The Metropolitan mentioned the clairvoyant fool-for-
Christ, Hieroschemamonk Theophilus. They set off there immediately. On the
way, they saw Blessed Theophilus lying by the side of the road in the middle
of an ant-hill, not moving. His arms were folded on his chest crosswise, as in
death, and his eyes were completely closed. Ants swarmed in masses all over
his body and face, but he, as if feeling nothing, pretended to be dead. Puzzled,
the Tsar and the Metropolitan returned to Kiev…

676 Royle, op.cit., 19-20.
Russian troops moved into the Romanian Principalities, and on July 2, 1853, Tsar Nicholas proclaimed: “By the occupation of the Principalities we desire such security as will ensure the restoration of our dues [in the Holy Land]. It is not conquest that we seek but satisfaction for a just right so clearly infringed.” As he told the British ambassador in St. Petersburg, Seymour: “You see what my position is. I am the Head of a People of the Greek religion, our co-religionists of Turkey look up to me as their natural protector, and these are claims which it is impossible for me to disregard. I have the conviction that good right is on my side, I should therefore begin a War, such as that which now impends, without compunction and should be prepared to carry it on, as I have before remarked to you, as long as there should be a rouble in the Treasury or a man in the country.”

Nevertheless, when the Powers drew up a compromise “Note”, Nicholas promptly accepted it.

However, the Turks rejected it, having been secretly assured of Franco-British support. On October 4, 1853 they delivered an ultimatum to the Russians to leave the Principalities within a fortnight. When the Tsar rejected the ultimatum, war broke out. On the same day A.F. Tiutcheva noted in her diary: “A terrible struggle is being ignited, gigantic opposing forces are entering into conflict with each other: the East and the West, the Slavic world and the Latin world, the Orthodox Church in her struggle not only with Islam, but also with the other Christian confessions, which, taking the side of the religion of Mohammed, are thereby betraying their own vital principle.”

The British, the French and later the Sardinians joined the Turks. Palmerston, in a letter to the British Prime Minister John Russell, made clear that his war aim was not the restoration of some supposed injustice, but the weakening of Russia and the giving of different parts of her territory to different western powers.

A.S. Khomiakov wrote: “Whatever political bases and excuses for the struggle there may be for the struggle that is convulsing Europe now, it is impossible not to notice, even at the most superficial observation, that on one of the warring sides stand exclusively peoples belonging to Orthodoxy, and on the other – Romans and Protestants, gathered around Islam.”

And Khomiakov quoted from an epistle of the Catholic Archbishop of Paris Sibur, who assured the French that the war with Russia “is not a political war, but a holy war; not a war of states or peoples, but solely a

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677 Royle, op. cit., p. 52.
678 Tiutcheva, Pri Dvore Doukh Imperatorov (At the Court of Two Emperors), Moscow, 1990, p. 52; in N.Yu. Selischev, “K 150-letiu nachala Krymskoj vojny” (Towards the 150th Anniversary of the Crimean War), Pravoslavnaia Rus’ (Orthodox Rus’), № 24 (1741), December 15/28, 2003, p. 11 (in Russian).
religious war”. All other reasons were “in essence no more than excuses”. The true reason was “the necessity to drive out the error of Photius; to subdue and crush it”. “That is the recognized aim of this new crusade, and such was the hidden aim of all the previous crusades, even if those who participated in them did not admit it.”679

On February 18, 1855, the Tsar, worn out and intensely grieved by the losses in the war, died. (According to one version, he was poisoned by the medic Mandt on the orders of Napoleon III.680)

Metropolitan Philaret of Kiev asked his valet whether he remembered the trip with the Tsar to Blessed Theophilus, and the fool-for-Christ’s strange behaviour. “Up to now I could not understand his strange behaviour. Now, the prophecy of the Starets is as clear as God’s day. The ants were the malicious enemies of our fatherland, trying to torment the great body of Russia. The arms folded on his chest and the closed eyes of Theophilus were the sudden, untimely death of our beloved Batiushka-Tsar.”681

After the fall of Sebastopol, the new Tsar, Alexander II, signed the Treaty of Paris in 1856 and brought the Crimean war to an end. While the Russians had lost some battles and the major port of Sebastopol, they retained Kars, which (with Erzurum) they had conquered from the Turks with less than half their forces. At the Peace Conference, both Russia and Turkey were forbidden to have fleets in the Black Sea (although Alexander II abrogated this clause in 1870), the Straits were closed for warships, and the Aland islands in the Baltic were demilitarised. On the other hand, as the Russian representative A.F. Orlov telegraphed to St. Petersburg: “The English claims on the independence of Mingrelia, the Trans-Caucasus and other demands have been completely rejected. The quarrels over Nikolaev stirred up by Lord Clarendon have been resolved by our replies.”682 As Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow put it: “In spite of all this, in Europe we were unconquered, while in Asia we were conquerors. Glory to the Russian army!”683

So in purely military terms, the Crimean war was not such a disaster for Russia; and if the war had continued, might well have ended with victory as superior Russian manpower began to tell. The situation had been much more perilous for Russia in 1812, and yet they had gone on to enter Paris in triumph.

As Tsar Alexander II had written to the Russian commander Gorchakov after the fall of Sebastopol: “Sebastopol is not Moscow, the Crimea is not

680 Ivanov, op. cit., p. 327.
682 Orlov, in Selischev, op. cit., p. 12.
Russia. Two years after we set fire to Moscow, our troops marched in the streets of Paris. We are still the same Russians and God is still with us.” And within a generation, Russian armies were at the gates of Constantinople…

However, the fact remained that while the war of 1812-14 had ended in the rout of Russia’s enemies, this had not happened in 1854-56. Moreover, Russia’s primary war-aim, the retention of her right to act as guardian of the Orthodox Christians in the Ottoman Empire, had not been achieved.

Still more serious was the dispiriting effect that the war had on public opinion. Observers had noted the enthusiasm of the simple people for the war, which they considered to be a holy war; the soldiers in the Crimea had shown feats of heroism; and the intercession of the Mother of God had clearly been seen in the deliverance of Odessa through her “Kasperovskaya” icon.684

However, examples of unbelief had been seen among the commanding officers at Sebastopol; some of the intelligentsy, such as B.N. Chicherin, openly scoffed the idea of a holy war; and the nation as a whole could not be said to have been as united behind their Tsar as in 1812.

The conclusion drawn by Constantine Aksakov (who, in spite of his anti-statism, ardently supported the war) was as follows: “From the very beginning the reason for all our failures has lain, not in the power, strength or skill of our enemies, but in us ourselves; we ourselves, of course, have been our most terrible adversaries. It is no wonder that we have been overcome when we ourselves give in and retreat... Believe me, the danger for Russia is not in the Crimea, and not from the English, the French and the Turks, no, the danger, the real danger is within us, from the spirit of little faith, the spirit of doubt in the help of God, a non-Russian, western spirit, a foreign, heterodox spirit, which weakens our strength and love for our brothers, which cunningly counsels us to make concessions, to humiliate ourselves, to avoid quarrels with Germany, to wage a defensive war, and not to go on the offensive, and not go straight for the liberation of our brothers. We have protected ourselves! That is the source of our enslavement and, perhaps, of our endless woes. If we want God to be for us, it is necessary that we should be for God, and not for the Austrian or in general for the German union, for the sake of which we have abandoned God’s work. It is necessary that we should go forward for the Faith and our brothers. But we, having excited the hopes of our brothers, have allowed the cross to be desecrated, and abandoned our brothers to torments... The struggle, the real struggle between East and West, Russia and Europe, is in ourselves and not at our borders.”685

685 C. Aksakov, in E.N. Annenkov, “‘Slaviano-Khristianskie’ idealy na fone zapadnoj tsivilizatsii, russkie spory 1840-1850-kh gg.” (“‘Slavic-Christian’ ideas against the background...
Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow on Church and State

In this volume we have often encountered the views of Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow. He was indeed the outstanding churchman of his age, a great pastor who ruled the see of Moscow for nearly half a century, a great theologian and a great defender of the Church. But he was also a great defender of the State, as was demonstrated during his conduct during December, 1825, when his wise refusal to reveal the contents of Tsar Alexander’s will immediately helped to guarantee the transfer of power to his brother, Tsar Nicholas II.

Of particular interest, therefore, are his views on the relationship between the Church and the State…

According to Snychev, Metropolitan Philaret said that “it was necessary for there to be a close union between the ruler and the people – a union, moreover, that was based exclusively on righteousness. The external expression of the prosperity of a state was the complete submission of the people to the government. The government in a state had to enjoy the rights of complete inviolability on the part of the subjects. And if it was deprived of these rights, the state could not be firm, it was threatened with danger insofar as two opposing forces would appear: self-will on the part of the subjects and predominance on the part of the government. ‘If the government is not firm,’ taught Philaret, ‘then the state also is not firm. Such a state is like a city built on a volcanic mountain: what does its firmness signify when beneath it is concealed a force which can turn it into ruins at any minute? Subjects who do not recognize the sacred inviolability of the rulers are incited by hope of self-will to attain self-will; an authority which is not convinced of its inviolability is incited by worries about its security to attain predominance; in such a situation the state wavers between the extremes of self-will and predominance, between the horrors of anarchy and repression, and cannot affirm in itself obedient freedom, which is the focus and soul of social life.’

“The holy hierarch understood the rebellion [of the Decembrists] as being a rebellion against the State, against itself. ‘Subjects can themselves understand,’ said Philaret, ‘that in destroying the authorities they are destroying the constitution of society and consequently they are themselves destroying themselves.’”

Philaret “did not doubt that monarchical rule is ‘power from God’ (Romans 13.1) in its significance for Russian history and statehood, and more of western civilization, Russia quarrels in the 1840s and 50s”), in V.A. Kotel’nikov (ed.), Khristianstvo i Russkaia Literatura (Christianity and Russian Literature), St. Petersburg: “Nauka”, 1996, pp. 143-144 (in Russian).

686 Snychev, op. cit., p. 177.
than once in his sermons expressed the most submissively loyal feelings with regard to all the representatives of the Royal Family. But he was one of the very few archpastors who had the courage to resist the tendency – very characteristic of Russian conditions – to reduce Orthodoxy to ‘glorification of the tsar’. Thus, contrary to many hierarchs, who from feelings of servility warmly accepted Nicholas I’s attempt to introduce the heir among the members of the Synod, he justly saw in this a manifestation of caesaropapism..., and in the application of attributes of the Heavenly King to the earthly king – a most dangerous deformation of religious consciousness..., and in such phenomena as the passing of a cross procession around statues of the emperor – a direct return to paganism.”

Metropolitan Philaret, as Fr. Georges Florovsky writes, “distinctly and firmly reminded people of the Church’s independence and freedom, reminded them of the limits of the state. And in this he sharply and irreconcilably parted with his epoch, with the whole of the State’s self-definition in the new, Petersburgian Russia. Philaret was very reserved and quiet when speaking. By his intense and courageous silence he with difficulty concealed and subdued his anxiety about what was happening. Through the vanity and confusion of events he saw and made out the threatening signs of the righteous wrath of God that was bound to come. Evil days, days of judgement were coming – ‘it seems that we are already living in the suburbs of Babylon, if not in Babylon itself,’ he feared... ‘My soul is sorrowful,’ admitted Metropolitan Philaret once. ‘It seems to me that the judgement which begins at the house of God is being more and more revealed... How thickly does the smoke come from the coldness of the abyss and how high does it mount’... And only in repentance did he see an exit, in universal repentance ‘for many things, especially in recent years’.

“Philaret had his own theory of the State, of the sacred kingdom. And in it there was not, and could not be, any place for the principles of state supremacy. It is precisely because the powers that be are from God, and the sovereigns rule by the mercy of God, that the Kingdom has a completely subject and auxiliary character. ‘The State as State is not subject to the Church’, and therefore the servants of the Church already in the apostolic canons are strictly forbidden ‘to take part in the administration of the people’. Not from outside, but from within must the Christian State be bound by the law of God and the ecclesiastical order. In the mind of Metropolitan Philaret, the State is a moral union, ‘a union of free moral beings’ and a union founded on mutual service and love – ‘a certain part of the general dominion of the Almighty, outwardly separate, but by an invisible power yoked into the unity of the whole’... And the foundation of power lies in the principle of service. In the
Christian State Philaret saw the Anointed of God, and before this banner of God’s good will he with good grace inclined his head. ‘The Sovereign receives the whole of his lawfulness from the Church’s anointing’, that is, in the Church and through the Church. Here the Kingdom inclines its head before the Priesthood and takes upon itself the vow of service to the Church, and its right to take part in ecclesiastical affairs. He possesses this not by virtue of his autocracy and authority, but precisely by virtue of his obedience and vow. And this right does not extend or pass to the organs of state administration, and between the Sovereign and the Church there cannot and must not be any dividing wall or mediation. The Sovereign is anointed, but not the State. The Sovereign enters into the Church, but the State as such remains outside the Church. And for that reason it has no rights and privileges in the Church. In her inner constitution the Church is completely independent, and has no need of the help or defence of the secular authorities – ‘the altar does not fear to fall even without this protection’. For the Church is ruled by Christ Himself, Who distributes and realizes ‘his own episcopacy of souls’ through the apostolic hierarchy, which ‘is not similar to any form of secular rule’.

“The Church has her own inviolable code of laws, her own strength and privileges, which exceed all earthly measures. ‘In His word Jesus Christ did not outline for her a detailed and uniform statute, so that His Kingdom should not seem to be of this world’… The Church has her own special form of action – in prayer, in the service of the sacraments, in exhortation and in pastoral care. And for real influence on public life, for her real enchurchment, according to Metropolitan Philaret’s thought, the interference of the hierarchy in secular affairs is quite unnecessary – ‘it is necessary not so much that a bishop should sit in the governmental assembly of grandees, as that the grandees and men of nobles birth should more frequently and ardently surround the altar of the Lord together with the bishop’… Metropolitan Philaret always with great definiteness drew a firm line between the state and ecclesiastical orders. Of course, he did not demand and did not desire the separation of the State from the Church, its departure from the Church into the arbitrariness of secular vanity. But at the same time he always sharply underlined the complete heterogeneity and particularity of the State and the Church. The Church cannot be in the State, and the State cannot be in the Church – ‘unity and harmony’ must be realized between them in the unity of the creative realization of God’s commandments.

“It is not difficult to understand how distant and foreign this way of thinking was for the State functionaries of the Nicolaitan spirit and time, and how demanding and childish it seemed to them. Philaret did not believe in the power of rebukes and reprimands. He did not attach great significance to the external forms of life – ‘it is not some kind of transformation that is needed, but a choice of men and supervision’, he used to say. And above all what was necessary was an inner creative uplift, a gathering and renewal of spiritual forces. What was needed was an intensification of creative activity, a
strengthening and intensification of ecclesiastical and pastoral freedom. As a counterweight to the onslaught of the State, Metropolitan Philaret thought about the reestablishment of the living unity of the local episcopate, which would be realized in constant consultative communion of fellow pastors and bishops, and strengthened at times by small congresses and councils, until a general local Council would become inwardly possible and achievable. Metropolitan Philaret always emphasized that ‘we live in the Church militant’... And with sadness he recognized that ‘the quantity of sins and carelessnesses which have mounted up in the course of more than one century almost exceeds the strength and means of correction’... Philaret was not a man of struggle, and was weighed down ‘by remaining in the chatter and cares of the city and works of men’. He lived in expectation ‘of that eternally secure city, from which it will not be necessary to flee into any desert’, He wanted to withdraw, to run away, and beyond the storm of affairs to pray for the mercy and longsuffering of God, for ‘defence from on high’.

The State, wrote Philaret, is “a union of free moral beings, united amongst themselves with the sacrifice of part of their freedom for the preservation and confirmation by the common forces of the law of morality, which constitutes the necessity of their existence. The civil laws are nothing other than interpretations of this law in application to particular cases and guards placed against its violation.”

Philaret emphasised the rootedness of the State in the family, with the State deriving its essential properties and structure from the family: “The family is older than the State. Man, husband, wife, father, son, mother, daughter and the obligations and virtues inherent in these names existed before the family grew into the nation and the State was formed. That is why family life in relation to State life can be figuratively depicted as the root of the tree. In order that the tree should bear leaves and flowers and fruit, it is necessary that the root should be strong and bring pure juice to the tree. In order that State life should develop strongly and correctly, flourish with education, and bring forth the fruit of public prosperity, it is necessary that family life should be strong with the blessed love of the spouses, the sacred authority of the parents, and the reverence and obedience of the children, and that as a consequence of this, from the pure elements of family there should arise similarly pure principles of State life, so that with veneration for one’s father

688 “Already in the reign of Alexander I the hierarch used to submit the thought of the restoration of Local Councils and the division on the Russian Church into nine metropolitan areas. At the command of Emperor Alexander he had even composed a project and given it to the members of the Synod for examination. But the Synod rejected the project, declaring: ‘Why this project, and why have you not spoken to us about it?’ ‘I was ordered [to compose it]’ was all that the hierarch could reply, ‘and speaking about it is not forbidden’” (Snychev, op. cit., pp. 226). (V.M.)
veneration for the tsar should be born and grow, and that the love of children for their mother should be a preparation of love for the fatherland, and the simple-hearted obedience of domestics should prepare and direct the way to self-sacrifice and self-forgetfulness in obedience to the laws and sacred authority of the autocrat..."691

If the foundation of the State is the family, and each family is both a miniature State and a miniature monarchy, it follows that the most natural form of Statehood is Monarchy – more specifically, a Monarchy that is in union with, as owing its origin to, the Heavenly Monarch, God. Despotical monarchies identify themselves, rather than unite themselves, with the Deity, so they cannot be said to correspond to the Divine order of things. In ancient times, the only monarchy that was in accordance with the order and the command of God was the Israelite autocracy.

In 1851, Metropolitan Philaret preached as follows: “As heaven is indisputably better than the earth, and the heavenly than the earthly, it is similarly indisputable that the best on earth must be recognised to be that which was built on it in the image of the heavenly, as was said to the God-seer Moses: ‘Look thou that thou make them after their pattern, which was showed thee in the mount’ (Exodus 25.40). In accordance with this, God established a king on earth in the image of His single rule in the heavens; He arranged for an autocratic king on earth in the image of His almighty power; and He placed an hereditary king on earth in the image of His imperishable Kingdom, which lasts from ages to ages.

“Oh if only all the kings of the earth paid sufficient attention to their heavenly dignity and to the traits of the image of the heavenly impressed upon them, and faithfully united the righteousness and goodness demanded of them, the heavenly unsleeping watchfulness, purity of thought and holiness of intention that is in God’s image! Oh if only all the peoples sufficiently understood the heavenly dignity of the king and the construction of the heavenly kingdom in the image of the heavenly, and constantly signed themselves with the traits of that same image – by reverence and love for the king, by humble obedience to his laws and commands, by mutual agreement and unanimity, and removed from themselves everything of which there is no image in the heavens – arrogance, disputes, self-will, greediness and every evil thought, intention and act! Everything would be blessed in accordance with the heavenly image if it were well constructed in accordance with the heavenly image. All earthly kingdoms would be worthy of being the antechamber of the Heavenly Kingdom.

“Russia! You participate in this good more than many kingdoms and peoples. ‘Hold on to that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown’ (Revelation 3.11). Keep and continue to adorn your radiant crown, ceaselessly

struggling to fulfil more perfectly the crown-giving commandments: ‘Fear God, honour the king’ (I Peter 2.17).

“Turning from the well-known to that which has perhaps been less examined and understood in the apostle’s word, I direct our attention to that which the apostle, while teaching the fear of God, reverence for the king and obedience to the authorities, at the same time teaches about freedom: ‘Submit’, he says, ‘to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake; whether to the king, as being supreme, or to governors as being sent through him… as free’. Submit as free men. Submit, and remain free…

“But how are we more correctly to understand and define freedom? Philosophy teaches that freedom is the capacity without restrictions rationally to choose and do that which is best, and that it is by nature the heritage of every man. What, it would seem, could be more desirable? But this teaching has its light on the summit of the contemplation of human nature, human nature as it should be, while in descending to our experience and actions as they are in reality, it encounters darkness and obstacles.

“In the multiplicity of the race of men, are there many who have such an open and educated mind as faithfully to see and distinguish that which is best? And do those who see the best always have enough strength decisively to choose it and bring it to the level of action? Have we not heard complaints from the best of men: ‘For to will is present in me, but how to perform that which is good I find not’ (Romans 7.18)? What are we to say about the freedom of people who, although not in slavery to anybody, are nevertheless subject to sensuality, overcome by passion, possessed by evil habits? Is the avaricious man free? Is he not bound in golden chains? Is the indulger of his flesh free? Is he not bound, if not by cruel bonds, then by soft nets? Is the proud and vainglorious man free? Is he not chained, not by his hands, and not by his legs, but by his head and heart, to his own idol?

“Thus does not experience and consciousness, at least of some people in some cases, speak of that of which the Divine Scriptures speak generally: ‘He who does sin is the servant of sin’ (John 8.34)?

“Observation of people and human societies shows that people who to a greater degree allow themselves to fall into this inner, moral slavery – slavery to sin, the passions and vices – are more often than others zealots for external freedom – freedom broadened as far as possible in human society before the law and the authorities. But will broadening external freedom help them to freedom from inner slavery? There is no reason to think that. With greater probability we must fear the opposite. He in whom sensuality, passion and vice has already acquired dominance, when the barriers put by the law and the authorities to his vicious actions have been removed, will of course give himself over to the satisfaction of his passions and lusts with even less
restraint than before, and will use his external freedom only in order that he
may immerse himself more deeply in inner slavery. Unhappy freedom which,
as the Apostle explained, ‘they have as a cover for their envy’! Let us bless the
law and the authorities which, in decreeing and ordering and defending, as
necessity requires, the limits placed upon freedom of action, hinder as far
they can the abuse of natural freedom and the spread of moral slavery, that is,
slavery to sin, the passions and the vices.

“I said: as far as they can, because we can not only not expect from the law
and the earthly authorities a complete cutting off of the abuse of freedom and
the raising of those immersed in the slavery of sin to the true and perfect
freedom: even the law of the Heavenly Lawgiver is not sufficient for that. The
law warns about sin, rebukes the sinner and condemns him, but does not
communicate to the slave of sin the power to break the bonds of this slavery,
and does not provide the means of blotting out the iniquities committed,
which lie on the conscience like a fiery seal of sinful slavery. And in this
consists ‘the weakness of the law’ (Romans 8.3), to which the Apostle
witnesses without a moment’s hesitation.

“Here the question again presents itself: what is true freedom, and who can
give it, and – especially – return it to the person who has lost it through sin?
True freedom is the active capacity of the man who has not been enslaved to
sin and who is not weighed down by a condemning conscience, to choose the
best in the light of the truth of God and to realize it with the help of the power
of God’s grace.

“Only He Who gave this freedom to sinless man at his creation can give it
back to the slave of sin. The Creator of freedom Himself declared this: ‘If the
Son will set you free, then you will truly be free’ (John 8.36). ‘If you remain in
My words, you will truly be My disciples, and you will know the truth, and
the truth will set you free’ (John 31.32). Jesus Christ, the Son of God, having
suffered and died for us in the nature He received from us, by His ‘Blood has
cleansed our conscience from dead works’ (Hebrews 9.14), and, having torn
apart the bonds of death by His resurrection, has torn apart also the bonds of
sin and death that bind us, and, after His ascension to heaven, has sent down
the Spirit of truth, giving us through faith the light of His truth to see what is
best, and His grace-filled power to do it.

“This is freedom, which is restrained neither by heaven, nor by the earth,
nor by hell, which has as its limit the will of God, and this not to its own
diminution, because it also strives to fulfil the will of God, which has no need
to shake the lawful decrees of men because it is able to see in these the truth
that ‘the Kingdom is the Lord’s and He Himself is sovereign of the nations’
(Psalm 21.28), which in an unconstrained way venerates lawful human
authority and its commands that are not contrary to God, insofar as it
radiantly sees the truth that ‘there is no power that is not of God, the powers
that be are ordained of God’ (Romans 13.1). And so this is freedom, which is in complete accord with obedience to the law and lawful authority, because it itself wishes for that which obedience demands.

“I would have much to say about the freedom that is Christian and inner, and not external, which is moral and spiritual, and not carnal, which always does good and is never rebellious, which can live in a hut just as comfortably as in a noble’s house or a royal palace, which a subject, without ceasing to be a subject, can enjoy as much as a master, which is inviolable in bonds and prison, as we can see in the Christian martyrs. But it is already bring our sermon to an end.

“Love Christian freedom – freedom from sin, from passion, from vice, the freedom of willing obedience to the law and the authorities, and do good for the sake of the Lord, in accordance with your faith in and love for Him. And let nobody be seduced by the people from whom the Apostolic word warns us, who ‘promise freedom, being themselves the slaves of corruption’ (II Peter 2.19). Amen.”

**Universalism versus Nationalism in the Balkans**

Although ecclesiastical unity had been restored between the Greeks of the Ottoman Empire and the Greeks of Free Hellas in 1852, the fact that the Greek nation was still divided between two hostile States continued to create problems and contradictions.

Sir Steven Runciman writes: “Throughout the nineteenth century, after the close of the Greek War of Independence, the Greeks within the Ottoman Empire had been in an equivocal position. Right up to the end of the Balkan Wars in 1913 they were far more numerous than their fellow-Greeks living within the boundaries of the Kingdom of Greece, and on average more wealthy. Some of them still took service under the Sultan. Turkish government finances were still largely administered by Greeks. There were Greeks in the Turkish diplomatic service, such as Musurus Pasha, for many years Ottoman Ambassador to the Court of St. James. Such men served their master loyally; but they were always conscious of the free Greek state, whose interests often ran counter to his. Under the easygoing rule of Sultans Abdul Medjit and Abdul Azis, in the middle of the century, no great difficulties arose. But the Islamic reaction under Abdul Hamit led to renewed suspicion of the Greeks, which was enhanced by the Cretan question and the war, disastrous for Greece, of 1897. The Young Turks who dethroned Abdul Hamit shared his dislike of the Christians, which the Balkan War seemed to justify.

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Participation by Greeks in Turkish administrative affairs declined and eventually was ended.

“For the Orthodox Patriarch of Constantinople the position throughout the century was particularly difficult. He was a Greek but he was not a citizen of Greece. By the oath that he took on his appointment he undertook to be loyal to the Sultan, even though the Sultan might be at war with the Kingdom of Greece. His flock, envious of the freedom of the Greeks of the Kingdom, longed to be united with them; but he could not lawfully encourage their longing. The dilemma that faced Gregory V in the spring of 1821 was shared, though in a less acute form, by all his successors. He no longer had any authority over the Greeks of Greece. Hardly had the Kingdom been established before its Church insisted on complete autonomy [i.e. autocephaly] under the Archbishop of Athens. It was to Athens, to the King of Greece, that the Greeks in Turkey now looked for the fulfilment of their aspirations. Had the Christian Empire been restored at Constantinople the Patriarch would indeed have lost much of his administrative powers; but he would have lost them gladly; for the Emperor would have been at hand to advise and admonish, and he would have enjoyed the protection of a Christian government. But as it was, he was left to administer, in a worsening atmosphere and with decreasing authority, a community whose sentimental allegiance was given increasingly to a monarch who lived far away, with whom he could not publicly associate himself, and whose kingdom was too small and poor to rescue him in times of peril. In the past the Russian Tsar had been cast by many of the Greeks in the role of saviour. That had had its advantages; for, though the Tsar continually let his Greek clients down [sic!], he was at least a powerful figure whom the Turks regarded with awe. Moreover he did not interfere with the Greeks’ allegiance to their Patriarch. Whatever Russian ambitions might be, the Greeks had no intention of ending as Russian subjects. As it was, the emergence of an independent Greece lessened Russian sympathy. Greek politicians ingeniously played off Britain and France against Russia, and against each other and Russia found it more profitable to give her patronage to Bulgaria: which was not to the liking of the Greeks.

“We may regret that the Patriarchate was not inspired to alter its role. It was, after all, the Oecumenical Patriarchate. Was it not its duty to emerge as leader of the Orthodox Oecumene? The Greeks were not alone in achieving independence in the nineteenth century. The Serbs, the Roumanians, and, later, the Bulgarians all threw off the Ottoman yoke. All of them were alive with nationalistic ardour. Could not the Patriarchate have become a rallying force for the Orthodox world, and so have checked the centrifugal tendencies of Balkan nationalism?

“The opportunity was lost. The Patriarchate remained Greek rather than oecumenical. We cannot blame the Patriarchs. They were Greeks, reared in
the Hellene tradition of which the Orthodox Church was the guardian and from which it derived much of its strength. Moreover in the atmosphere of the nineteenth century internationalism was regarded as an instrument of tyranny and reaction. But the Patriarchate erred too far in the other direction. Its fierce and fruitless attempt to keep the Bulgarian Church in subjection to Greek hierarchs, in the 1860s, did it no good and only increased bitterness. On Mount Athos, whose communities owed much to the lavish, if not disinterested, generosity of the Russian Tsars, the feuds between the Greek and Slav monasteries were far from edifying. This record of nationalism was to endanger the very existence of the Patriarchate in the dark days that followed 1922...

And yet it must be remembered that this nationalism did not come primarily from the Patriarchate itself but from the westernized Athenian Greeks. As the philhellene C.N. Leontiev wrote in the 1880s: “The movement of contemporary political nationalism is nothing other than the spread of cosmopolitan democratisation with the difference only in the methods...

“There has been no creativity; the new Hellenes have not been able to think up anything in the sphere of higher interests except a reverent imitation of progressive-democratic Europe. As soon as the privileged Turks, who represented something like a foreign aristocracy among the Greeks, had removed themselves, nothing was found except the most complete plutocratic and grammatocratic egalitarianism. When a people does not have its own privileged, more or less immobile classes, the richest and most educated of the citizens must, of course, gain the superiority over the others. Therefore in an egalitarian-liberal order a very mobile plutocracy and grammatocracy having no traditions or heritage inevitably develop. At that time [1821-32] the new Greece could not produce a king of their own blood, to such a degree did her leaders, the heroes of national liberty, suffer from demagogic jealousy! It, this new Greece, could not even produce a president of her native Greek blood, Count Kapodistrias, without soon killing him.”

According to Leontiev, the Greek revolution, which continued throughout the nineteenth century, represented a new kind of Orthodox nationalism, a nationalism influenced by the ideas of the French revolution that did not, as in earlier centuries, seek to strengthen national feeling for the sake of the faith, but used religious feeling for the sake of the nation. This was the reason why, in spite of the fact that the clergy played such a prominent role in the Greek revolution, their influence fell sharply after the revolution in those areas liberated from the Turks. “The Greek clergy complain that in Athens religion is in decline (that is, the main factor insulating [the Greeks] from the West has

weakened), and makes itself felt much more in Constantinople than in Athens, and in general more under the Turks than in pure Hellas.\textsuperscript{694}

“The religious idea (Orthodoxy) was taken by the Greek movement only as an aid. There were no systematic persecutions of Orthodoxy itself in Turkey; but there did exist very powerful and crude civil offences and restrictions for people not of the Mohammedan confession. It is understandable that in such a situation it was easy not to separate faith from race. It was even natural to expect that the freedom of the race would draw in after it the exaltation of the Church and the strengthening of the clergy through the growth of faith in the flock; for powerful faith in the flock always has as its consequence love for the clergy, even if it is very inadequate. With a strong faith (it doesn’t matter of what kind, whether unsophisticated and simple in heart or conscious and highly developed) mystical feeling both precedes moral feeling and, so to speak, crowns it. It, this mystical feeling, is considered the most important, and for that reason a flock with living faith is always more condescending also to the vices of its clergy than a flock that is indifferent. A strongly believing flock is always ready with joy to increase the rights, privileges and power of the clergy and willingly submits to it even in not purely ecclesiastical affairs.

“In those times, when the peoples being freed from a foreign yoke were led by leaders who had not experienced the ‘winds’ of the eighteenth century, the emancipation of nations did not bring with it a weakening of the influence of the clergy and religion itself, but even had the opposite effect: it strengthened both the one and the other. In Russian history, for example, we see that from the time of Demetrius Donskoj and until Peter I the significance, even the political significance of the clergy was constantly growing, and Orthodoxy itself was becoming stronger and stronger, was spreading, and entering more and more deeply into the flesh and blood of the Russian nation. The liberation of the Russian nation from the Tatar yoke did not bring with it either the withdrawal of the clergy from the political sphere or a lessening of its weight and influence or religious indifference in the higher classes or cosmopolitanism in morals and customs. The demands of Russian national emancipation in the time of St. Sergius of Radonezh and Prince Ivan Vasilievich III were combined in the souls of the people’s leaders not with those ideals and ideas with which national patriotism has been yoked in the nineteenth century in the minds of contemporary leaders. Then what seemed important was the rights of the faith, the rights of religion, the rights of God; the rights of that which Vladimir Soloviev so successfully called God’s power.

“In the nineteenth century what was thought to be important first of all was the rights of man, the rights of the popular mob, the rights of the people’s power. That is the difference.”

\textsuperscript{694} Leontiev, “Natsional’naia politika kak orudie vsemirnoj revoliutsii” (National Politics as a Weapon of Universal Revolution), in Vostok, Rossia i Slavianstvo (The East, Russia and Slavdom), Moscow, 1996, pp. 513, 514-515 (in Russian).
Leontiev concludes: "Now (after the proclamation of ‘the rights of man’) every union, every expulsion, every purification of the race from outside admixtures gives only cosmopolitan results [by which he means ‘democratisation within and assimilation (with other countries) without’].

“Then, when nationalism had in mind not so much itself as the interests of religion, the aristocracy, the monarch, etc., then it involuntarily produced itself. And whole nations and separate people at that time became more varied, more original and more powerful.

“Now, when nationalism seeks to liberate and form itself, to group people not in the name of the various, but interrelated interests of religion, the monarchy and privileged classes, but in the name of the unity and freedom of the race itself, the result turns out everywhere to be more or less uniformly democratic. All nations and all people are becoming more and more similar and as a consequence more and more spiritually poor.

“In our time political, state nationalism is becoming the destroyer of cultural, life-style nationalism.”

The Tsar and the Patriarch

The Ecumenical Patriarch was divided in his political loyalties, not only between the Turkish Sultan, to whom he had sworn an oath of allegiance, and the Free Kingdom of Greece, but also between the Sultan and the Tsar of Russia, whom Patriarch Jeremiah II had called "the Christian tsar throughout the inhabited earth for all Christians," and whose kingdom he had explicitly called "the Third Rome". In the Age of Revolution, whose main characteristic was the defiance of the Christian teaching on authority under the influence of the French revolutionary ideology, it was necessary for the first hierarch in Orthodoxy to give a good example in the carrying out of the Christian

695 Leontiev, “Plodnyatsional’nykh dvizhenij na pravoslavnom Vostoke” (The fruits of the national movements in the Orthodox East), op. cit., pp. 536-537, 538. This contrast between two kinds of nationalism may be compared with the two national types of Greek discerned by the British anthropologist Patrick Leigh Fermor in his 1966 book Roumeli. He contrasted two archetypes of the Greek temperament, the Romios and the Hellene, which may be said to take their origin from the pre- and post-revolutionary forms of Greek nationalism. “The Hellene, said Leigh Fermor, was the heir of ancient Greece, Hellas; the Romios was shaped by Byzantium, the new Rome, and by four centuries of Turkish occupation of Greece. He went on to list sixty-four characteristics of the Romios and the Hellene; in opposing pairs except for a few which were common to both, such as unstinting hospitality and a passion for the political sections of newspapers. Whereas the Romios favours practice, for instance, the Hellene favours theory; Romios lived by instinct, Hellene by principle and logic; the former is at home with demotic Greek, the latter with katharevousa. The argument is that in all Greeks there are elements of both, and that this is the origin of an inner turmoil in the Greek psyche which can lead to reactions which are incomprehensible to outsiders.” (David Brewer, “Ethnic Truth and Modern Greek History”, History Today, May, 2001, p. 21)
teaching. So the question was: whom was the Patriarch bound to obey as his political sovereign?

The answer might seem self-evident: if the Patriarch had sworn an oath of allegiance to the Sultan, and even commemorated the Sultan at the Divine Liturgy, the Sultan was his political master. Certainly, this was the position of Patriarch Gregory V, as we have seen, and of other distinguished teachers of the Greek nation, such as the Chian, Athanasios Parios. Moreover, even the Tsars had recognized the Sultan as a lawful ruler, and as lawful ruler of his Christian subjects, even to the extent of refusing their help when the Greeks rose up against the Sultan.

As we have seen, Runciman argues that the Russians “let down” the Greeks in this way. But this is an unjust comment if we accept the thesis that the Sultan was sincerely recognized by the Tsar as the lawful ruler of the Ottoman Empire and of the Christian inhabitants of that Empire. Moreover, over the centuries the Russians had steadily, and at enormous cost to themselves, pushed the boundaries of the Ottoman Empire southward, thereby significantly aiding the eventual liberation of the Balkan Orthodox.

In any case, the situation was complicated by the fact that, even if the Patriarch commemorated the Sultan at the Liturgy, almost nobody else did! Thus Protopriest Benjamin Zhukov writes: “In Mohammedan Turkey the Orthodox did not pray for the authorities during Divine services, which was witnessed by pilgrims to the Sepulchre of the Lord in Jerusalem. Skaballonovich in his Interpreted Typicon writes: ‘With the coming of Turkish dominion, the prayers for the kings began to be excluded from the augmented and great litanies and to be substituted by: “Again we pray for the pious and Orthodox Christians” (p. 152). In Austro-Hungary the Orthodox Serbs and Romanians did not pray for their emperor Franz-Joseph, who was not Orthodox. In exactly the same way the names of King George, a Lutheran, and King Ferdinand, a Catholic, were not commemorated in Orthodox Greece and Bulgaria. Instead their Orthodox heirs to the throne were commemorated. This attitude to the authorities sometimes led to conflict with them. Thus in 1888 the Bulgarian Synod was dismissed by Ferdinand of Coburg, and the members of the Synod were expelled by gendarmes from the capital because they refused to offer prayer in the churches for the Catholic prince, who had offended the Orthodox Church by many of his actions. After this the government did not allow the Synod to assemble for six years…”

But perhaps commemoration and obedience are different matters, so that commemoration of an authority may be refused while obedience is granted... And perhaps the Mohammedan Sultan and the Catholic King Ferdinand

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696 Runciman, op. cit., p. 409.
697 Zhukov, Russkaia Prawoslavnaia Tserkov’ na Rodine i za Rubezhom (The Russian Orthodox Church in the Homeland and Abroad), Paris, 2005, pp. 18-19 (in Russian).
could not be commemorated by name because no heterodox can be commemorated at the Divine Liturgy, but could still be prayed for as the lawful authorities in accordance with the apostolic command... For St. Paul called on the Christians to pray “for all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty” (1 Timothy 2.2), although the authorities at that time were pagans...

However, there was one important difference between the pagan authorities of St. Paul’s time and the heterodox authorities of the nineteenth century. In the former case, the pagan Roman empire was not only the *only* political authority of the Oecumene: outside it there was no more lawful authority. But in the latter case, there *was* a more lawful authority than the heterodox authorities – the Orthodox Christian authority of the Tsar.

The critical question, therefore, was: if there was a war between the Mohammedan or Catholic authorities, on the one side, and the Orthodox Tsar, on the other, whom were the Orthodox Christians of the Balkans to pray for and support?

This situation arose during the Crimean War. And during that war the Athonite Elder Hilarion the Georgian (whom we have met before as Fr. Ise, confessor of the Imeretian King Solomon II) instructed his disciple, Hieromonk Sabbas, to celebrate the Divine Liturgy every day and to pray for the Russians during it, and to read the whole Psalter and make many prostrations for the aid of “our Russian brethren”… “When some time had passed,” witnesses Hieromonk Sabbas, “the elder said to me: ‘Let’s go to the monastery, let’s ask the abbot what they know about the war, whether the Russians are winning or the enemies.’ When we arrived at the monastery, the abbot with the proestoses showed us a paper which the Patriarch and one other hierarch had sent from Constantinople, for distributing to the serving hieromonks in all the monasteries. The Patriarch wrote that they were beseeching God, at the Great Entrance in the Divine Liturgy, to give strength to the Turkish army to subdue the Russians under the feet of the Turks. To this was attached a special prayer which had to be read aloud. When the abbot, Elder Eulogius, had read us this patriarchal epistle and said to the elder: ‘Have you understood what our head, our father is writing to us?’, my elder was horrified and said: ‘He is not a Christian,’ and with sorrow asked: ‘Have you read this in the monastery during the Liturgy, as he writes?’ But they replied: ‘No! May it not be!’ But in the decree the Patriarch was threatening any monastery that did not carry out this order that it would suffer a very severe punishment. The next day we went back to our cell. A week passed. A monk came from Grigoriou monastery for the revealing of thoughts, and my elder asked him: ‘Did you read this prayer which the Patriarch sent to the monasteries?’ He replied: ‘Yes, it was read last Sunday during the Liturgy.’ The elder said: ‘You have not acted well in reading it; you have deprived yourselves of the grace of Holy Baptism, you have deprived
your monastery of the grace of God; condemnation has fallen on you!’ This monk returned to the monastery and told his elders and abbot that ‘we have deprived the monastery of the grace of God, the grace of Holy Baptism – that is what Papa Hilarion is saying.’ On the same day a flood swept away the mill, and the fathers began to grumble against the abbot: ‘You have destroyed the monastery!’ In great sorrow the abbot hurried to make three prostrations before the icon of the Saviour and said: ‘My Lord Jesus Christ, I’m going to my spiritual father Hilarion to confess what I have done, and whatever penance he gives me I will carry it out, so that I should not suffer a stroke from sorrow.’ Taking with him one hierodeacon and one monk, he set off for the cell of the Holy Apostle James, where we living at the time. When they arrived, my elder was outside the cell. The abbot with his companions, on seeing my elder, fell face downwards in prostrations to the earth and said: ‘Bless, holy spiritual father.’ Then they went up to kiss his hand. But my elder shouted at them: ‘Go away, away from me; I do not accept heretics!’ The abbot said: ‘I have sinned, I have come to ask you to give me a penance.’ But the elder said: ‘How did you, wretched one, dare to place Mohammed higher than Christ? God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ says to His Son: “Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies the footstool of Thy feet” (Psalm 109.1), but you ask Him to put His Son under the feet of His enemies! Get away from me, I will not accept you.’ With tears the abbot besought the elder to receive him in repentance and give him a penance. But my elder said: ‘I am not your spiritual father, go, find a spiritual father and he will give you a penance.’ And leaving them outside his cell weeping, the elder went into it and locked the door with a key. What could we do? We went into my cell and there served an all-night vigil, beseeching God to incline the elder to mercy and give a penance to the abbot. In the morning the elder went into the church for the Liturgy, not saying a word to those who had arrived, and after the dismissal of the Liturgy he quickly left for his cell. Those who had arrived with the abbot began to worry that he would suffer a heart attack; they asked me to go in to the elder and call him; perhaps he would listen to me. I went, fell at his feet and asked him: ‘Be merciful, give them a penance – the abbot may suffer a stroke in the heart attack with fatal consequences.’ Then the elder asked me: ‘What penance shall I give them? God on high is angry with them. What epitimia should I give them which would propitiate God?’ When I said to my father: ‘Elder, since I read the whole Psalter of the Prophet-King David every day, as you told me, there is one psalm there which fits this case – the 82nd: “O God, who shall be likened unto Thee? Be Thou not silent, neither be still, O God...” Command them to read this psalm tomorrow during the Liturgy, when the Cherubic hymn is being sung, at the Great Entrance; let the hierom monk who read the prayer of the Patriarch before stand under the great chandelier, and when all the fathers come together during the Great Entrance, the priest must come out of the altar holding the diskos and chalice in his hands, then let one monk bring a parchment with this psalm written on it in front, and let the hierom monk, who has been waiting under the chandelier, read the whole psalm loudly to the whole brotherhood, and while
they are reading it from the second to the ninth verses let them all repeat many times: “Lord, have mercy”. And when the remaining verses are being read, let them all say: “Amen!” And then the grace of God will again return to their monastery.’ The elder accepted my advice and asked me to call them. When they joyfully entered the cell and made a prostration, the elder said to them: ‘Carry out this penance, and the mercy of God will return to you.’ Then they began to be disturbed that the exarch sent by the Patriarch, who was caring for the fulfilment of the patriarchal decree in Karyes, might learn about this and might bring great woes upon the monastery. They did not know what to do. The elder said: ‘Since you are so frightened, I will take my hieromonk and go to the monastery; and if the exarch or the Turks hear about it, tell them: only Monk Hilarion the Georgian ordered us to do this, and we did it, and and you will be without sorrow.’ Then the abbot said: ‘Spiritual father, we are also worried and sorrowful about you, because when the Turks will learn about this, they will come here, take you, tie you up in sacks and drown you both in the sea.’ My elder replied: ‘We are ready, my hieromonk and I, let them drown us.’ Then we all together set off in the boat for Grigoriou monastery. When the brothers of the monastery saw us, they rejoiced greatly. In the morning we arranged that the hieromonk who had read the prayer of the Patriarch should himself liturgize; they lit the chandelier during the Cherubic hymn, and when all the fathers were gathered together and the server had come out of the altar preceded by the candle and candle-holder and carrying the chalice and diskos on his head and in his hands, he declared: “May the Lord remember you all in His Kingdom”, and stopped under the great chandelier. Then one monk, having in his hand the parchment with the 82nd psalm written on it, stood in front of the priest and began to read: “O God, who shall be likened unto Thee? Be Thou not silent, neither be still, O God…” – to the end. Meanwhile the fathers called out: “Lord, have mercy” until the 10th verse, and then everyone said: “Amen” many times. And they all understood that the grace of God had again come down on the monastery, and the elders from joy embraced men, thanking me that I had done such a good thing for them; and everyone glorified and thanked God.’

“All this took place under Patriarch Anthimus VI. At the end of the war he was again removed from his throne. After this he came to Athos and settled in the monastery of Esphigmenou, where he had been tonsured. Once, in 1856, on a certain feast-day, he wanted to visit the monastery of St. Panteleimon, where Fr. Hilarion was at that time. During the service the Patriarch was standing in the cathedral of the Protection on the hierarchical see. Father Hilarion passed by him with Fr. Sabbas; he didn’t even look at the venerable Patriarch, which the latter immediately noticed. The Patriarch was told about the incident with the prayer in Grigoriou monastery. At the end of the service, as usual, all the guests were invited to the guest-house. The Patriarch, wanting somehow to extract himself from his awkward situation in the eyes of the Russians and Fr. Hilarion, started a conversation on past events and
tried to develop the thought that there are cases when a certain ‘economia’ is demanded, and the care of the Church sometimes requires submission also to some not very lawful demands of the government, if this serves for the good of the Church. ‘And so we prayed for the granting of help from on high to our Sultan, and in this way disposed him to mercifulness for our Church and her children, the Orthodox Christians.’ When Patriarch Anthimus, under whom the schism with the Bulgarians took place, arrived on Athos after his deposition, and just stepped foot on the shore, the whole of the Holy Mountain shuddered from an underground quake and shook several times. All this was ascribed by the Athonites to the guilt of the Patriarch, and the governing body sent an order throughout the Mountain that they should pray fervently to God that He not punish the inhabitants of the Holy Mountain with His righteous wrath, but that He have mercy according to His mercy.”

Thus there was a fine line to be drawn between submission to the Sultan as the lawful sovereign, and a too-comfortable adaptation to the conditions of this Babylonian captivity, forgetting the Jerusalem of a truly Orthodox polity. The Tsar considered that the Orthodox peoples did not have the right to rebel against the Sultan of their own will, without the blessing of himself as the Emperor of the Third Rome. But the corollary of this view was that when the Tsar entered into war with the Sultan, it was the duty of the Orthodox subjects of the Sultan to pray for victory for the Tsar.

For, as Fr. Hilarion said, echoing the words of St. Seraphim: “The other peoples’ kings often make themselves out to be something great, but not one of them is a king in reality, but they are only adorned and flatter themselves with a great name, but God is not favourably disposed towards them, and does not abide in them. They reign only in part by the condescension of God. Therefore he who does not love his God-established tsar is not worthy of being called a Christian.”